



God's Will and Our Lives

EXPERIENCING

GOD

Henry and Richard Blackaby

**GOD PURSUES A
LOVE RELATIONSHIP**

Session 3

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GOD CENTERED LIVING

We hold to the doctrine of **ELECTION** which is teaching that God chooses us so that we can choose Him.

- I.e., God takes the initiative — He pursues us.

This loving nature of God is manifest in His ability to quickly forgive, for He is slow to anger and abounds in love (Neh. 9:17; Psl. 103:8-18)

- This element of God's nature angered Jonah because of God's offer of salvation to Nineveh

God is not a "Cosmic Cop" ready to jump on the slightest infraction, rather He **wants to reconcile** relationship with Himself.

- **Isa 44:22** "I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions, And like a cloud, your sins. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you"

GOD CENTERED LIVING

The salvific message is one of Reconciliation and righteousness (just thinking) is the fruit and not prerequisite of reconciliation.

God made us for relationship with Himself and as **Augustine** states, "Our souls are restless until they find their rest in Him"
[Augustine's Confessions (Lib 1,1-2,2.5,5: CSEL 33, 1-5)]

To be "in Christ" is to be united with Him—to be in relationship with Him

- This is how we become "the righteousness of God" (Rom. 5:21)

The Love of God saved us and our love for Him draws us into union with His work (John 21 - Jesus to Peter Do you Love me?)



GOD CENTERED LIVING

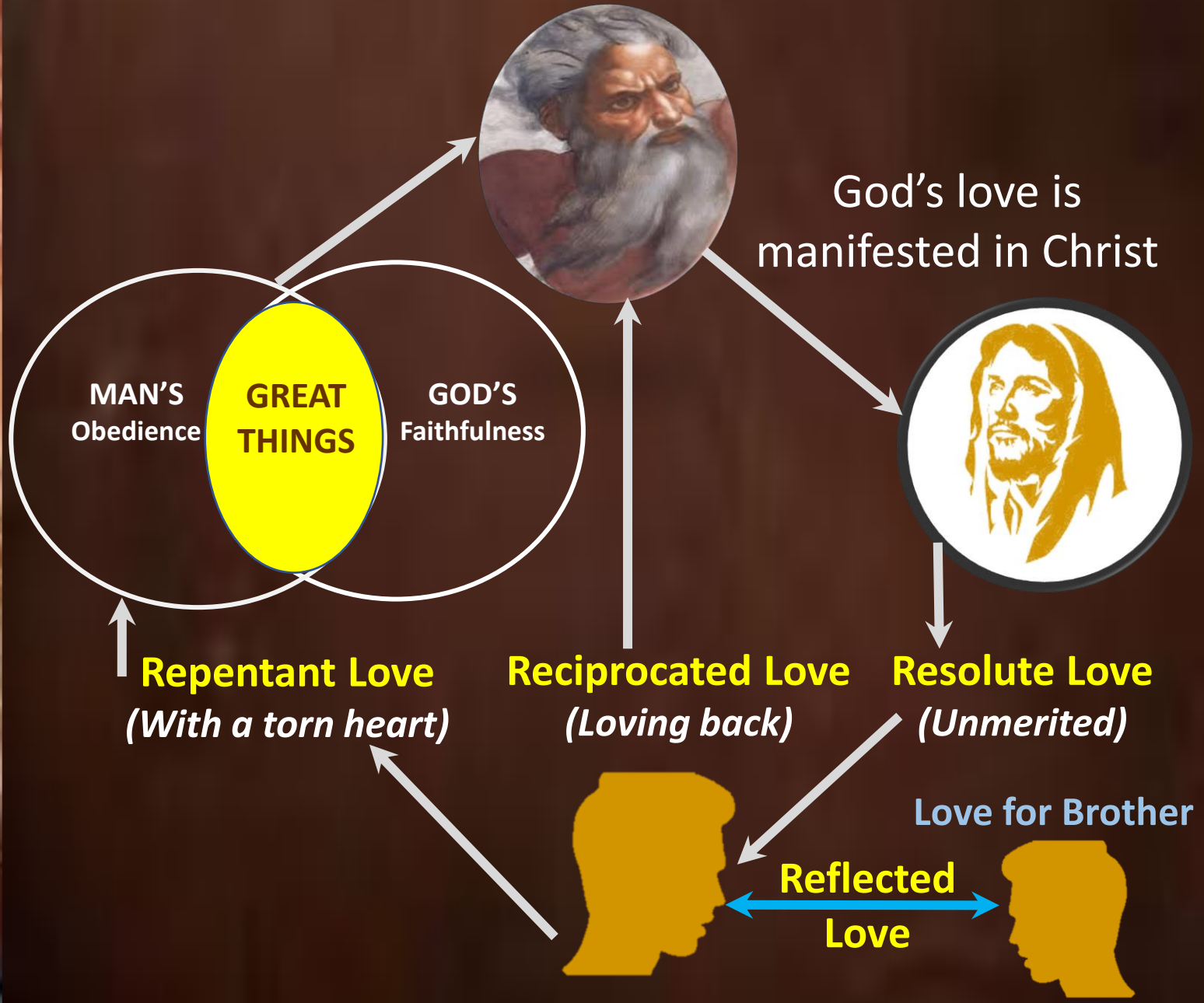
"Salvation is from our side a choice, from the divine side [...] a conquest of the Most High God. [A. W. Tozer "God's Pursuit of Man"]

Consider God's love to the author of Amazing Grace. On his tombstone is written: "John Newton, clerk, once an infidel and Libertine, a servant of slavers in Africa, was, by the rich mercy of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, preserved, restored, pardoned, and appointed to preach the Faith he had long labored to destroy"

Newton's life was changed on March 10, 1748, while returning to England from Africa, he read Dutch Monk, Thomas Kempis Book, **Imitation of Christ**.

