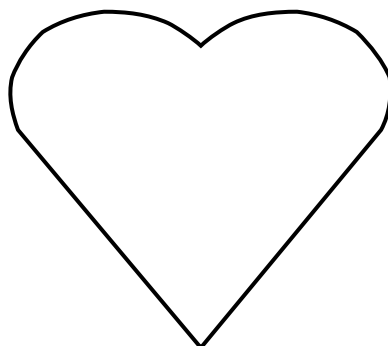
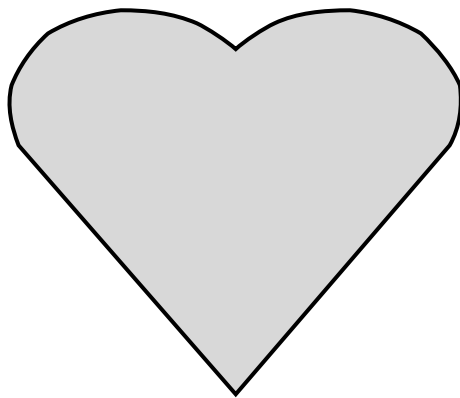
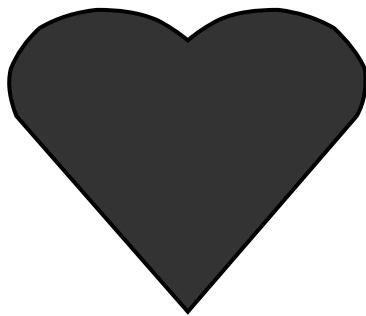


Chapter 3

A Biblical Ministry Perspective



The **5** Factors of God's Love That Transform Life & Ministry

(Scripture used is from the New American Standard Bible 1995 (NASB)).

A Biblical Mandate

Matthew 22:37–39

“And He said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”

II Corinthians 5:14,15

“For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.”

1 Corinthians 13:1–4

“If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.”

Revelation 2:4

“But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.”

Galatians 5:6, 13

“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.
13 For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.”

Jude v.21

“Keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.”

1 John 4:19

“We love, because He first loved us.”

INTRODUCTION: Because our love for God is dependent on our comprehension of God's love for us, then we need to grow in our understanding of God's love. As we deepen our understanding of God's love our love will grow and become an ever-increasing reality.

Additional Thought:

We love because He first loved us and He first loved us because “God is love” (1 John. 4:8,16), and love is (1 Cor. 13:4–8a & Gal. 5:22, 23). It is important to understand the uniqueness of love as a person (God), a character quality, a fruit of the Spirit, and an emotion/feeling.

One more thing to think about.

Since man was made in the image of God, doesn't that mean he was made with a great capacity to love? This fallen capacity to love needs to be renewed within the regenerated believer. Love is not merely an intellectual issue. God changes our hearts making it possible for His love to be a life-changing reality in our lives. Time, experience, Scripture, understanding, and the Holy Spirit move every believer further along in this process of love renewal (II Peter 1:5–7; Ephesians. 3:17–19) making the image complete.

(Please read and meditate on each of the Scriptures below and determine if you agree with my basic observation at the end of each section. Also note that each of the first **5 Love Factors** build on each other.)

You can go deeper in your awareness of God's love if you understand that:

Factor #1: God loves you as you are, but He loves you too much to leave you that way.

GOD LOVES YOU AS YOU ARE; His love is inclusive.

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

Romans. 5:8 “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

Ephesians 2:4–6 “But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

John 17:23–26 “I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me. Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. ‘O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me; and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.’”

BUT HE LOVES YOU TOO MUCH TO LEAVE YOU THAT WAY. His love is transforming.

Ephesians 3:14–19 “For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man; so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.”

Ephesians 1:4,5 “In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ.”

Romans 8:29 “He also predestined (us) to become conformed to the image of His Son.”

Romans 6:15 “Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!”

Question: What changes take place once a person becomes united with God through the salvation that comes by faith in Jesus Christ?

Action points:

1. Believe the **fact** that God loves you unconditionally.
2. Confess as sin your doubt about how much God loves you.
3. Surrender yourself to the Lord, who loves you so much that He would die so you could live, to do in you that which needs to be changed.

What do you think?

Before you became a Christian, God's love for you was 100% of how much He could love you and did not depend on anything you are or did. Now, as a Christian, is His love for you based on what you do and thus can change depending on your performance (meaning it is at times less than a 100% of what it was before you were a Christian)? *I don't think so.*

You can go deeper in your awareness of God's love if you understand that:

Factor #2: There is nothing you can do to make God love you more. There is nothing you can do to make God love you less. But there is a lot you can do to enjoy the love God has for you.

God's love is unconditional, it is not based on performance >> Cultivate a genuine RELATIONSHIP with God.

