



GOD'S LOVE

Spiritual Exercises

Day 1: God is not someone who lives far away in a place you can never reach. Nor is he a heavenly warden, eager to punish you for doing wrong. He is a father who loves you. He says to you:

"I have loved you with an everlasting love, so I am constant in my affection for you." (Jer. 31:3)

How can you accept the love of God today?

Day 2: You can know God and know how much he loves you. He wants to be in a personal relationship with you. He wants you to be his son or daughter. He does not want there to be any barrier or distance between you and him. He promised through the prophet Jeremiah:

"I will be their God and they shall be my people. There will be no further need for neighbor to try to teach neighbor, or brother to say to brother, 'Learn to know the Lord!' No, they will all know me, the least no less than the greatest – it is the Lord who speaks – since I will forgive their iniquity and never call their sin to mind." (Jer. 31:33-34)

What does your personal relationship with God look like right now? How would you like it to grow or change?

Day 3: He loves you. God the creator of the universe, the one who made all things out of nothing, loves you. He wants to care for you and give you a better life. He promised:

"I myself will pasture my sheep, I myself will show them where to rest – it is the Lord God who speaks. I shall look for the lost one, bring back the stray, bandage the wounded and make the weak strong. I shall watch over the healthy and the strong. I shall be a true shepherd to them." (Ezek. 34:14-16)

What is challenging about this truth? What is comforting?

Day 4: Because he loves us, God sent his only son to save us. He sent Jesus so that we might have life, a better life now, a life that will last eternally.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (Jn. 3:16)

"Because he loves us" . . . "For God so loved" . . . Let it sink in that God sent his son for you.

Day 5: God loves you. He is speaking to you now, reaching out to you. He is saying to you:

"Oh, come to the water all you who are thirsty; though you have no money, come! Why spend money on what is not bread, your wages on what fails to satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and you will have good things to eat and rich food to enjoy. Pay attention, come to me; listen, and your soul will live. With you I will make an everlasting covenant because of my sure, steadfast love." (Isa. 55:1-3)

What are you thirsting for? How can God meet this need?

Day 6: If you wish to know God, if you wish to have the life he offers, you can. Just turn to him and reach out to him. He invites you:

“I know the plans I have for you – it is the Lord who speaks – plans for peace, not disaster, reserving a future full of hope for you. When you call to me, and come and pray to me, I will listen to you. When you seek me, you shall find me.” (Jer. 29:11-13)

What holds you back from reaching out to God? How can you reach out to God today?

Day 7: Sometimes God seems so far away. Sometimes it seems like we can never reach him. But he is not far away. He is very close to you, and right now he is trying to show himself to you in a fuller way than ever before. He promises:

“The Lord is near to all who call upon him, to all who call upon him in truth.” (Ps. 145:18)

Remind yourself throughout the day today that “the Lord is near”.

NEXT WEEK’S STUDY FOCUS: SIN & SALVATION

Please Read: Genesis 3; Psalm 51; Colossians 1:13-23

Take some time each day to slowly read and meditate on the Spiritual Exercise for the day:

1. Read once through simply for content, to get a big picture idea of the topic and scripture.
2. Read a second time slowly to see what words or phrases stand out to you. Talk with God about these words or phrases asking:
 - Why do they stand out to you? What meaning do they have for you currently in your life?
 - What emotions or feelings do they bring up and why?
 - What might they reveal to you about God? About yourself? About some future course of action God is inviting you to?
3. Read the passages one final time lifting up the words as prayer and asking God to help you live the truths he has revealed to you during the time of reflection.