

Practical Christian Living

Lesson 14: Understanding Our Deepest Needs (Part 2)

In our last lesson we saw that the deepest inner need of every person is to regard himself as a worthwhile human being.

In order to regard myself as a worthwhile person, I must be aware of two things in my life: First, I must have **significance**. This means that I must have a purpose in life that is important enough for me to feel that my life counts for something. And, second, I must have **security**. This means that I must have the security of being accepted and loved by someone who is important to me.

Again, if we could listen to the thoughts of a person, we might hear something like this:

To respect myself as a worthwhile person, I must have some purpose in life. I must be able to do something that is meaningful so that my life counts for something. But, even if I have this, it is not enough. If I am to regard myself as a worthwhile person, I must be accepted and loved by someone who is important to me.

We need Acceptance

Most of us go to great lengths to be liked and accepted by other people. To win the acceptance of others, we usually try to be on our best behavior. We try to impress others with our good points. We carefully conceal our weaknesses. We fear that other people will reject us if they find out what we are really like.

God knows our need for acceptance and He has made a way for us to be totally accepted by Him. How did God do this? He put us **IN CHRIST**. The Bible says, *"But of Him you are IN CHRIST JESUS..." 1 Corinthians 1:30*

Because we are **IN CHRIST**, we are totally and forever accepted by God. When God looks at us, He sees Christ. He sees His beloved Son, and we are totally accepted in Him. The Bible says, *"To the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved (IN CHRIST)." Ephesians 1:6*

You may say, *"But what about all my sins and failures? How can God continue to accept me when I fail so often?"*

We must understand the difference between our **standing** and our **state**. Our **standing** is the way God sees us in Christ. Our standing is always perfect because Christ is perfect, and God sees us in Him. The Bible says, *"By one offering He has perfected forever those who are sanctified (set apart in Christ)." Hebrews 10:14*

Our **state** is the way we live on the earth. Our state will never be perfect in this life. The Bible says, *"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." 1 John 1:8*

Our sins and failures do not surprise God. He knew all about us when He saved us, and He knows all about us now. He is disciplining and chastening us to make us what He wants us to be.

But, all the time He is working on us, God still sees us perfect **IN CHRIST**. We are always "*accepted in the Beloved*."

We need to be Loved

Every person not only needs to be accepted, but he also needs to be loved.

Most people are familiar with the true story that took place in a nursery orphanage. Physically healthy babies were mysteriously dying. No one could account for the deaths of these children who were physically well cared for.

Someone eventually observed that there seemed to be a direct correlation between personal, loving attention and physical health. The children who lived were the cuter ones who were picked up more often by the orphanage personnel. "*Professional mothers*" were hired to cuddle the babies, holding them close and warmly, gently caressing them. The babies lived.

The mystery was solved. Human beings desperately need to be loved.

(Taken from "Basic Principles of Biblical Counseling" by Lawrence J. Crabb, Jr., page 63. Copyright 1975 by the Zondervan Corporation. Used by permission.)

It is not just babies who need to be loved. People of all ages need the security of being loved by someone who is important to them. A teenage girl wrote,

Within the last year, three of my friends tried to commit suicide. Life was too much for them. They couldn't hack it. This world ate them up until their only thought of escape was death.

Loneliness is universal. It eats inside your system. It brings a vacuum of emptiness, a fear of death, a gnawing hunger of wanting to be understood and loved. Loneliness is a sickness. It hurts. For some it hurts so much that they do anything to run away from it.

You can have a million close friends and still be lonely. You can be the best-looking, most popular, most successful person on earth and still be lonely. No matter what you do, where you go, or what you try to be, loneliness still eats your heart.

Lonely people need love: warm, flowing love...love can kill loneliness.

This again points up the fact that human beings desperately need to be loved. Each one of us has this deep inner need for love.

We need Unconditional Love

We all need to be loved. But there is a kind of love which does not meet our deep inner need. This kind of love is called conditional love because it is given when certain conditions are met. Here are some examples of conditional love:

- "I will love you **IF** you are good."
- "I will love you **IF** you make me proud of you."
- "I will love you **IF** you do what I want you to do."

Conditional love does not meet our deep inner need because we are always under pressure to earn it. And we never know when we may do something that will cause us to lose it.

What do we need? We need someone who loves us *unconditionally*. We need someone who loves us when we fail and when we make mistakes. We need someone whose love does not change. God is the only one who can give us this kind of love.

God's love for us never changes. He says to us, *"I love you, and I will always love you. Nothing can ever separate you from My love."* This kind of love gives us the security we need.

