

SPRING 2019

# MASTERWORK<sup>®</sup>

ESSENTIAL MESSAGES FROM GOD'S SERVANTS



*Lessons from*

GOD LOVES YOU **by David Jeremiah**

WHEN THE ENEMY STRIKES **by Charles E. Stanley**

LifeWay | Adults

# A STEP OF FAITH

In your opinion, what does it take for a person to get to heaven and have eternal life? The Bible answers this question in one word—**FAITH**.

## **F** Is for Forgiveness

- Everyone has sinned and needs God's forgiveness: *"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23).
- God's forgiveness is in Jesus only: *"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace"* (Ephesians 1:7).

## **A** Is for Available

- God's forgiveness is available for all: *"God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life"* (John 3:16).
- God's forgiveness is available but not automatic: *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord!' will enter the kingdom of heaven"* (Matthew 7:21).

## **I** Is for Impossible

- It is impossible to get to heaven on our own: *"You are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast"* (Ephesians 2:8-9).

## **T** Is for Turn

- Turn means repent. Turn away from sin and self and turn to Jesus alone as your Savior and Lord: *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me"* (John 14:6); *"If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation"* (Romans 10:9-10).

## **H** Is for Heaven

- Here . . . Eternal life begins now with Jesus: *"I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance"* (John 10:10).
- Hereafter . . . Heaven is a place where we will live with God forever: *"If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also"* (John 14:3).
- How . . . How can a person have God's forgiveness, eternal life, and heaven? By trusting Jesus as your Savior and Lord. You can do this right now by praying and asking Jesus to forgive you of your sins and inviting Jesus into your heart.

Accepting Christ is just the beginning of a wonderful adventure with God! Follow Christ's command in baptism. Join a church where you can worship God and grow in your faith. Get involved in Sunday School and Bible study. Begin a daily personal worship time in which you study the Bible and pray.

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S P R I N G    2 0 1 9

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Biblical Solutions for Life

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We believe that the Bible has God for its author; salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter and that all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. To review LifeWay's doctrinal guidelines, please visit [www.lifeway.com/doctrinalguideline](http://www.lifeway.com/doctrinalguideline).



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## **GETTING THE MOST OUT OF MASTERWORK**

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Here are a few suggestions to help you get the most out of this resource:

### **Group Members**

1. Read the daily assignments prior to attending the group time. Complete the personal learning activities in bold type. Record your notes and questions.
2. Review your notes and questions a few moments prior to the group time as a means of preparing to be an active part of the group.
3. In the margins of this book, record insights gained during the group time.

### **Group Leader**

1. Complete step 1 above.
2. Identify the one main idea and goal for the lesson. The main point of the lesson and the goal are printed on the teaching plan pages at the end of each lesson. (See p. 16.) Focus on the session goal as you lead the session.
3. Read and study the key Bible passages listed in the margin of the teaching plan. Supplemental Bible commentary and Bible background articles are available in the MasterWork Leader Supplement. (See below.)
4. Develop a group time plan. Two options are offered in this book. One option is to follow the teaching plan at the end of each lesson. A second option is to use the discussion questions in the margins of the lessons. Some group leaders use a combination of both group time plans.
5. Customize the electronic versions of the suggested teaching plans, available on the Internet at <https://masterworkbylifeway.wordpress.com>, to fit your group.
6. Review and refine your teaching notes as you move toward the group time.
7. Arrive early, praying for the group time.

## **MASTERWORK LEADER SUPPLEMENT**

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Bible commentary on key passages used in *MasterWork* lessons and related *Biblical Illustrator* articles are available for download at [lifeway.com/masterwork](http://lifeway.com/masterwork). Look for “MasterWork Leader Supplement - Spring 2019.”



# God Loves You

He Always Has—He Always Will

A popular song from several decades ago declared, “What the World Needs Now Is Love.” And I have to agree—as long as the love the world is given is the true love of God. I don’t know of anything the world needs now, or at any other time, more than the love of God. Only the love of God can remove the barrier of sin that separates mankind from God—“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son” (John 3:16). And only the love of God gives us hope in the face of disappointment and despair—“[Nothing] shall be able to separate us from the love of God” (Rom. 8:39).

