

23T20 To Know the Love of God

Written by Dr. Kip Wehrman and Judy Wehrman (10/26/2023)

Hello my friends. Judy and I want to thank Pastor Nelson for inviting us to share with you today. Be sure even though we are far away. Literally half the world away. We are very much with you in Spirit. We were very thankful to God that we were able to visit back in the beginning of October. Thank you again for making us feel so welcome.

We were asked to talk about what it means to know the love of God. This is a great topic and one that is very important to both of us.

Before we get started today, Let's Pray. Heavenly Father please bless our time today. Help me to stay out of your way. Please use me Lord. I pray that our time result in a deeper more satisfying relationship with you Jesus. And I pray this in your name Lord Jesus. Amen.

Let me ask you a question. Now What? If you are a Christian or at least thinking about becoming a Christian, a question we all eventually ask is, Now What? Don't be surprised, everyone asks this question, you are not alone.

Again, let me ask you. Now what? Once you become a Christian, Now What? What should I do? How should I do it? How do I act? and on and on and on. I know these questions because I have asked these questions myself over and over during my life.

Here is a tougher question. Did you ever get an answer to your questions?

There are a lot of well-meaning people who will quickly quote you Bible verses. But for new Christians, the quoting of Bible verses makes you either feel inadequate or it doesn't mean anything because we don't know the Bible yet or we just attend church. But for me, over the years all this stuff just confused me more. I wondered if there were simple straight forward answers.

How can we know the love of God? For starters we have to know about God. We can not feel love from someone we don't know. And can a stranger truly love you. Probably not. So if we are to experience the love of God, then we better get to know God.

Jesus truly loves us; He cares for us. Did you know that a vast majority of Jesus' teachings recorded in the Bible are about how we should live? How we live with God and how we live with others here on earth. That is love, showing us the best way to live and the best life to live. The Bible can actually give us the answer to our "Now What?" questions. We just need to trust God to reveal it to us through His word the Bible.

Today we are going to look at a few of the Bible passages that will help us answer how can I know the love of God.

Before we get started, I want to say something. God intended ordinary people like us to be able to open the Bible and understand it. There is no reason to let the Bible intimidate you.

In fact, there are several excellent Tagalog translations from the Philippine Bible Society. You can get offline APPs for your phone like Bible.is, Biblica and the Philippine bible society apps. These can be downloaded to your phone for offline use. At least one of these has audio so you can listen to a contemporary bible in your language at home and offline.

Anyway, why do I say, "don't be intimidated to read your bible." Here is what James the half-brother of Jesus says, *"But if any of you needs wisdom, you should ask God for it. God is generous. He enjoys giving to all people, so God will give you wisdom. But when you ask God, you must believe. Do not doubt God. Anyone who doubts is like a wave in the sea. The wind blows the wave up and down. He who doubts is thinking two different things at the same time. He cannot decide about anything he does. A person like that should not think that he will receive anything from the Lord.* (James 1:5-8 ICB)

Judy can you read the Tagalog from the Ang Salita ng Dios also known as the Tagalog Contemporary Bible from the Philippine Bible Society.

Kung mayroon mang nagkukulang sa inyo sa karunungan, humingi siya sa Dios at ibigay ito sa kanya nang walang pagmamaramot at panunumbat. Ngunit dapat magtiwala ang humihingi at huwag magduda, dahil ang taong nagdududa ay katulad ng alon sa dagat na tinatangay at pinapadpad ng hangin. Ang ganitong tao ay hindi dapat

umasa na may matatanggap mula sa Panginoon dahil nagdadalawang-isip siya at walang katiyakan sa mga ginagawa niya.

(James 1:5-8 ASD)

What this means, is if we honestly want to understand something about God, He has promised to help us understand by giving us the wisdom we lack. Our helper, the Holy Spirit, will guide us and help us to understand the things about God our hearts desire to know. God knows and above all things He wants a relationship with us.

I pray that you let the Bible speak to you. Listen without preconceived ideas, so Jesus can speak to your soul through the Holy Spirit and His Holy word the Bible.

I think we need to define a couple things before we get started.

