

## Connection Equipping Academy

### Biblical Foundation // God's Character, Nature, and Attributes

#### Topic // *God Is Loving*

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## OVERVIEW

### Mission Statement

***Our goal is to help equip the saints to do God's work in the World.***

We will progress in the growth area of knowing God as we discuss another attribute of God. We are learning how each of God's attributes reveals the truth about our misconceptions, and how we grow in the grace of the Gospel when we are renewing our minds ***daily*** in light of Who He is and what He has done!

As we are being equipped with these truths, we are going to spend several weeks talking through *four growth areas*. We'll be looking biblical foundations for each of these:

### ***Four Growth Areas***

- Knowing God
- Identity in Christ
- The Body of Christ
- God's Kingdom

In order to equip, we will practice each week looking at the Biblical passages on each topic. We will consider some of the common misconceptions and then ask four *application questions*:

- What does this tell us about God?
- What does this tell us about ourselves?
- What has God done?
- Who have we become?

## INTRODUCTION

In episode 6, we will look at some misconceptions of God's love that hinder our faith, and prevent the life we are meant to live abiding in Christ. These misconceptions are easy for us to "reason" out, which allows us to remain where we are! Let's confront these things that cloud our vision and prevent our faith from taking deeper roots in God's love.

## GOD IS LOVING

### **Misconception - God can't love me because I can't love myself.**

It seems incomprehensible to us that God can love *and* like us. This misconception manifests in many thoughts—revealing our unbelief as we insist that we are unacceptable, or that circumstances wouldn't have happened if He loved us.

#### 1. Where does this misconception come from?

We tend to view the vertical relationship with God through the lens of our horizontal experiences, environments, and relationships.

#### 2. What strongholds can be built from this one misconception?

Acceptance based on our performance impacts how we live in our finances, health, career, dating, parenting, and every other aspect of life.

#### 3. What does the gospel tell us otherwise?

- Romans 5:6-8
- John 15:13

Jesus defined and demonstrated sacrificial love that moves towards others. He enables us to have this love for anyone because we are secure in His love for us.

#### 4. How does Scripture renew your mind and help you tear down those strongholds?

#### 5. What would change in your life if this stronghold were completely uprooted in your thinking?

### **Misconception - I can live how I want to because God loves me no matter what.**

#### 1. Where does this misconception come from?

Our sinful nature is filled with discontent and the desire for autonomy so that we intrinsically distrust any authority—even blinding us to God being for us.

2. What strongholds can be built from this one misconception?

We have a perverted perception of what love is and does. The fruit of consequence-free love is evident in human relationships: unhealthy, dangerous, and doesn't bless others.

3. What gospel truth tells us otherwise?

- 1 John 4:18
- Hebrews 12:6

*Love is Who God is.* Even His consequences are loving and good. Our growing through adversity is a demonstration of His love and it is not an indication of His anger.

1. How does Scripture show you how to renew your mind and help you tear down those strongholds?
2. What would change in your life if this stronghold were completely uprooted in your thinking?

**Misconception - God the Father is wrathful and just but Jesus is gracious and loving.**

The gospels show us that Jesus is the exact expression of what the Father is like. The Son and Father are not in contention to shield us from each other. They move together toward us for our good, even if it requires temporary pain.

“But the great thing to remember is, though our feelings come and go, His love for us does not. It is not wearied by our sins, or our indifference; and, therefore, it is quite relentless in its determination that we shall be cured of those sins, at whatever cost to us, at whatever cost to Him.” - C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

## **PERSONAL APPLICATION**

### **Application Question 1**

What do we learn of God because He is love?

- a. We struggle to relate to His perfect love in its daily work. But even in His loving discipline, He heals us by making us more like Christ.

- b. The writer of Hebrews exhorts the believers experiencing persecution (12:2-8). Imagine him saying to you, “Don’t go back to your old ways of approaching God. You are a son! Receive this shaping discipline that God is working out for your good.”
- c. His discipline shapes us through the Word, the Holy Spirit, and the Body. Imagine it as an athletic discipline for fitness that requires perseverance.
- d. God is the initiator of love, always compelled to love because of His perfect nature. His love leads us to personal repentance (*thinking and living under the new thought or belief*).

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### Application Question 2

What do we learn of ourselves by His love?

- a. We don’t deserve God’s love; He gives it anyway because of Who *He* is.
- b. Extremes of self-righteousness or empty self-worth are both self-centric thinking. The result of the Fall is that sin causes us all to become self-conscious but the Gospel reminds us that it was never about us anyway.

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### Application Question 3

What has God done through His loving nature?

- a. We can’t look at Jesus on the cross and not see God’s extraordinary love.
- b. His love refuses to leave us where we are.

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### Application Question 4

Who have I become by His love?

- a. We have both the grace for salvation and the grace for being transformed daily. He reminds us that we can’t rely on our feelings to tell us the truth about Him, our circumstances, or ourselves.

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**Apply** this personally:

1. Ask the Lord to show you what wrong thought patterns have become strongholds to you.
2. In what way might you be stuck in self-centric thinking, denying that it's all about God or resisting His personal grace for you?
3. Seek out a wise, trusted friend to ask for their insight. Where are you lacking belief in His love? Ask them to pray with you this week for God to reveal your unbelief that you might experience His love in a personal way.
4. Identify a specific thing you can do to magnify the Lord's love and goodness. We need Christ to become firmly established in Him.