

## "With All Your Strength"

Whatever you are, God has given to you the gifts and the opportunities to be. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." And today we exploring how to show your love for God with all your strength.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. James 1:17 says that, "Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow." God's way is the way of love. It leads people to treat each other fairly and kindly. God's way is humble and compassionate. It's never selfish, never callous, and never hateful. God's way builds up instead of puffing up; it encourages with hope and comfort rather than manipulates with doubt and fear. The more you know about God, the more you'll love Him and love His teaching. The more you follow His ways, the more blessing you will see. We'd love to hear from you and we want to be a part of your life each week.

When the word love is used as a noun, we must understand that it's a noun of action. When the word "love" is used as a verb, it's a sacrificing of itself for the best interests of others. God wants more from us than a profession of faith and love. He wants us to demonstrate our love. Love is meant to be practiced, and we must show our love for God with all our strength.

The Lord Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount gave us what some call the golden rule. The Lord said in Matthew 7:12, "In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets." Now righteous people, who love the Lord, ask the question, "how do I want to be treated?" And so they treat others the way they would like to be treated themselves. What if everyone followed this golden rule? Wouldn't our society be a better place?

Now we offer this study, With All Your Strength, free! If you'd like a printed copy of our booklet, Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength, and you live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have programs and free materials on our website, at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). You can also see us on YouTube.

We'll now worship in song. We'll read from 1 John 4:7 to 11, and we'll examine what we can do to keep God alive in our hearts. And to love Him with all our strength.

Our reading today comes from 1 John chapter 4 verses 7 to 11. And they show the amazing relationship between God and love. And how you can't have one without the other.

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

My what a wonderful encouragement to love. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're so grateful that you have loved us every day of our lives. And have given Your son so that we might know that love. And Father we're thankful that our sins can be forgiven. Because of the love that You showed. Help us to love You and to love one another. In Jesus name, Amen.

Love is our highest calling. Nothing is more important than loving God and loving other people. You'll likely recall what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 13:1 to 3, "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have

not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing." Without love we can't fulfill our purpose, we become empty, and we gain nothing. If love is that important, then we ought to learn what love is and how it behaves. Let me make these suggestions:

First, love warms a cold heart. The opposite of love is not hate but apathy or indifference. A cold heart can walk on by and never get involved. Negative and hurtful experiences can dull the heart, can depress the spirit, and can drive away compassion. Love warms your heart up, makes you alive and causes you to feel and to act.

Selfishness and apathy lead people to sit by and do nothing, while others suffer. 1 John 3:16 to 18 says, "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth." Love starts in the heart but it doesn't end there. Love doesn't merely talk about doing something. Love acts.

When people today live lonely, isolated lives it's a heartbreak. One fourth of all the households in America have only one person in them. Researchers say that 40 percent of people relate more with others over a cell phone or a computer than they do in real life. Many family gatherings have little conversation and lots of texting. I visited one home, and the first thing the host did was ban all use of smart phones. He wanted us to talk. I recently read the number of people who have no one to discuss important matters with has tripled in the last twenty years. Loneliness can lead to depression and illness. We need each other; we need to love and to be loved. It's essential to life.

Second, love sacrifices its will and itself for another's best interest. Love is never self-seeking or self-serving. 1 Corinthians 13:5 says that love "does not seek its own." Another version says "it does not insist on its own way." Love puts itself last and others first. Love seeks to please more than it seeks to win. Love tries to understand by seeing things through another's eyes. God urges us in Philippians 2:3 to 4, "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others." You see, love must be demonstrated toward others. The Lord Jesus sacrificed Himself for our sake, and we must sacrifice ourselves for the benefit of others. That's what love is.

Third, when problems and conflicts arise, love seeks reconciliation. Reconciliation is the renewal of friendship. It puts the past transgressions behind and it renews love. The Lord Jesus suffered death to forgive your sins and to reconcile you to God. The Bible says in Romans 12:18, "If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men." God has always wanted His people to have a compassionate and understanding heart that reconciles with others. Philippians 4 verse 5 says, "Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near." We need a gentle spirit, one that is sweet and reasonable rather than one that stays angry and grows hateful.

Fourth, love knows how to forgive. The Bible says in Ephesians 4:31 to 32, "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you." Knowing that God had enough love to forgive us of our many sins, we should be willing to forgive others of their few sins. God's Word simply says in 1 Peter 4 and verse 8 that, "love covers a multitude of sins." Yes love learns to put offenses behind and to go on. 1 Corinthians 13:7 to 8 says that, "Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails." It never quits.

Whether you can forgive another is not some small matter; it actually affects your salvation. God expects you to forgive, if you wish to be forgiven. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 6:14 to 15, "For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions." You know people who want to experience the grace of God have obligations to show mercy to others. James 2 and verse 13 says, "For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment." Oh if we wish to be forgiven, we must learn to forgive.