Number 1. What we are going to be talking about only applies if you are a Christian. We need to be clear what we mean when we say Christian. Unfortunately, the term Christian has been hijacked by many who wish to redefine what it is. But to be clear, in short, a Christian is a follower of Jesus Christ of the Bible. Other terms used instead of follower might be disciple, servant or even slave of Jesus Christ. If you are a Christian, then Jesus is in charge of you. To be a Christian means God is directing your life and you are completely devoted to Him. Whatever He asks you to do, you say “yes”. That is what it means to be a Christian.

Number 2. I'd like to clarify this before we start, you cannot earn your way into heaven by good works no matter how noble they are. The Bible is clear on this, but that does not mean we are called to do nothing. In fact, Jesus spent most of His teaching time showing us what to do and how to do it. He is also our perfect example. The interactions between Jesus and people, show us how we should behave. I promise you it is not passive in any way.

So, the short answer to any of our “Now What?” questions is simply the Bible. Read the Bible. Study the Bible. If we are to be a follower of Christ, then we need to learn about Him. The Bible is our guide. In conjunction with good Bible teaching in our local church and from online resources, reading the Bible and letting the Holy Spirit speak to us through the words is the simplest way to answer the Now What's? Now please understand,

no Christian is perfect. I'm sure not perfect. Only Jesus was Perfect when He lived here on earth. But Christians are called to show Jesus to the world through our lives. We are the salt of the earth according to Jesus, *“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its salty taste, it cannot be made salty again. It is good for nothing. It must be thrown out for people to walk on.”* (Matthew 5:13 ICB)

“Kayong mga tagasunod ko ang nagsisilbing asin sa mundo. Ngunit kung mag-iba ang lasa ng asin, wala nang magagawa para ibalik ang lasa nito. Wala na itong pakinabang kaya itinatapon na lang at tinatapak-tapakan ng mga tao. (Matt. 5:13 ASD)

Salt is a preservative and a sanitizer. As a Christ follower, we should make wherever we are and whatever we do, better when we are there. The people around us have better lives with us than without us. We should be resisting evil and holding it back. But if we don't do this, then it's like salt that has lost its salty taste, we are no longer beneficial to the people we are around. We are good for nothing.

Christians are to be the light of the world. Jesus says, *“You are the light that gives light to the world. A city that is built on a hill cannot be hidden. And people don't hide a light under a bowl. They put the light on a lampstand. Then the light shines for all the people in the house. In the same way, you should be a light for other people. Live so that they will see the good things you do. Live so that they will praise your Father in heaven.* (Matthew 5: 14-16 ICB)

“Kayo ang nagsisilbing ilaw sa mundo. At ito ay makikita nga tulad ng lungsod na itinayo sa ibabaw ng isang burol na hindi maitago. Walang taong nagsindi ng ilaw at pagkatapos ay tatakpan ng takalan. Sa halip, inilalagay ang ilaw sa patungan upang magbigay-liwanag sa lahat ng nasa bahay. Ganoon din ang dapat ninyong gawin. Pagliwanagin ninyo ang inyong ilaw sa mga tao, upang makita nila ang mabubuting gawa ninyo at pupurihin nila ang inyong Amang nasa langit.” (Matt. 5: 14-16 ASD)

This light is more like a beacon or light house, showing the way to Jesus. We have to be actively engaging our communities in the name of Jesus, or we are like a light under a basket. Totally useless.

Things should be clear so truth would prevail in every way. Our lives should be a light that guide others and shine pointing to Jesus.

We cannot be any of these things unless we follow Jesus. Remember follow is an action word. There are definitely things we must do to be “light” and “salt” in this dark world. But I know, you want to know How we can be Salt and Light.

We cannot really follow someone if you don't know them. Think about your spouse if you are married. When you were courting, you were trying to get to know that person. You pursued them. You spent time and probably money on the activity. Gifts maybe, making yourself pretty. You invested in getting to know that person, so you could grow to love them.

Love God. Okay. But how do I love someone I don't know. In order, to love God, we have to get to know God.

We can know God if we understand who God is. The best way to know God is through the characteristics of God. Things like,

- **Love of God** (Romans 8:35-39; Psalms 100:5; Proverbs 3:12; 1John 4: 8-10)
- **Justice of God** (Proverbs 21:15)
- **Mercy of God** (Psalm 23)
- **Wrath of God** (Romans 12:19; Psalm 33:5)
- **Truth of God** (John 14:6-7; Romans 3:4-5)

This is just a short list. God has many many more characteristics. But to know the love of God, means understanding God loves us with all of who He is. God's love includes His mercy, wrath, truth. It includes discipline sometimes.

