

How Knowing God's Love for Us Encourages Us to Love Him More

I woke up at 2:15 a.m. with God saying to me, "I loved you into existence." My first thought was *Of course You did*. You created me. Without Your desire for me to exist, I wouldn't exist; I wouldn't have life. God literally loved me into existence.

He saw me before I was born. Every moment of my life was planned before I had lived a single day on earth, like it says in Psalm 139:16 (NLT). His love orchestrated good plans for me, so I would fulfill my destiny. All I have to do is follow God. There is no doubt God loves me, but I can't follow Him if I don't love Him completely.

God created each of us on purpose for a purpose. As God's creation, you and I are priceless to Him. I was a valuable person to Him even when I weighed 430 pounds and was eating myself to death. God still loved me, and if I had survived and was still breathing and eating everything in sight today, He would still love me.

Depths of His Love

What I did by losing 250 pounds does not make Him love me anymore. However, it does help me love Him more because I know the depths of His love and grace that called me back to Him again and again. He didn't condemn me for my behavior and rebellion against doing what I knew He wanted me to do.

What He did was set up circumstances to call me out of that miserable pit I found myself in. I know beyond a shadow of a doubt God delivered me from my bondage to food addiction and into a closer walk with Him when I surrendered completely to

His love.

Looking back on my life, I see clearly the effort Jesus went to in order to show me that I needed to give up sugar and gluten, so I could finally live free, “have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance [to the full, till it overflows],” like Jesus said in John 10:10 (AMP). What greater gift could He give me than a life full of abundance and meaning?

How Should I Love God?

His love toward me is so amazing, and all He asks in return is that I love Him. However, He doesn't really need my love. He created everything, even me and you. God has no needs. So why does He ask me to love Him? Because He knows I need to love Him in order to follow Him in obedience and fulfill my God-given destiny. He loves me. He has bigger dreams in mind for me than I have for myself.

How can I, in my very human condition, love God? It's simple—and yet extremely difficult at the same time. I don't have to love Him. I am free to love Him, and if I choose to do that, He tells me how.

“You are to love the Lord, your God, with every passion of your heart, with all the energy of your being, with every thought that is within you, and with all your strength. This is the great and supreme commandment. And the second is this: ‘You must love your neighbor in the same way you love yourself.’ You will never find a greater commandment than these” (Mark 12:30-31, TPT).

Four Ways to Love God

He lists four ways in which I can show love to Him. However, to really show Him that I love Him, I must love Him with all of me. That means if I am loving something else, then God does not have my love.

I must love Him with every passion of my heart or with the emotional part of me. I can't have some of my emotions tangled up in something else. If I'm stressed, angry, lonely, depressed, bored, ashamed and run to food instead of God, I am not loving Him with every passion of my heart.

I must love Him with all the energy of my being, which means my soul or very life. This really means to love Him with my actions. How I live my life will show for what or whom I live.

I must love Him with every thought that is within me. If I have thoughts that are contrary to God's purpose, that means that part of me is not loving God. I must direct my thoughts and take those that are against God captive as 2 Corinthians 10:5 tells me.

I must love Him with all my strength (or with all my physical body). If I am not taking care of my body, then I cannot be loving Him with all my strength. My body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. That is one reason He wants me to keep it healthy—so I can do the work He has called me to do.

Loving God benefits us more than it does Him. He loved us into existence, and He is loving us into living an abundant life. He does this by helping us understand how to love and obey Him, so our lives will be lived in all the spiritual blessings He has for us.

For more on how you can cultivate love in your relationship with God, listen to *Sweet Grace for Your Journey* on the Charisma Podcast Network. {eo}

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