When God forgives, He no longer holds our sins and trespasses against us. Sometimes we confuse forgiving with forgetting. Now you can forgive a sin, even if you can't forget it. Forgiveness is not forgetting; it is forgetting against, yes. 2 Corinthians 5:19 says that, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them." Now, our sins are a matter of history. God's grace touches our hearts, because He dealt with our sins rather than because He ignored or denied them. Because Jesus suffered for our sins, God doesn't count them against us. The fact of our sins has not disappeared, but the guilt for our sin has. God has forgiven us.

Fifth, love will tell you what you need to hear not what you want to hear. God's Word says in Proverbs 27 and verse 6, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy." Honesty, even when it hurts, from a true friend is far more loving than half-truths and flattery from someone who means to do you harm. God out of love has told us in Scripture what we needed to know. Let's respond to that love. The devil will tell you what you want to hear, whether it's true or not; but the Lord will tell you what you need to hear to bless your life, even if it hurts your feelings for a short time.

The very best thing you can do for a friend is to introduce him or her to Jesus Christ and the gospel. The gospel is good news of salvation and hope. People need to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. They need to know that He died on the cross for their sins, He was buried, and He rose again on the third day. They need to know about His loving grace and His call for them to repent and to be baptized. They need to know about becoming a Christian and how that's a lifelong commitment of love and service. There's no retirement from faith in Christ. We stay faithful even to death.

Sixth, God's love means serving others. 1 Peter 4 and verse 10 says, "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace:" Whatever talent we possess we should use it to serve the Lord and to bless the lives of others. Galatians 6:10 says, "So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith." Loving God with all our strength means giving ourselves to the cause of Christ and to the service of others. 1 John 4:19 simply explains: "We love, because He first loved us."

Now God demands a higher standard from those who call upon His name. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 5:43 to 48, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, (Jesus talking) love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

Christians love those who are hard to love, because God loved us when we were hard to love. God loves all people, because that is who God is. He gives His sun and rain to all, even when they don't deserve it. Loving an enemy is mature, it's a mature love that Christians pursue, because they are

children of God. They do more than others because God has been gracious to them. They care for strangers, because God loved them when they were strangers and aliens to the promises of God. The blood of Christ was shed for every person! And by the grace of God, Jesus tasted death for everyone.

2 Corinthians presents a marvelous example of the way that Christ changes hearts to love people. People that we don't know. There was a famine taking place among the Jews in Judea in the first century, but Greeks and Romans in Macedonia were willing to send monetary relief to help the Jews in the churches of Judea. People they'd never met. The reaction in Macedonia is amazing.

2 Corinthians 8:1 to 5 tells the story: "Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord, begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God." When we first give ourselves to the Lord, it's a pleasure to bless others.

Faith and love act together. James 2:14 to 18 says, "What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,' and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. But someone may well say, 'You have faith and I have works'; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works."

Why do we talk about loving God with all our strength? Well without heartfelt love for God and for others we are empty beings. Without love, our lives are filled with loneliness and sadness. Without love we failed our purpose, have no value, and we make no gains. We need the love of Jesus in our hearts and we must show it in our lives.

Let's pray together. Father we pray that the love that we have for You and that we have for others may be shown in the way that we live and the way that we treat others. Father we're thankful for the love You have given us in our forgiveness. Help us Father to be faithful servants and to do Your will. In Jesus name, Amen.

God's Word teaches us how to love one another. Jesus said in John 13:34 to 5, "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." The Lord wants us to love each other the same way that He loves us. Well how has He loved us? Jesus said in John 15:13, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends." The Lord Jesus loved us with a great love; He died for us.

When we love God with all our strength and love others the way Jesus loved us, people see Christ living in us. Loving others like Jesus did identifies us as Christians. Let me ask you, are you kind? Do you forgive others or hold grudges? Are you compassionate or do you have a closed heart? Do you seek peace or do you get even? Do you have a sweet spirit of reasonableness or are you constantly condemning others? Do you try to resolve conflicts or do you gossip and slander other people? Do you love like Jesus?

When the love of Jesus is in your heart, you'll change your life and follow Him. Now to become a Christian you must believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and be willing to confess Him in the presence of others. You must cease doing evil and follow Christ in repentance. And you must be baptized into Christ, immersed in water for the forgiveness of your sins. This is the pattern established

for all time in Acts 2:38 and 9. Baptism into Christ is when our sins are washed away. And I pray you'll become a Christian today.

We hope our study, All of Your Strength, has caused you to want to love God with all your strength. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy, send your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Well on our website is a map of churches in your area. There's also SEARCH that appears on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry". Now we also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you draw close to God.

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