



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 faraway 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.

One of my favorite passages in the Bible is this one: "*Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you*" (1 Peter 5:7). 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!

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? Multitudes of people today 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 His love.»

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. He watches us closely not to judge us but because He loves us and is interested in our welfare. 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. Their hearts leap with pleasure as their children tear open the bright wrappings and squeal with delight at sight of the gift.

Truly, God gives "to those who ask" but He does more. God's love is not reserved for just a few.

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).

Following are a few quotes and 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.

** *God loves us because of who He is, not because of who we are.*

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

** *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)*

** *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***