

## I. Introduction.

**John 3:15-17** | <sup>15</sup> that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. <sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

- A. It's important to simply remember the truth of God's love, which is an essential attribute of God as well as the primary motivation behind His plan of human redemption. Simply put, God deeply loves you, me and everyone else in the entire world.
- B. Let's begin with a quote by **A. W. Tozer**: "...if we would know God and for other's sake tell what we know, we must try to speak of His love. All Christians have tried, but none has ever done it very well. I can no more do justice to that awesome and wonder-filled theme than a child can grasp a star. Still, by reaching toward the star the child may call attention to it and even indicate the direction one must look to see it. So, as I stretch my heart toward the high, shining love of God, someone who has not before known about it may be encouraged to look up and have hope." (*The Knowledge of the Holy*)
- C. The love of God is the truest beginning point of knowing Him as He is—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Of all the attributes of God known and unknown, they all flow from this one transcendent reality—His love.
  - It's important to note that God's love is not like our cultural notion of love. The modern western self-gratifying, self-serving, self-exalting type of "love" is merely repackaged narcissism. Sadly, much of our world does not know real love and has not experienced it. Jesus warned that "the love of many will grow cold" as we approach His return (Matthew 24:12).
  - I meet with people regularly who share heartbreaking, devastating things. One gentleman recently shared with me about his broken upbringing. He said He never felt love His entire life; He did not know what it was and never felt it. Until he supernaturally met Christ a short while ago, he had no idea. Now that he feels God's love, he has deep joy.

## II. 7 Important Truths About God's Love.

1. **God is love.** Story: when I first became a Christian, I did not like talking/hearing about God's love. It seemed too soft for me. I just wanted to do powerful things and read about mighty moves of God and heal the sick, cast out devils and raise the dead—or die trying. As a young believer, I had a vision to be really intense like John the Baptist. I actually told people I would be just like him and would not get married. I had no clue as a young believer how much I didn't know. I was completely ignorant of what the Bible said and who God was. Now, twenty years later, with a bit more understanding, I see more clearly that the subject of love is the thematic golden thread throughout the Scriptures as well as the foremost concept that gives proper definition to who God actually is in His heart of hearts: **He is love.**
2. **God is a loving Person.** Although it may seem to be an understatement to say God is a loving Person, here's what I mean: we must first brush aside the notion that God is like a personal force, a nebulous concept, a special sense or a good feeling. God is a literal Person with a supernatural body—both flesh and Spirit (John 4:24). (Jesus will have a physical body for all eternity as will we.) God has two arms, two legs, two eyes, etc.—just like us. We are made in His image and bear His likeness in our physical body. As believers, His Spirit indwells us. When we stand before God at the judgment seat after we die, we will see the same Man that is written of in the gospels.
3. **Love is the preeminent virtue according to Scripture.** The apostle John said that "God is love" (1 John 4:8, 16). Paul wrote numerous descriptions of love in 1 Corinthians 13 and then stated it was the greatest of spiritual realities—even above faith and hope (1 Corinthians 13:13). All 16 of the qualities of love mentioned in this chapter describe what God is like and how He treats people (including you). It's not just a list of what you should be like, but what God is like and what He will always be like.) The truly spiritual man or woman is first and foremost a loving person. (Galatians 5:22—"...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy...")
4. **Love is the ultimate aim of our obedience to God.** Jesus affirmed that the highest-ranking commandment is to love God (Matthew 22:37-40). The first and greatest commandment is to love God, which then empowers us to love others. (Study John 14-15.)
5. **Love is most practically expressed generously and self-sacrificially.** God appeared in human flesh in Christ Jesus. What Jesus lived like shows us what the Creator God is really like. His sacrificial death shows us what real love is. The Father gave His only Son; Jesus gave His only life. They loved so they gave all that they could for the sake of others. (See Romans 8:32)

6. **Love is extremely patient.** It's longsuffering. The Bible describes God as slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness. Jesus described the Father like the father of the prodigal son. He's patient for many years, celebrates the repentant prodigal and reasons with the really pious. (See Nehemiah 9.) God is not nervously nit-picking your every error like the worst coach or boss we had once. He working on one or two main things in your heart in each season to make you more like Jesus, which is more loving.
7. **Love is what God feels toward you.** God really loves you. He has feelings for you. Like a perfect Father, like a best Friend, like a loving Brother, God loves you. The more you prayerfully study this concept in the Bible, and God's love becomes real to you, the more your thoughts and emotions will change. Your perspective on the Christian life and your current role in life will sharpen.