God desires to give you the gift of His love. But a gift must be received. If someone gives you a Christmas gift, and you leave it under the tree and never unwrap it, you haven’t really received it.

My point is that the giving of a gift is one half of a transaction. The transaction doesn’t become real and doesn’t take effect until that gift is accepted, opened, identified, and appreciated. In the same way, it’s not enough that God simply offers His love. He expects us to receive it.

This has been one of the more personally rewarding projects I’ve worked on, and I’ve worked on a few. As I delivered each of these messages to the church I pastor, Shadow Mountain Community Church in El Cajon, California, I was aware of the power of this topic as people interacted with the teaching. It has absolutely nothing to do with my preaching abilities, and everything to do with the eagerness of the Holy Spirit to comfort, encourage, and revitalize the human spirit with the message of God’s eternal love.

God love you. He always has. He always will.



## ABOUT THE WRITERS

DR. DAVID  
JEREMIAH

wrote *God Loves You*. Dr. Jeremiah is the founder of Turning Point Ministries, a nonprofit organization devoted to “delivering the unchanging Word of God to an ever-changing world.” A pastor’s son born in Toledo, Ohio, he graduated from Dallas Theological Seminary and received his doctorate from Cedarville College. David and his wife, Donna, have four children and ten grandchildren, and live in San Diego.

LESLIE  
HUDSON wrote the personal activities, interactive questions, and leader guide teaching suggestions for this study. A member of First Baptist Church, Dickson, Tennessee, Hudson strives to help other find “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” within God’s Word.



# God Is Love



## DAY ONE

### The Declaration of God's Love

Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You.

**PSALM 63:3**

#### Discussion Questions

When have you encountered someone who did not believe they were loved by God? What do you say to people who don't believe God loves them?

Many souls in this world believe for one reason or another that God does not love them. Maybe they have suffered misfortunes that convinced them God does not care. Or maybe they believe they have committed sins that caused God to turn His back on them. Or maybe they believe God simply favors certain classes or races or genders and does not love the others.

#### 1. Have you ever felt that God did not love you? How did that belief affect your life?

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I have a burden to dispel this grievous misunderstanding. I have a burden to tell you that God is love, and He deeply, stubbornly, and eternally insists on loving every individual on the face of the planet. It doesn't matter who you are or what you have done. God's love includes even people you may have trouble loving: That person who cut you off in traffic, that rude woman at the grocery store, the entire nation of people you deeply mistrust—God loves them all. As a matter of fact, God loves *you*.



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**2. Who do you struggle to love? Identify four or five people or types of people you find most challenging to love.**

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This is the most important fact in your life. *God* loves you. The eternal, self-existent Being who created and sustains everything that exists dearly loves you.

And He doesn't merely like you when you do well; He is personally and passionately committed to your good, even when you fail. God *loves* you. What would happen if that three-word sentence became the theme of your life—if you let it change everything about you and your world?

The Bible tells us God is love: “He who does not love does not know God, for God is love” (1 John 4:8). He reiterates this truth a few sentences later: “God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him” (v. 16).

It is important we avoid two common mistakes when considering the statement “God is love.” The first is to invert the equation and insist “love is God.” This is a serious error. Many false loves bear little or no resemblance to the perfect love of God. These false loves must never be equated with His love.

Secondly, we cannot make the mistake of subordinating all of God's attributes to His love. There is more to God than love. He is all-knowing, He is everywhere present, He is infinite, He is eternal, and He is just. John even wrote “God is light” (1 John 1:5).

However, we must recognize the force of “God is love.” What did the apostle mean that God “is” love? He was telling us something about the nature and essence of God. It's not merely that God loves, it's that God is love. Everything He does is rooted in and motivated by love. He made the world because He is love. He formed human beings because He is love. And He rules the universe in love. When we think of God and the world He created, we should never forget about His love.

**Discussion Questions**

Whom do you know who truly believes God loves them? How does it show?



## DAY TWO

# Describing God's Love, Part 1

### God's Love Is Uncaused

Our common experiences in life teach us we must earn love. We must meet certain standards or conditions that will cause others to love us. This is a burden that leads to addictions and despair.

