



Does God Really Love Us?

This is one of the tougher questions I've had. Not because the answer is tough. (The answer is only one word - only three letters: Yes!) It's a tough question because the person who asked it also knew that the answer was "Yes."

Often there is another question that lies behind the questions we ask. The question behind "Does God really love us?" may be:

"If God really does love me why does he let this happen?" (i.e. It doesn't feel like He loves me.)

We can "know" the answer, but that doesn't mean we always "feel" the answer. Remember in school, how you'd "know" a certain answer was the right one, but it just didn't "feel" right. (Maybe because all your friends were convinced their answer was right, so you started to "feel" like yours couldn't be right.) Circumstances come up in life that cause us to question things we know to be true. It's the same with God's love.

Another question that may lie behind "Does God really love us?" is: "How can God love me, knowing what I've done - or haven't done?" (i.e. I don't understand why he would love me?)

Our problem may be that, while on the one hand we know God loves us, on the other hand we don't understand how he can or how he is loving us at this moment. This passage from Ephesians 3:18-19 gives us a hint at an answer:

"I pray that you, being rooted in love, may have power... to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know his love that surpasses knowledge."

Because God is God and we are not, we will not always understand everything about him - including his love. We may not understand how he can love us given the things that are happening in our lives. We may not understand how he can love us given the things we have done in our lives. But our lack of understanding doesn't change the fact that he does love us - with a love that is so "Godly" that we won't always understand it.

So what should you do when (not "if" but "when") you don't feel or understand God's love?

Remember this:

Something can be true whether or not you feel it or understand it. Like when the thermometer says 80 but you feel like it must be 95 (because the dew point is 75). Feeling like it's 95 doesn't change the fact that it's 80.

So, seek the truth. God's Word is truth.

The truth is: God always loves you.

1) He's told you.

Over and over and over. He's told us so much that it's obviously one of the things he wants to make sure we never forget. (Or maybe he's told us so many times because he knows we're going to be constantly wondering if he really does.) Here are just a few of the many passages from God's own Word:

"God is love," (1 John 4:8). Love is God's defining characteristic.

"The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love," (Psalm 145:8)

"The LORD is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made." (Psalm 145:13)

"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39)

2) He shows you.

It's relatively easy for someone to say they love you. It's what they do that shows it. Here are some things that show us that God really does love us:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

"But God demonstrates his love for us in this way: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

"But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in sins.." (Ephesians 2:4,5)

"This is love: Not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." (1 John 4:10)

God reminds us that even his discipline (especially his discipline) shows his love:

"My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves." (Hebrews 12:5,6)

"Those whom I love, I rebuke and discipline." (Revelation 3:19)

Thank God he doesn't ask us to understand everything about his love! He simply asks us to believe that he does love us. And when we remember that he sent his Son to suffer hell and die, just so we could go to heaven and live, we have to know deep down that every other thing God does (or allows) is motivated by love. He's told us. He's shown us. He loves us. Even when we don't feel it or understand it - it's a fact!

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

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