Romans 8:37–39 "But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

1 John 4:19 "We love, because He first loved us."

1 Corinthians 2:9 "But just as it is written, 'Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him.'"

Luke 15:11–32 What does the story of the prodigal son tell us about the love of God?

II Corinthians 5:14,15 "For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf."

Matthew 22:37 "And He said to him, 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.'"

Romans 8:28 "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."

John 15:9 "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love."

John 14:21 "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him."

THINK: *What are the benefits of cultivating a love relationship with God? How does a Christian cultivate a love relationship with God?*

Action points:

1. Take by faith the **fact** that God loves you with a love that is not dependent on something *from* you.
2. Determine to learn what you can to enjoy more fully the love God has for you.
3. Take some practical steps to cultivate a growing love relationship with Jesus Christ.

You can go deeper in your awareness of God's love if you understand that:

Factor #3: The Love of God is equal at the foot of the Cross; therefore, God's love is the same for everyone. God loves others as much as He loves you. >> FELLOWSHIP

Luke 7:36–50 "Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to dine with him. And He entered the Pharisee's house, and reclined at the table. And behold, there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that He was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume, and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet, and anointing them with the perfume. Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, 'If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner.' And Jesus answered and said to him, 'Simon, I have something to say to you.' And he replied, 'Say it, Teacher.' 'A certain moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him more?' Simon answered and said, 'I suppose the one whom he forgave more.' And He said to him, 'You have judged correctly.' And turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet. You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume. For this reason I say to

you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.' And He said to her, 'Your sins have been forgiven.' And those who were reclining at the table with Him began to say to themselves, 'Who is this man who even forgives sins?' And He said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace.'"

Luke 18:9–14 "And He also told this parable to certain ones who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: 'Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee, and the other a tax-gatherer. The Pharisee stood and was praying thus to himself, "God, I thank Thee that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax-gatherer. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get." But the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, "God, be merciful to me, the sinner!" I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted."

What do you think? Don't all the verses that declare God's love for you also declare His love for others?

Action points:

1. Do not play the role of judge by judging whether others deserve God's love or not.
2. Understand that the people you don't like are loved by God as much as He loves you.
3. Never believe that you have gone too far for God to love you.

You can go deeper in your awareness of God's love if you understand that:

Factor #4: God wants you to be an extension of His love to others; therefore, you must allow God the freedom to love others through your life. >> INFLUENCE

Romans 5:5 "And hope does not disappoint, because *the love of God has been poured out within our hearts* through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."

John 7:37–39 "Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, "*From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.*"' But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified."

I BELIEVE THAT WHAT GOD POURS INTO A PERSON'S LIFE IS WHAT HE WANTS TO FLOW FROM A PERSON'S LIFE. Since God pours His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, He wants love to flow out of our lives by the Holy Spirit.

John 13:34,35 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Galatians 5:13 "For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another."

1 John 4:21 "And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also."

Action points:

1. Understand that God's love is not a possession which needs your protection, nor is it limited, and you need to horde as much as you can get of it.
2. Determine not to put conditions on your allowing God to love others through your life.
3. Seek practical ways in expressing God's love to others.

**Without love it is so hard to obey.
With love one cannot help but obey.**

John 14:21 He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.

Factor #5: *(This is how it all comes together)*

In order for the love of God to flow in and through your life, you need to practice and promote the 5 points of the love of God with other believers. >> LIFE IMPACT / SERVICE

II Timothy 2:2 "And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also."

Philippians 4:9 "The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you."

1 Corinthians 11:1 "Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ."

Ephesians 5:1,2 "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma."

Philippians 2:1–4 "If therefore there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."

Colossians 1:28,29 "And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ. And for this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me."

Colossians 2:1–3 “For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf, and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face, that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God’s mystery, that is, Christ Himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

1 Peter 4:8 “Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.”

Heed the warning of Scripture:

1 Cor 13:1–3 “If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.”

Revelation 2:4 “But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.”

Remember the spiritual principle of giving and think of how that applies to God’s love.

Matt. 10:8c “Freely you have received, freely give.”

Acts 20:35c “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

Your awareness of God’s love increases when you bring others into a greater awareness of God’s love.

Action points:

1. Learn how to communicate and to demonstrate the reality of God’s love to others so that they too will become agents of His love.
2. Ask the Lord to use you every day as an agent of His love to others.
3. Make it your prayer that every day you will thank God for His unconditional love for you.

Observation:

When you are consumed by the **Love of God**, everything in life pales in comparison.

(In light of the 5 Love Factors, leaders must believe, practice, and teach this statement below)

**My security, my awareness of love,
my acceptance,
my hope of the future,**

**My value as a person rests in Jesus Christ
and in His love, which is unconditional for me.**

**No matter how I feel, I know that God does not change,
and I am secure and complete in Him.**

**THEREFORE,
My mission in life is to LOVE GOD
and
to bring others into a life-changing awareness of His Love for them,
and His desire to love others through their lives.**