• He didn't respond right away, **but God...**

GOD CENTERED LIVING





REVIEW FROM THE VIDEO

- ❑ *Christianity is not a religion but rather is a relationship*
- ❑ *Sometimes God takes us by the hand and walks with us through things we fear*
- ❑ *God is a loving heavenly Father Who knows what we are going to face so he prepares and equips us for the journey*
- ❑ *The story of Hosea and Gomer is written to show how God feels when His people are unfaithful to Him.*
- ❑ *Our relationship with God is not a set of duties we perform or a set of disciplines we follow or doctrines we believe.*



REVIEW FROM THE VIDEO

- ❑ *When we love someone, we don't find it difficult to spend time with them.*
- ❑ *We all have a choice as to how we will respond to the love of God.*
- ❑ *The relationship with God surpasses a simple intellectual understanding about Him*
- ❑ *Experiencing God is not just about adding to our current knowledge, it is admitting a desire to start from zero to growth up in, with and through Him.*
- ❑ *It is possible to move past mechanical responsiveness to a heartfelt love life with God*



UNDERSTANDING THE STUDY

The earliest concept about God is that of His awesome **POWER** and **AUTHORITY**

Because of the His **JUDGMENT** against Adam and Eve, it is hard to conceive that He is also a God of **LOVE**.

The beloved apostle reports that we know how much God loves us and we have put our **TRUST** in Him.

In fact God is “love” and all who live in love, live in God, and God lives in them (I John 4:16).

John initiated his letter by declaring that “**FELLOWSHIP**” with God is based upon **TRUTH** and **LOVE** (1:5–5:17).

UNDERSTANDING THE STUDY

The writer's concern in the body of the letter is to give two tests for discerning who is in fellowship with God: **OBEDIENCE** to the truth and love.

In verse 5, John declares that God is **LIGHT** — i.e., by nature He is holy.

- Intellectually, light is **TRUTH**
- Morally, light is **PURITY**.

And it is no stretch to cite a third test, **RIGHTEOUSNESS**.

John states that fellowship bears certain distinctives (2:3–27).

The balance of the epistle develops, in recurring cycles, the tests of fellowship (**ABIDING** in truth/belief; **SHOWING** love).



UNDERSTANDING THE STUDY

In 2:3–11 the phrase *the one who says* (nasb) introduces three tests to prove the reality of fellowship (v. 4, 6, 9):

- knowing (**EXPERIENCING** God, abiding in Him, and being in the **LIGHT**.)

The one in fellowship not only obeys His word, but also God's love (4:12; or, His love for God) is truly made **COMPLETE**—stands perfect—in Him (1:10).

Fellowship means personal knowledge (experience) of God with results affecting one's **CONDUCT**



UNDERSTANDING THE STUDY

Love is moral obedience, and an exercise of **WILL**, not sentimentality.

The second claim (v. 6) is to “**abide**” (niv live) in Him. To abide (remain or live, niv) in God (2:6, 24, 27, 28; 3:6, 24; 4:13, 15, 16) is to **EXPERIENCE** intimate, personal fellowship.

The second test (v. 5b–8) concerns fellowship, which is defined as being “in Him”; that is, in **CHRIST** (rather than the Father; v. 6).

Conformity to Christ’s conduct means conformity to His **COMMANDS** (v. 7).



UNDERSTANDING THE STUDY

One command encapsulates all the rest and that command is to love (John 13:34; 15:12, 17; I John 3:23–24; II John 4–6).

John 3:16 explains the DEPTHS to which God went to manifest His love to the world.

The third test of fellowship with God is love for one's Christian BROTHER (v. 9–11).

To claim to be in the light (1:5–7; i.e., in fellowship) while hating one's brother means that one is still in the darkness.



UNDERSTANDING THE STUDY

A genuine believer is **RIGHT** with both God and man.

He who continues to love both, **ABIDES** in the light (1:5-7) and advances the light.

But he who continues to love one less than another (**HATE**) produces an opposite outcome.

Consequently, John 2:28-4-6, concerns three requirements for fellowship: **RIGHTEOUSNESS, LOVE** and **FAITH**.

The phrase "**and now**" (2:28) marks an advance in thought from commendation to exhortation.



UNDERSTANDING THE STUDY

1. Read the following scriptures:

- Deut. 30:19-20
- John 3:16
- John 14:21
- Rom. 8:35-39
- I John 3:16
- I John 4:9-19

2. Using these scriptures answer the following questions:

- a) What constitutes our lives?
- b) How has God demonstrated His love?
- c) How can we show our love to Him?
- d) What did God promise to do in response to our loving Him?



UNDERSTANDING THE STUDY

3. What are some of the things in your past that have a strong limiting influence on your life today? (i.e. failures, family secrets, past abuse, etc.)
4. What are some things in your life you need to pray about and make adjustments to be able to walk with God?

