

Love is Love
or *God* is Love?

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“What enters our mind when we think about God is the most important thing about us.”

“The essence of idolatry is the entertainment of thoughts about God that are unworthy of Him.”

A. W. Tozer

Our Dangerous Confusion

- * 2015 Obergefell v. Hodges:
 - * 5-4 SCOTUS decision guaranteeing right to SSM
 - * #lovewins - 6hrs – 6.2million tweets
- * Taylor Swift: “And you can want who you want... Boys and boys and girls and girls.” #lovewins #FINALLY

Our Dangerous Confusion

- * Coca-Cola: It's now official. Love is love is love.
#LoveWins
- * DNC chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz: “Love is love, and love is now the law.”
- * #loveislove: Love knows no gender, labels, boundaries



Ban on same-sex couples roils small Christian college:

“This isn’t something sinful, God,” one student said, leading the emotional gathering. “This is something beautiful. I pray that we continue to live out the mission of being difference-makers, God, that this world be a place of equality, God.”

“There is hardly any human action...which does not originate in some very general idea men have conceived of the Deity, of his relation to mankind, of the nature of their own souls, and of their duties to their fellow-creatures.”

-Alexis de Tocqueville

“Ignorance of God – ignorance both of his ways and of the practice of communion with him – lies at the root of much of the church’s weakness today.”

—J.I. Packer

Two Views on Sexuality

BIBLICAL GOD	NO/FALSE GOD
grand design / plan	no design / plan
divine norms	human norms
divine authority	human authority
sexuality as intended	sexuality as desired
human accountability	human autonomy

Our Unexamined Assumptions

- * Assumption 1: “No boundaries can be placed on love. Rather, love establishes all the boundaries.”
- * Assumption 2: “Love and authority have nothing to do with one another. Authority restrains. Love frees. Authority exploits. Love empowers. Authority steals life. Love saves life.”

IX 9Marks

The Church and the
**SURPRISING
OFFENSE**
of God's Love

*Reintroducing the Doctrines of
Church Membership and Discipline*

Foreword by Mark Dever

Jonathan Leeman

The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God

D. A. Carson

Dangerous Theological Assumptions

- * “God is Love” – means He gives blanket acceptance, benign affirmation
- * D.A. Carson: “the love of God in our culture has been purged of anything the culture finds uncomfortable. The love of God has been sanitized, democratized, and above all sentimentalized.”

Q. What is the chief end of man?

**Until we properly answer this question
we cannot properly understand love.**

OUTLINE

- * **God's Love is Essential**
- * God's Love is Salvific
- * God's Love is Offensive

God is Indivisibly One

If God is infinite	and God is love	God's love is infinite
If God is eternal	and God is love	God's love is eternal
If God is unchanging	and God is love	God's love is unchanging
if God is holy	and God is love	God's love is holy
If God's purposes are doxological	and God is love	God's love is doxological

God's Love is Essential:

God **is** Love

- * A. W. Tozer: “because God is self-existent, His love had no beginning; because He is eternal, His love can have no end; because He is infinite, it has no limit; because He is holy, it is the quintessence of all spotless purity; because He is immense, His love is an incomprehensibly vast, bottomless, shoreless sea before which we kneel in joyful silence and from which the loftiest eloquence retreats confused and abashed.”

God's Love is Essential:

- * **God's love not reducible to a word study (agape)**
 - * text of Scripture more complicated
 - * LXX 2 Sam. 13 – Amnon “loved” Tamar (agape, phileo)
 - * John 3:35, 5:20 – Father loves the Son (agape, phileo)
 - * Demas “agapa-oed” this present world (1 John 2:15)
- * **God's love revealed throughout story of redemption**

God's Love in Christ

- * Heb 1:3 - He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature
- * Eph. 1:5 - In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ
- * John 15:9 - As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.
- * 2 Cor. 5:19 - God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself

OUTLINE

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- * **God's Love is Salvific**
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God's Love is Salvific:

- * **In General: God loves all humanity**

- * John 3:16 – God so loved the world that he gave his only Son

- * 1 Jn. 4:10 - In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (2:2)

- * Luke 19:10 - For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

God's Love is Salvific:

- * **God yearns, calls, beckons, woos all humanity:**
- * Why will you die, O house of Israel? For **I have no pleasure in the death of anyone**, declares the Lord God; so turn, and live.
- * Turn to me and be saved, **all the ends of the earth!** For I am God, and there is no other. (Isa. 45:22)
- * 1 Tim 2:4 - who **desires all men to be saved** and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (2 Pet. 3:9)

God's Love is Salvific:

- * **In Particular: He pours His loving affection on His elect children**
- * Deut. 10:14-15 - Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it. Yet **the Lord set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples**, as you are this day.

God's Love is Salvific:

- * Husbands, love your wives, **as Christ loved the church** and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her, that he might present her to himself in splendor
- * Rom. 5:5 - God's love has been poured into **our** hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to **us**.