If you are a parent, you should be able to understand this. I have three girls. I've learned loving my children requires me to discipline them. I want what is best for them, so I have to teach them what is right. I discipline them and correct them because I love them.

This Love God has for us is even more. It is a love we cannot fully imagine. Knowing the love of God will not just happen automatically, you need to spend time with Him, in learning His word and meditating on it. If

you do this as a part of your life you will feel close to Him because you spend time with Him. When we are in trouble, we can feel this love. I know from my own experience when I was sick and in the hospital. I could feel how much God loved me. It is beyond reason; I only know what my experience was beyond all understanding. This was just a glimpse of the Love of God. It gives you a sense of everything is going to be alright no matter what happens.

Now I know all of this is just a beginning. But the “Now What” is learning more about God. To Know God, so that our faith can grow and our confidence in our Father God will be reinforced. As we get to know God, our love for God will naturally grow. But again, knowledge is not enough. Remember the devil and his angels know all about Jesus, but they don’t love God. We have to apply our knowledge of God, so our love moves from something we know we need to do, to a love for God we can’t live without. We can’t imagine not loving God because He is the focus of all our life’s activities.

What does all of this mean. Get to know God. We cannot build a relationship with King Jesus if we don’t know Him. We have to choose to follow our Lord, King Jesus. Every day we have to trust Jesus to be our leader. There are no part-time Christians. You are either 100% with Jesus or you are not.

Once we understand what being a Christian means, then we can begin to answer the Now What question, How do we follow Jesus? So, What does this mean. How do we follow Jesus? We don’t have to guess because Jesus told us.

I want to start with these words from Jesus from Matthew chapter 6, *“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”* (Matthew 6:33-34 NKJV)

Kaya unahin ninyo ang mapabilang sa kaharian ng Dios at ang pagsunod sa kanyang kalooban, at ibibigay niya ang lahat ng pangangailangan ninyo. Kaya huwag na kayong mag-alala tungkol sa kinabukasan, dahil ang bukas ay may sarili nang alalahanin. Sapat na ang mga alalahaning dumarating sa bawat araw.”(Matt.6:33-34 ASD)

Jesus is talking about worrying in this text, Jesus tells us to seek first the Kingdom of God. Seek to know Him first. Seek to have a relationship with Him first, then all your needs will be given to you. Daily provisions, peace, joy, etc. I challenge you all to try this. In our experience God never fails, He is trustworthy. He will do what He promised as long as you do what He asked you to do first Trust your leader and follow Him.

Most of us know this as the golden rule, to treat others as we want to be treated. In fact, Jesus calls us to a much higher standard as His followers, *“This is my command: Love each other as I have loved you. The greatest love a person can show is to die for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.* (John 15:12-14 ICB)

Ito ang aking utos sa inyo: magmahalan kayo katulad ng pagmamahal ko sa inyo. Wala nang pag-ibig na hihigit pa sa pag-ibig ng isang taong nag-alay ng kanyang buhay para sa kanyang mga kaibigan. Mga kaibigan ko kayo kung sinusunod n’yo ang aking mga utos. (John 15:12-14 ASD)

Jesus tells us, we are His followers only if we do what He tells us to do. We must love others as He loved people. This is a bigger love than we even have for ourselves. We have to be willing to do things for others even when it is inconvenient or can even hurt us. Loving others the way Jesus does means sacrificially serving others the way Jesus did. We must Love People if we are Christian. This is the Now what? Of all Now What’s? But how and where we still need to explore.

We are to love God and love people because God loves us even though none of us are worthy. But despite how unworthy we are, the Apostle Paul has encouragement for us. Paul says *“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 ICB).

Sapagkat natitiyak ko na walang makakapaghiwalay sa atin sa pag-ibig ng Dios na ipinakita sa atin sa pamamagitan ni Cristo Jesus na ating Panginoon. Maging kamatayan o buhay, mga anghel o anumang

makapangyarihang espiritu, ang kasalukuyang panahon o ang hinaharap, ang mga kapangyarihan, ang mga nasa itaas o mga nasa ibaba, o kahit ano pang mga bagay sa buong mundo ay hindi makapaghihiwalay sa atin sa pag-ibig ng Dios. (Romans 8:38-39 ASD).

