



## ARE YOU SURE OF GOD'S LOVE FOR YOU?

As I reflected on last year and the reading material I sent you, I remember addressing diverse troubles that were affecting some of you, like fear and anxiety, severe sickness, despair because of the loss of a loved one, ill treatment and severe gossiping from family or religious community, feelings of

guilt, regret about past mistakes, wondering about God's forgiveness and mercy, etc. Some of you had doubts about God's love for you, or were viewing Him as a far away Being.

So to begin the New Year, I have in my heart to address a subject that will help you to ride any difficult waves and troubles that this New Year may bring. I have discovered in my life that one thing is needful to ride those diverse waves of adversity that each year brings, and it is this : to deeply know the love that God has for you personally.

When counseling with people suffering from anxiety or depression, I often take them to one of my favorite passages in the Bible: "*Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you*" (1 Peter 5:7). I love this verse because it says **why** we can cast our anxiety on God — simply because He loves us. Imagine that! God, the Creator of everything that exists, actually loves you and me! If you take the time to meditate upon that verse, you will know the freedom that we feel when we have conscience that He cares for us, and you will be filled with hope.

**Do you experience God's love for you?** Or do you sometimes think you are all alone in the world or that God doesn't love you? If so, you are not alone. Multitudes of people today, believers and non believers, have similar thoughts. This was also true when the apostle Paul was alive. Look at what he said when he prayed that the Ephesians would deeply know God's love : « *I pray that God may dwell in your hearts and that you may through faith know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.* » (Ephesians 3:16-21)

Just as a tree's roots provide it with stability and nourishment, so also our revelation of God's love is the foundation of our stability, strength and peace in life. We become « rooted and grounded in love » and understanding His love for us opens up the door to understanding our Father, because "God is love" (1 John 4:8).

God's love is not reserved for just a few. The Lord wants us all to know "the breadth, and length, and depth, and height" of His love. God's love is not one-dimensional. There is width, length, depth, and height to it. Having only a superficial knowledge of God's love is like looking at a one-dimensional picture of a real object.

Satan has endeavored to obscure the truth about God. Throughout the centuries and in every part of the world, he has pictured God as a God of anger, a God who wants to harm His earthly children, who watches their every move in order to catch them in some mistake, and punish them. He has portrayed God as being far more interested in justice than in mercy.

But here is the truth about God: Our heavenly Father is a God of love and we need to spend more time focusing on that truth. It needs to be clear in our own minds that God watches us closely not to judge us but because He loves us and is interested in our welfare. God loves you so much He

can't take His eyes off you. Yes, though He is a God of judgment, He also is a God of mercy. He is a God of love.

**And because He is a God of love, He loves to give.** In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said: "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!" (Matt. 7:11) Take the time to ponder that point. What an understandable comparison! How easy to identify with! Parents enjoy finding "just the right" gifts for their children, especially for the little ones. Their hearts leap with pleasure as their children tear open the bright wrappings and squeal with delight at sight of the gift. Using this joyful experience as a base, Jesus continued, "How much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!" Truly, God gives "to those who ask." But He does more. He gives to everybody! "Your Father in heaven . . . makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." (Matt. 5:45).

\*\* God waits for you to communicate with Him. You can have instant, direct access to God. God loves mankind so much, and in a very special sense the ones who believe in Him, that He has made Himself available to you at all times.

\*\* We don't need to search for signs of "loveworthiness." God loves us because of who God is, not because of who we are.

\*\* No matter what storm you face, you need to know that God loves you. He has not abandoned you and He never will.

\*\* God loves each of us as if there were only one of us. -- *Augustine*

\*\* Though our feelings come and go, God's love for us does not. -- *C.S. Lewis*

Following are a few verses on God's love for you. I encourage you to read them slowly, to meditate upon them and to ask God to make His love real to you.

\*\* **Your love, O LORD,** reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies. (Psalm 36:5)

\*\* **How priceless is your unfailing love!** People take refuge in the shadow of your wings. (Psalm 36:7)

\*\* *But I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God; **I trust in God's unfailing love** for ever and ever. (Psalm 52:8)*

\*\* *But You, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, **abounding in love and faithfulness.** (Psalm 86:15)*

\*\* *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, **plans to give you hope and a future.**" (Jeremiah 29:11)*

\*\* **This is how God showed His love among us:** He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. 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 4:9-10)

\*\* *God proved His love on the Cross. When Christ hung, and bled, and died, it was God saying to the world, 'I love you.'* **Billy Graham**