In our human relationships, we generally do not love those who manifest unattractive or repelling actions or attributes. But God's love for us is not like that; it is free, spontaneous, unprompted, and uninfluenced. There is nothing we can do to cause God to love us, and nothing we can do to prevent Him from loving us. God loves us simply because He is God, not because we have done anything to cause it.

Because God is God, He does as He pleases, and it pleases Him to love us without cause. When God made Adam and Eve, they brought Him no secrets or surprises. They could offer Him nothing He did not already have. He loved them simply because it was His plan to do so. From the beginning of time, God does not love us because we love Him. It is exactly the opposite: "We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

**1. Do you struggle to believe this truth? If so, compose a prayer asking God to help you overcome your unbelief (Mark 9:24).**

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### God's Love Is Unreasonable

You may think it's blatantly presumptuous for me to call God unreasonable. But I am not using the term in the derogatory way we usually apply it. Indeed I am eternally grateful God's love is unreasonable.

From the day Adam and Eve sinned against God, mankind has continued to rebel, to drift away from Him, and to break every commandment given to us for our good. It would seem we have given back to God nothing but disappointment and heartbreak. Throughout the Old Testament, we

see that if God had responded “reasonably” and reacted the way we do, He would have abandoned or destroyed humanity long ago.

Though God had countless reasons to have lowered the curtain on the human drama, He had none, humanly speaking, to press on with His love in the face of humanity’s persistent failings. This is why I say God’s love is unreasonable. Though from a human perspective His love is beyond all reason, we simply need to remember that His thoughts and ways are as far beyond ours as the heavens are from the earth (Isa. 55:8-9). So while His love is “unreasonable,” it is not irrational; it bears divine reason, which our finite human minds cannot fathom.

### God’s Love Is Unending

Grappling with the magnitude of God’s love forces us back to the basics of who He is. The unending nature of His love is inseparably connected to one aspect of His own nature: He is “the Everlasting God” (Gen. 21:33), “the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End ... who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty” (Rev. 1:8). He “inhabits eternity” (Isa. 57:15). He is “the King eternal” (1 Tim. 1:17). Of Him, the psalmist wrote, “Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God” (Ps. 90:2).

All of these passages speak of God’s eternal nature. They tell us He existed always and will always exist. Unlike us, He is not limited by time or space, because He created them both.

God’s love reflects His eternal absolutes. God’s love is eternal, like He is: more durable than time, wider and deeper than the incalculable dimensions of the cosmos. As He tells us, “I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you” (Jer. 31:3).

God’s perfect love for you existed deep in the depths of eternity even before time began. He knows all, transcends all, and is magnificent beyond human imagining. Yet His love for you is so close and intimate it far outshines that of doting human fathers. God actually numbers the hairs on your head. He knows and cherishes the tiniest details of your life, He watches over you every moment, and He has a plan for your life that has been in His heart longer than the world has existed.

#### Discussion Question

When have you loved someone or something unreasonably? (Consider a stray dog, a stubborn coworker, or the like.)

God’s perfect love for you existed deep in the depths of eternity even before time began.

### 2. When have you been acutely aware of God’s love for you?

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#### Discussion Question

How can we start to explain the unendingness of God’s love?

**How did you respond to that awareness?**

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## DAY THREE

# Describing God's Love, Part 2

### God's Love Is Unlimited

Solomon, the son of David and the wisest man of his age, built a majestic temple to the glory of God. It was a place for worshipers to experience the Lord's presence, a place where God had promised to meet His people in a special way. Even though this temple was a wonder of the ancient world, Solomon reflected on the inadequacy of anything built with hands to contain the magnificence of God: "Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built!" (2 Chron. 6:18).

Here is the paradox. We know God is as far beyond us as the deepest reaches of the universe. Yet at the same time, "He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:27-28). Since God is both beyond us and beside us, His love also exists beyond us, beside us, and within us. His love is to us as the sea is to a fish: The sea is huge and expansive beyond the limited range of any fish, yet in it the fish lives, moves, and has its very being.

#### Discussion Question

Besides this sea to the fish example, what other analogy might help someone understand the unlimited love of God?