*Help me improve my notes! The first person to point out a legitimate mistake/typo on this document (during service) gets \$1.*

### Greater Peoria House of Prayer Announcements for January 18, 2018

1. **Welcome** to the Greater Peoria House of Prayer... we're glad you're here and blessed to be worshipping God with you! Be sure to pick up the **free** materials at the back table in the prayer room or the desk near the front of the downstairs fellowship area, which includes teaching notes, stickers, pens, prayer cards and more. **Daily schedule:** We have morning prayer right here in this room seven days a week from 7-8 a.m. Monday - Friday and 8-9 a.m. Saturday and Sunday. We have afternoon prayer four days a week: Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from 11:30 a.m. - noon. We have evening prayer with live worship from 6-8 p.m. Monday - Saturday. On Friday's, we have an extra prayer gathering from 10-11:30 a.m. Our **Friday Encounter Night** is from 6-9 p.m. and is our main corporate gathering each Friday evening featuring live worship and a teaching to inspire love for Jesus and prayer.
2. **UPCOMING EVENT:** Young men's discipleship is tomorrow night, Saturday, January 19, 6-8 p.m.
3. **Prayer room ministry opportunities:** If you are interested in leading or ministering during a live worship set by singing, playing an instrument, prayer leading or behind the sound board, please contact us at info@gphop.org. We'd love to have you serve on one of our teams! **Team ministry opportunities:** If you feel the Lord has gifted you in the prophetic (or would like to grow in this gifting) and would consider helping on a prophetic team, send an email to info@gphop.org. Contact Mandy Kistner at mandy@gphop.org if you would like to schedule a future healing ministry appointment or help out on the healing team.
4. **Missions:** Please keep the following missionaries we support in prayer as well as be sensitive to their financial needs: **Ashley Bucknam** and **Alicia Wright** (ACTS School, Colorado Springs, CO); **Tim and Blair Fraim** (Florianopolis House of Prayer; Florianopolis, Brazil); **Eric and Erin Simmons** (Minnesota House of Prayer Network; Twin Cities, MN); **Amy Dirks** and **Phil Kellenberger** (International House of Prayer, Kansas City, MO). Also keep friends **Tyler and Sarah Cook** and family in prayer who lead a HOP in Ottawa, IL.
5. **Social media:** Follow us on Facebook (Greater Peoria House of Prayer - GPHOP), Twitter (@GPHOPPrayer), Instagram (@GPHOPPrayer), Vimeo and YouTube for regular updates and inspiration. Use these social media sites to get the word out, share pictures, quotes you heard, etc. Contact Derek at derek@gphop.org if you're interested in helping with GPHOP's social media.
6. **Refuge ministry:** There are several groups who use our facility for their ministry purposes. Please keep the following in prayer: Christian Business Men's Connection Bible studies (Thursday mornings), Kinisi 424 senior worship leader meetings (monthly/as needed), kingdom business prayer groups (as needed), prophetic dance classes (as needed) and Sunday church gatherings (as needed).
7. We provide **free wifi** to everyone here! The password for the **GPHOP** router is on the chalkboard in the downstairs fellowship area. You can also connect to either the CableWiFi or xfinitywifi routers if you have a personal Comcast account.
8. **Prayer requests:** If you would like our community to pray for something specific, please submit it to info@gphop.org.
9. **Giving:** If you have been blessed by the GPHOP and would like sow financially into the ministry, we would be more than blessed. You can give in cash, but if you would like to give to GPHOP with a check, please make it out to "Greater Peoria House of Prayer" or "GPHOP"—your gift is tax deductible. Thank you for your generosity! It's helping make day and night prayer with worship possible in central Illinois. You can place your gift in the Saturday night offering during the 7 p.m. teaching or drop it in either of the two black donation boxes. Donations can also be mailed to our physical address at 117 East Washington Street, East Peoria, IL 61611. Donors can also use PayPal or our website (gphop.org/donate) to give electronically.

*Thank you for helping to **keep this prayer room sacred** by ensuring conversations with others are brief and kindly reminding others to do the same. There is a large fellowship area downstairs if you would like to talk at length.*