



## God's Resources for Life and Healing

### Part 7D: Love

Because God is love, all that He does is congruent with love, including His original plan for our existence. As we look at that plan, we can see how love formed it from beginning to end. Love needs an object, and even more ideally, someone like oneself to return that love. I believe that God envisioned and created us to fill that role.

His plan to achieve this began even before He designed and created our habitat (Mat. 25:34; Eph. 1:4). While we were not created until the sixth day, all that came first was anticipating our creation and what we would need to sustain our lives plus many, many over-and-beyond things for our enjoyment. When He created us, He specifically created us in His own image with a capacity to exercise our own free will and to give and to receive love (Gen. 1:26-27). All of these were necessary to fulfill His plan.

The plan that God established for us before the foundations of the world extended far beyond our earthly life, however. Its ultimate goal is the unhindered, purified, and even more intimate love relationship we will have with Him through all eternity, where we will experience Him in His fullest, where we will be "like Him," sharing in His glory and all the spiritual blessings of the heavenly realm (Mat. 25:34; Eph. 1:3, 18; 1 Pet. 1:3-4; 1 John 3:2).

Our experience on earth is our training and our proving ground, so to speak. Initially it is where we decide if we will respond to His overtures of love to us and choose to enter into His plan. The only way we can do this is to believe in and to accept the most sacrificial act of love that He has done for us, sending His Son to be our Savior (John 3:16; 5:24; Rom. 5:8). As soon as we do this, we are gifted with the righteousness of Christ, totally unearned by ourselves, and adopted into His family as His children (John 1:12; Rom. 3:22; 5:17; 8:14-17; Gal. 4:5; 10:10; 1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 1:5; 2:8-9; Phil. 3:9; Titus 3:5; 1 John 3:1-2). He does not bring us into relationship with Himself as servants but as sons and daughters. What greater love and honor could He possibly extend to us?

As God's children, we can enjoy many heavenly blessings even as we live in the earthly realm, including times of intimate connection with Him and His love through the Holy Spirit. This can only happen, however, as we diligently pursue Him, learning to walk and to pray and to worship Him in the spirit and to focus our attention increasingly more on heavenly things than on earthly things (John 4:24; Gal. 5:16, 25; Eph. 6:18; Col. 3:1-2; 2 Peter 1:5-8; Jude 20). As we draw near to Him in this way, He will draw near to us (James 4:8). As we taste of His goodness and come to know Him more through His Word, our love for Him will grow and intimacy with Him will become our greatest treasure (Jer. 29:13; Ps. 34:8; Mat. 13:44-46; John 17:17; 1 Peter 2:2). The more we love Him, the more He will pour out His love and good things into our lives (Ps. 16:11; 37:4; Rom. 8:28; James 1:17).

Love of the quality that God desires must be tested and proven, however. In fact, love often grows even stronger through times of adversity as we depend on God and see His unfailing faithfulness to us (2 Cor. 1:8-10). Our earthly life becomes, then, not only a time for us to grow in the godly disciplines that will bring us into the depths of God's love but also a time in which our love for God will be tested for its genuineness, its strength, and its endurance (Mat. 10:22; Luke 8:5-15; Rom. 5:3-5; 6:4-10; Thes. 1:4-5; 2 Tim. 2:3; 4:5; Heb. 10:32-36; Heb. 12:1-3; James 1:12; 1 Peter 4:12-13; 5:9; Rev. 21:7).

Ever since Adam and Eve's sin in the Garden of Eden, we have been caught in a cosmic-level conflict between God's purposes for us and Satan's. Satan will do everything possible to make us turn from God, and God will allow it up to certain limits in order to test us, as He did with Job (Job 1:12; 2:3-6). During these times, however, God gives us everything that we need to sustain ourselves and to win the battle against Satan if we are willing to purify our lives, activate our faith, and utilize the power of the Holy Spirit within us (Eph. 6:10-18; 2 Pet. 1:3-4). God has also promised that in the end He will compensate and reward us for all unjust suffering we endure at Satan's hand. If we suffer much, we will be rewarded much. If we follow in Jesus' own steps of suffering, we will also share in His victories and gain the privilege of reigning with Him (2 Tim. 2:12; 1 Peter 4:12-16).