God loves us and we can never be separated from His love. God loves us so much He allows us to choose between Him and everything else. Don't miss this, God loves everyone even those destined for hell. Not even hell can separate you from the love of God, but He will honor our choice. Like some parents that are not on good terms with a son/daughter, they may never see that child or talk to that child, but the parent never stops loving that child. That is what the love of God for us is.

The only way we can fully experience and know the love of God is to have a close relationship with God.

What does it mean to have a close relationship with Jesus? Why is it so important, well Jesus told us how important it is? *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.* (John 14:6 NKJV).

Sumagot si Jesus, "Ako ang daan, ang katotohanan, at ang buhay. Walang makakarating sa Ama kung hindi sa pamamagitan ko. (John 14:6 ASD).

So yes, it is very important to have a closeness with Jesus. No other way to heaven.

So, Jesus tells us if we want to be close to Him, then we need to be a follower. His followers "keep His commandments". We learn more about Jesus, we love Jesus and we do what Jesus has told us to do. The apostle John explains how close our relationship with Jesus must be when we follow Jesus. *And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him. Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!* (1 John 2:28-3:1 NKJV)

Kaya nga, mga anak, manatili kayo sa kanya, upang magkaroon tayo ng kapanatagan sa kanyang pagbabalik, at hindi tayo mapahiya pagdating ng araw na iyon. Alam ninyo na si Cristo ay matuwid, kaya makasisiguro kayo na ang lahat ng taong gumagawa ng matuwid ay mga anak ng Dios. Pag-isipan ninyo kung gaano kadakila ang pag-ibig ng Ama sa atin! Tinawag niya tayong mga anak niya, at tunay nga na tayo’y mga anak niya! Kaya hindi tayo nakikilala ng mga tao sa mundo dahil hindi nila kilala ang Dios (1 John 2:28-3:1 ASD)

A child of God. That sounds pretty good to me. We build a closeness with Jesus by doing what He told us to do and in return we become children of God. But please hear me. This is not just knowledge of God. This is more than simply knowing of Jesus. You must actively follow the king. Jesus warns us though. You cannot fake this relationship. We must work at it. Jesus needs to be the most important relationship we have. No exceptions, no excuses.

Jesus says, *“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’* (Matthew 7:21-23 NKJV)

“Marami ang tumatawag sa akin ng ‘Panginoon’, pero hindi ito nangangahulugan na makakapasok sila sa kaharian ng langit. Ang mga tao lang na sumusunod sa kalooban ng aking Amang nasa langit ang mapapabilang sa kanyang kaharian. Marami ang magsasabi sa akin sa Araw ng Paghuhukom, ‘Panginoon, hindi ba’t sa ngalan n’yo ay nagpahayag kami ng inyong salita, nagpalayas ng masasamang espiritu at gumawa ng maraming himala?’ Ngunit sasabihin ko sa kanila, ‘Hindi ko kayo kilala! Lumayo kayo sa akin, kayong mga gumagawa ng masama!’ (Matthew 7:21-23 ASD)

Well, that is the importance of a relationship with Jesus. It’s not enough to know Jesus or even believe He is King. Even the devil knows this. A relationship means we follow the king. We do what He commands us to do. We work to be more like Jesus by learning more about Him, then doing what He wants us to do. We trust Jesus. We love Jesus. And We love the things and people that Jesus loves.

I want to leave you with one last thing. According to Jesus, the Greatest Commandment is to Love God with all you have. So, how are you doing on this? What are your priorities? how you spend your money and time, show what you love most. Is it God?

The only way we can know the love of God is to have an intimate closeness with the creator of the universe, King Jesus. Good news is, the gospel is. Jesus wants a relationship with you. You want to experience God's love, then Love God with all you have. And you will experience God's love in ways that we can not understand. God's love gives of peace and joy, no matter what happens in this life. God's love allows you to sleep like a baby. We can trust God will give us what we need. God's love guides and directs us into the satisfying life God wants for each of us.

Let's Pray. Father God. You are the one I love above all else. Thank you for wanting me and loving me, even though nothing I can do will ever deserve your Love. Thank you Lord for making a way so that I can know you and experience your love. I pray in your name Lord Jesus, Amen.

Thank you and God's Blessing my friends.