OUTLINE

- * God's Love is Essential
- * God's Love is Salvific
- * **God's Love is Offensive**

God's Love is Offensive:

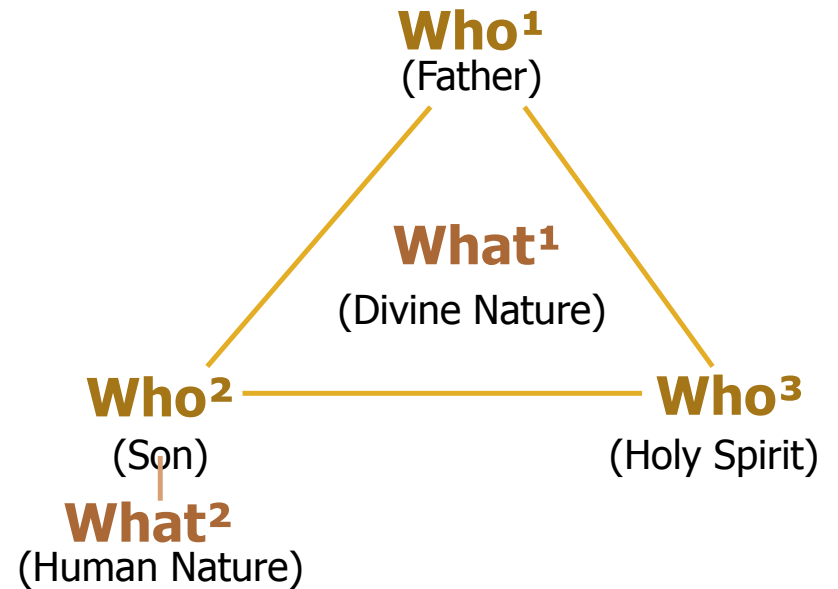
- * **TWO CAUSES OF OFFENSE**

- * God-centered **affections**

- * God-centered goals

The Trinity

- * God is three Persons
- * Each Person is fully God
- * There is one God



God Loves Himself

- * Matt. 3:17 – This is My Beloved Son (Spirt as dove)
- * Jn 5:20 - **the Father loves the Son** and shows him all that he himself is doing.
- * Jn 14:31 - I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that **I love the Father**
- * John 1:1 - **In the beginning** was the Word, and the Word was **with** God, and the Word was God.
- * Father...**you loved me before the foundation of the world.** (John 17:24)

Salvation brings us into loving fellowship with an eternally loving Trinitarian God

- * John 14:23 - Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and **we will come to him and make our home with him.**
- * Gal. 4:6 - Because you are sons, God has sent forth the **Spirit** of His **Son** into our hearts, crying, “Abba! **Father!**”
- * Rom 5:5 - the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

God's Love is Offensive:

- * **TWO CAUSES OF OFFENSE**

- * God-centered affections

- * God-centered **goals**

A Doxological Love

- * In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ...*to the praise of his glorious grace*
- * Jesus is coming *to be glorified* in his saints *and be marveled* at among all who believe (2 Thess. 1:10)

God and Man

- * Mankind was ***created by God*** (value)
- * Mankind was ***created for God*** (purpose)
- * Mankind is ***responsible to God*** (accountability)

Man's Fall

- * Gen. 6:11-13 (Noah's generation)
- * Now the earth was **corrupt** in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw the earth, and behold, it was **corrupt**, for all flesh had **corrupted** their way on the earth. And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will **destroy** them with the earth."

God-centered Goals



Two loves have made two cities. Love of self to the despising of God has made the City of the World; love of God to the despising of self has made the City of God. Let a man consult himself to see what he loves, and he will find which city he belongs to.

St. Augustine, City of God

God-centered Goals

* 2 Cor. 5:14-15

* For the **love** of Christ **controls** us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might **no longer live for themselves but for him** who for their sake died and was raised.

God-centered Goals

* Phil. 1:9-11

* it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

God-centered Goals

- * that your love may abound more and more, with **knowledge** and all discernment
 - * knowledge of God, Christ (nature, moral character)
 - * knowledge of gospel, God's will, Christian life

God-centered Goals

- * that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all **discernment**
 - * ability to make proper moral decisions
 - * Love detached from moral insight, restraint is why culture embraces vacuous slogans: “love is love”

God-centered Goals

* Heb. 12:6-7, 10

* **The Lord disciplines the one he loves**, and chastises every son whom he receives. It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ...He disciplines us for our good, **that we may share his holiness.**

God is Indivisibly One

metaphysical	moral	relational
self-existent	good	Creator
eternal	loving	Sovereign
infinite	just	Providence
immaterial	holy	Transcendent
omniscient	righteousness	Immanent
omnipotent	truthful	
omnipresent	perfect	

God-centered Goals

* so that you may **approve what is excellent**

* act of testing for purpose of approving

* evaluating metals, coins, candidates for a degree

* not simply choosing between good and evil, but approving greatest good

God-centered Goals

- * and so be **pure and blameless for the day of Christ**
 - * eschatology “lends direction and seriousness to ethics”
 - * we cannot claim to have the Father’s love for one another if we do not will the good for one another that God eternally wills

God-centered Goals

- * filled with the fruit of **righteousness** that comes through Jesus Christ, **to the glory and praise of God.**
 - * ethical righteousness; noble acts and kindly deeds
 - * we should want for one another a harvest of conduct pleasing to God

Q. What is the chief end of man?

A. Man's chief end is to glorify
God, and to enjoy him forever.

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—**that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge,** that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

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