Psalm 139 is a hymn to the omnipresence of God, but its observations are true for His love as well. Where God is, love is. Verses 7-12 remind us God and His love are always present with His people. As a pastor, I have listened to many people convinced they have wandered beyond the reach of God's love. They say, "God could never love me because ...." But there is no *because* that will fill in that blank. It doesn't matter how you complete the sentence, you come up with a wrong answer. *God could never love* is a false premise. It can never happen to you or to anyone else.

**1. Read Psalm 139:7-12 in your Bible. Personalize the truths of this passage and record some of them here.**

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### God's Love Is Unchanging

In a world that moves and changes as fast as ours, one thing remains constant: the character of God. “I am the LORD, I do not change” (Mal. 3:6). “The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of His heart to all generations” (Ps. 33:11). “You are the same, and Your years will have no end” (102:27). James described God as “the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning” (Jas. 1:17).

We need only look to Jesus for the model of unchanging, ever-enduring love. Toward the end of His three-year earthly ministry, Christ must have felt deep disappointment over the lack of spiritual maturity in His disciples. On His last evening of freedom, Christ humbled Himself as a servant and washed the feet of His disciples. Then He sat down to speak quietly to them one last time before His execution. Jesus expressed to His friends His deep love for them and urged them to love one another: “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love” (John 15:9).

Even as these disciples demonstrated their characteristic misunderstandings, He called them His friends, not His servants. He knew his own execution was only hours away, yet He concerned Himself with comforting these flawed and stumbling men. Again and again, He returned to the theme of His constant love for them.

There is a good side and a better side to God's unchanging love. The good side is that God won't wake up in the morning and decide He's had enough of us. The better side is that even when we wake up in the morning and decide we've had enough of Him, He will still love us.

**2. Speak the preceding paragraph aloud to yourself. Compose a response to the paragraph.**

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### Discussion Questions

What are some negative words we use that mean “unchanging”? (Consider the word *stubborn* to get going.) What are some positive words that mean “unchanging”? (Consider *steady*.)



## DAY FOUR

# Describing God's Love, Part 3

### God's Love Is Uncomplicated

When Switzerland's Karl Barth, one of the twentieth century's most prolific theologians, made his only trip to the United States in 1962, a student asked him to summarize the broad-ranging biblical theology he had written, *Church Dogmatics*. His audience awaited his reply, expecting to be amazed by a profound statement from the learned man. After a short pause, he said, "Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so."<sup>1</sup> The audience indeed got something profound, but they also got something uncomplicated. In a dozen simple words, Karl Barth summarized the essence of all Christian theology in a way that a child could grasp as easily as a world-class scholar.

#### 1. What simple truths have shaped your faith?

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John 3:16, the most beloved of all Bible verses, captures the essence of what God's love means for us: God loved and gave, so that we need only believe. We could write volumes of books about the subject and find new areas yet to be examined. Yet this vast tree of theological knowledge springs from a single seed, plain in its simplicity: *God loves*. Though He loves in profound ways we can never grasp, He has expressed that love in terms that all humanity can understand. We don't have to plumb the depths of theology to understand what "I love you" means when spoken in the language of the heart.

#### Discussion Questions

Why do believers make God or the gospel complicated? How can we practice sharing the simplicity of the gospel?

### God's Love Is Unconditional

For the writers of the New Testament, the idea of God loving imperfect people in a perfect way was so radical and new that only the relatively obscure word *agape* could capture it.

This loving, pursuing God was clearly visible in the Old Testament, but for many, this can be difficult to see. In the New Testament, however,

God's love is fully manifested through the revelation of Jesus Christ. It's no wonder the message left Jerusalem and took hold of the Mediterranean world so rapidly. It said God loves everyone—not merely a single nation, tribe, or a sect; it said God desires to save every human being from his or her own sin, and that He wants nothing in return but the joy of our fellowship. There had never before been such a message.

Unconditional love flies in the face of the most basic drives of human nature. We tend to love conditionally; we love only those we consider worthy. God's love is nothing like that. Christians see the unconditional quality of God's love displayed on the Cross. It is love for the utterly unworthy, a love that proceeds from a God who loves simply because He is love. Only God would dare to love in such a way.

He wants nothing in return but the joy of our fellowship.