Some Christians have a wrong concept of God's love. They expect God to show His love for them by giving them whatever they want. This is like saying to God, *"I will believe that You love me if You let me have my own way and give me everything I want."*

Another wrong concept is that God shows His love for us by protecting us from trials and troubles. Those who believe this will find that their faith will be shaken when trials and troubles do come. They may conclude that God does not love them any more.

The truth is that God's love is far greater and far deeper than these concepts. God loves us so much that He desires the best for us. He is preparing us for eternity. Therefore He allows trials and testings to come in order that our faith might grow strong. Jesus said, *"In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."* John 16:33

How do we Experience God's Love?

God loves us! The Bible plainly declares this great fact. But we need to **experience** God's love in order that our deep inner needs might be met. Paul prayed that the Ephesian believers might **know** in their experience *"the love of Christ which passes all knowledge."*

Let us consider some ways by which we can experience God's love:

1 - We experience God's love when we love Him.

God is a person. He thinks, He wills, He loves. Although He is entirely self-sufficient, He greatly desires our love. He wants us to love Him with all our heart.

When we love God with all our heart, we will experience His love and His blessing upon our life. God says, *"Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he has known My name. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him My salvation."* Psalm 91:14-16

2 - We experience God's love when we obey Him.

Love and obedience go together. Jesus said, *"If you love Me, keep My commandments."* It is to those who love and obey the Lord that He manifests His love. The Lord Jesus said, *"He who has my commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and manifest Myself to him."* John 14:21

3 - We experience God's love in the local church.

One of the best places for us to know and experience God's love is in the local church. There we can express God's love to our brothers and sisters in Christ, and we can enjoy the love of God which they express to us. The Apostle Paul prayed this prayer for the Ephesian believers:

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend WITH ALL SAINTS what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge..." Ephesians 3:17-19

We must Believe in God's Love

Because of the effects of sin in our life, we sometimes find it hard to believe that God really loves us. Our enemy, Satan, likes to confuse us and make us doubt God's love. He especially likes to torment us when we fail God in some way. He puts thoughts like these into our mind: *"God doesn't love you any more. You are such a failure. God could never love anyone like you."*

The truth is that God knew all about us when He saved us. He has seen us at our very worst, and yet He loved us enough to give His Son for us. The Bible says, *"God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."* Romans 5:8

If God loved me, sought me out, and brought me to Himself when I was rebellious and at enmity with Him, surely He will not stop loving me now that I belong to Him.

A Christian counselor related the following incident:

I recently spoke with a Christian woman who was sure God had stopped loving her. She felt desperately insecure. Her behavior over the past few years would certainly have turned me off, but fortunately she had Someone more faithful and loving than I to depend on. I asked her to read Romans 8:32-33. She wept as it slowly dawned on her that she could not make God stop loving her even if she were to dedicate herself to that task for the rest of her life.

What I must understand is this: God's love and acceptance is not dependent on me—what I am and what I do. **I am loved and accepted IN CHRIST.** When I fail utterly, and am overwhelmed by my failure, I can say, *"Lord, I know that Your love for me is as deep and wonderful as ever. I am still IN CHRIST, and You have accepted me forever in Him. Although I have failed, my position before You is still the same. You still love and accept me in Your beloved Son."*

The Bible tells us that absolutely nothing in this world or the next can ever separate us from the love of God in Christ. Paul wrote,

"For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor heavenly rulers, nor things that are present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:38-39

None of these things can ever separate us from God's love because He loves us **IN CHRIST JESUS.** Why God chose us out of all the millions of people in the world and why He set His

love upon us, we do not know. But God's Word tells us that He chose us **IN CHRIST** before the foundation of the world. We are one with Christ. God loves us with the same love with which He loves His own beloved Son. The Lord Jesus said, *"I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them, AS YOU HAVE LOVED ME."* John 17:23

There will be times when we may feel that no one loves us, not even God. But feelings are not facts. We walk by faith in God's Word and not by our feelings. Let us therefore believe God. Feelings or no feelings, whatever God says, it is so!

The Apostle John said, *"We have KNOWN and BELIEVED the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him."* 1 John 4:16

Discovered Gem: *I have the absolute security of being loved and accepted by God because I am IN CHRIST.*

Questions

1. How can we be totally accepted by God?
2. Is our standing with God always perfect?
3. Will our state ever be perfect in this life?
4. Does conditional love meet our deep, inner needs?
5. Is God the only one who can give us unconditional love?
6. Did God know all about us when He saved us?
7. Once the Lord loves us and brings us to Himself when we were at our worst, will He stop loving us now that we belong to Him?
8. In addition to the need to be accepted, what else does a person need?
9. How do we know that God really loves us?
10. Where is one of the best places for us to know and experience God's love?