



## Approaching God

### Begin your time with an opening prayer

Take a moment to quiet your heart and ask God to help you experience his presence today. Ask Him to free you from any distractions as you begin to read and meditate on today's passages.

### Today's Theme: God is Loving

God is self-giving, showing mercy and grace toward all creation, especially toward His people.

## Bible Reading, Study & Meditation - Slowly Read the Following Passages

**Start with Engaging the Text: Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words.**

### Hosea 11:1-9

**1** "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. **2** But the more they were called, the more they went away from me. They sacrificed to the Baals and they burned incense to images. **3** It was I who taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by the arms; but they did not realize it was I who healed them. **4** I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love. To them I was like one who lifts a little child to the cheek, and I bent down to feed them. **5** "Will they not return to Egypt and will not Assyria rule over them because they refuse to repent? **6** A sword will flash in their cities; it will devour their false prophets and put an end to their plans. **7** My people are determined to turn from me. Even though they call me God Most High, I will by no means exalt them. **8** "How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I treat you like Admah? How can I make you like Zeboyim? My heart is changed within me; all my compassion is aroused. **9** I will not carry out my fierce anger, nor will I devastate Ephraim again. For I am God, and not a man— the Holy One among you. I will not come against their cities.

### Ephesians 3:16-19

**16** I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, **17** so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, **18** may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,

**19** and to know this love that surpasses knowledge— that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

### 1 John 4:7-21

**8** Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. **9** This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. **10** This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. **11** Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. **12** No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. **13** This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. **14** And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. **15** If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. **16** And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. **17** This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. **18** There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. **19** We love because he first loved us. **20** Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. **21** And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

## Meditation - GOD IS LOVING

### Read the short essay from He Reads Truth

“God is love” (1 John 4:16). He is always loving—even when He disciplines, even when He judges. It’s who He is. And this divine love is infinite, meaning it is bigger than we could ever imagine, even if we had a thousand lifetimes with which to ponder it. If we were to taste a full dose of God’s love, it would knock us, quite literally, out of our socks. We would be unable to stand in the presence of such passion.

We were made for God’s love, so it shouldn’t surprise us that the enemy of God’s people chooses to sow doubt at this critical place in our souls. Concerning the forbidden fruit in the garden, the serpent told Eve, “God knows that when you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:5). In other words, we believe the lie that God is somehow holding out on us, that He does not really love us. It worked with Adam and Eve, and the devil has been using this same tactic ever since.

We tend to filter what the Bible tells us about the love of God through our experience of love with people who, like us, love imperfectly. The Bible gives us a definition of love in 1 John, imploring us to not define love on our own terms, through our own broken experiences, but instead to see love from heaven’s perspective: “Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins” (1 John 4:10).

Everything God does is loving. But His love is most clearly seen on the cross, because God’s love is sacrificial. He gives Himself for the good of those whom He loves. His love for us is true. There are holes in the hands of our Savior to prove it (John 20:27). Those holes are evidence of God’s love, declaring loudly that He does not withhold a single good thing from us, no matter what the enemy may try to tell us.

*(from the website: [hereadstruth.com](http://hereadstruth.com))*

## Daily Reflection Questions

1. What 1 or 2 verses of today’s scripture passages *most* stood out to you? What was significant for you in those verses?
2. How would you briefly summarize what it means that “God is Loving” in your own words?
3. In what areas of your life right now do you most need to believe and trust in this particular attribute of God? How might your life be different if you were able to trust and truly believe in God’s love?

## Close in Prayer:

- What can I **REJOICE IN** as a result of today’s study?
- What do I need to **REPENT OF** as a result of today’s study?
- What do I want to **REQUEST FROM** God today?