**2. Were there times you were taught, either directly or by example, that God's love was conditional? If so, how did you overcome that mistaken teaching? If you still struggle with it, ask God to reveal the unconditional commitment of His love.**

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#### Discussion Question

Read the preceding pull quote. Why do many Christians have difficulty believing that statement?



## DAY FIVE

# The Direction of God's Love

On the face of it, this is an easy question: Who does God love? All of us, of course. But “all of us” includes several identifiable groups.

### God Loves His Son

The preeminent recipient of God's love is His own Son, Jesus Christ. On two occasions—first at Jesus' baptism and again at His transfiguration—God the Father declared, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17; 17:5).



In His final intimate conversation with His disciples, described earlier, Jesus acknowledged His Father's love: "You loved Me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24).

Earlier in that same Gospel we read, "For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does" (5:20). We cannot fully appreciate the meaning of John 3:16 and the sacrifice that verse alludes to unless we realize the deep and abiding love of the Father for His only Son.

### **Discussion Questions**

How does a parent/child love differ from any other love? How does this give us a glimpse of God's love for us?

### **God Loves Israel**

One of the central themes of the Old Testament is God's love for His people Israel, whom He specially chose to bring His blessing to the world. Again and again almighty God expresses His enduring love for the Jewish people. Jeremiah tells us God will be faithful to Israel as long as the sun, moon, and stars shine, the waves roar, the heavens remain immeasurable, and the earth's foundations remain undiscoverable (Jer. 31:35-37). Isaiah spoke often about God's special love for Israel (Isa. 49:15-16). God's love for Israel does not mean He loves everyone else less. But because He chose them to bear a special assignment to implement His plan to redeem all of us, they have a special place in His heart.

### **God Loves Those Who Believe in Christ**

If we believe in Jesus Christ, then the Father loves us as He loves His own Son. It's an astonishing concept. Yet in that upper room on the night of His arrest, Christ prayed this very truth (John 17:23; see also 16:27).

The love of the Father for the Son is holy and unfathomable. Yet He promised to love believers in Christ just as deeply and fully, making us His children and full heirs to His kingdom. Paul said of those who are led by God's Spirit, "These are sons of God" (Rom. 8:14). In Colossians, Paul spoke of Christ's followers as "the elect of God, holy and beloved" (3:12). And in 2 Thessalonians, he describes God as "our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace" (2:16).

God's love for believers doesn't mean He doesn't love unbelievers. But as believers in Jesus Christ, we have become children of God. Now God loves us as His own family.

### **Discussion Questions**

What blessings or perks have you received as part of your family? How can this help you picture yourself in the family of God?

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**1. Does your life mirror the love God has for Christians and the church? If so, how so? If not, why not?**

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**God Loves the World**

The most profound expression of God's love is: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). This world God loves is a world man ruined by his sin. Yet man's failure did not quench God's unconditional love. In fact, as Paul said, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).

Man's failure did not quench God's unconditional love.

We can see God still loves all the world, sinners and saints, in Paul's words to Timothy: "[God] desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). Peter affirmed this truth: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).

Make no mistake: God hates sin. But He never stops loving sinners. He never stops going into the tangled wilderness of their failures to rescue them.

**2. Identify the names of several unsaved people in your life. Pray for their understanding that God loves them, volunteering to be a living testimony of that love.**

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**God Loves You**

Against the backdrop of God's massive love for the world, we could doubt God's love is also intimate and personal. But nothing could be further from the truth. Saint Augustine is reported to have said, "God loves you as though you are the only person in the world, and He loves everyone the way He loves you." Have you ever awakened and said, "He really does love me"?

1. Adapted from Mark Galli, "The End of Christianity as We Know It," *Christianity Today*, April 15, 2010, accessed February 29, 2012, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2010/aprilweb-only/25-41.0.html?start=3>

# LEADER GUIDE



## The main point of this

**lesson is:** God's love reflects His character and His concern for His creation.

**Focus on this goal:** To help adults recognize God's love as beyond their attainment yet available for their taking

## Key Bible Passages:

John 3:16; 17:23-24;  
1 John 4:8-19

## To the Leader

For use during the course of this study, consider creating a large, paper-covered response wall with *God Is Love* written in the center. Provide markers. Each week invite adults to add descriptive words or phrases reflecting what they learn about God's being love that session.

## Before the Session

1. Bring an index card and pen or pencil for each learner and a timer for a sixty-second activity. (Step 1)
2. Bring a complicated item, such as an electronic device, a multi-function tool, or so forth and be ready to share about it. (Step 5)

## During the Session

1. Give each learner an index card. Instruct them to write *I love* \_\_\_\_\_ at the top. Invite them to write as many answers to this question as they can in sixty seconds. Time the activity, then help learners group answers into People, Places, Things, and Activities. Invite a few volunteers to share their listed people. Ask: *Did anyone list foods you love? Activities you love to do? Seasons or weather or nature you love?* Be sure to share some of your own answers along the way. Ask: *How is loving food different from loving a sunset or loving your mother?* Stress that we use the word *love* to mean many things. Introduce today's session by saying: *Today we'll look at perfect love as well as the source of love.*
2. Read the Day One opening paragraph (p. 6). Use activity 1 (p. 6) to guide a discussion of reasons people don't believe God loves them. Bring up that even believers sometimes doubt God's love. Invite volunteers to read 1 John 4:8,16, pointing out that most translations state, "God is love." Ask: *What is the difference between saying "God loves" and "God is love"?* Show the difference by saying something like: *I golf.* (or other appropriate activity) *I enjoy golfing, I golf twice a month, and I know how to golf. However, I am not golf; golfing is something I do but it does not define me.* Stress that God's love is not something He simply does; He IS love. Ask: *How can we believe this and live in this truth?*
3. Direct attentions to the "God Is Love" wall. Enlist a volunteer to remain at the wall and write each description of God's love you or the class mention. Say: *First, let's consider human love. What are some descriptions of how humans love one another?* Consider not only the failed love of

- humanity at large but their own love shortcomings. Say: *We are about to uncover the truth that God's love is not at all like our own.* Engage learners in exploring the uncaused (1 John 4:19), unreasonable (Isa. 55:8-9), unending (Jer. 31:3) love of God as described in Day Two (pp. 8-9). Ask: *Which of these descriptions strikes you most powerfully? Explain.*
4. Direct attention to "God's Love Is Unlimited" (Day Three, p. 10). Observe that we live in a world of limited resources that requires us to manage those resources carefully. Ask: *Is there anything in our world that is unlimited?* Point out God's love is also unchanging (Day Three, p. 11). Invite volunteers to read Malachi 3:6 and James 1:17. Ask: *What might give you hesitation in the idea that God's love does not change? Do we want God's love to change? On the other hand, how does the unchanging nature of His love give you confidence?*
  5. Display a complicated item you own but rarely use. Say: *I thought this would be helpful; however, it is too complicated.* Engage learners in sharing some of the simple things they enjoy most. (a wooden rocking chair, a good book, etc.) Read the first paragraph of Day Four (p. 12) and enlist volunteers to share how they have experienced that God's love, though deeper than our understanding, is simple enough for anyone to understand. Direct learners to the topic of God's unconditional love (Day Four, pp. 12-13). Ask for a show of hands of who has been loved conditionally by a friend, a family member, or a fellow believer. Take a few moments to admit that we, as humans, will struggle to love unconditionally. Encourage learners to praise God for this aspect of who He is and to forgive others for their imperfect love.
  6. Quote, "Jesus loves me, this I know." Say: *We know that song, and it is true. However, Jesus' love for me is not the only love I need to be aware of.* Talk through each of the five items listed in Day Five (pp. 13-15): God loves His Son, Israel, believers, the world, and "me." As you bring up each one, ask: *How does God's love in this case affect our daily walk? How can we reflect God by loving those people well?*
  7. Review your "God Is Love" wall, confirming you included all the information discussed. Invite more descriptors gleaned along the way. Say: *God so loved us. Jesus loves us. When we live in relationship with them, we have the Spirit, of whom the first fruit is love (Gal. 5:22).* Challenge learners to write LOVE somewhere prominent (or make it as a screensaver on their phones) to remind them not only that God is love, but that we are to love because He is.

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