



Day One: YOU are Chosen, Wanted and Loved

There is no greater love story than the story the Bible tells us of the love of Jesus for His church. And as part of His church, it must thrill us to read it! However, there's more to this love story than we've experienced in the past. For Jesus not only wants us to believe that He loves the church, He also wants us to KNOW (with a heart knowledge that can never be shaken) that He is absolutely head over heels in love with every single one of us as individuals. YOU are chosen, wanted and loved by Jesus!

After spending the past five weeks looking at Jesus' awesome plan for the body of Christ to come into oneness so that we can fulfil Christ's commission to us to disciple the nations, it might seem as though we are suddenly shifting focus to a separate topic – that we are each chosen, wanted and loved. But as you'll see, it's not strange at all and these two things are absolutely connected.

Let's look again at the scriptures we've become very familiar with – this most significant prayer that Jesus prayed for us as a body before going to the cross, and which reveals to us that our perfect unity (oneness) is the missing key to the world believing in Him.

John 17:21 – 23 (NLT) *I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one – as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me. I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me.*

We've no doubt read the final sentence before, but we haven't dwelled on it together until now. Yet there is huge significance in the final words of these scriptures: *May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me.*

So where did that statement come from? The entire time, Jesus is praying about unity and oneness and His glory being demonstrated in the body of



Christ so that the world will believe and His commission to us will be fulfilled... and then suddenly He's talking about the world knowing that God loves us as much as He loves Jesus. What's that all about? Did Jesus lose focus and just tack that part on as an afterthought?

Absolutely not! Jesus never wasted a word or said something He didn't mean to say during the entire time He walked on planet earth. The words of Jesus were always specific, precise and in actuality were the words of God flowing through Him because as Jesus said, He could do nothing unless He first saw the Father do it.

There is a very specific reason why this sentence was spoken in combination with the prayer that Jesus was praying for the oneness of the body of Christ. There is in fact a huge connection between us knowing that we are intensely loved by Him, and the experiencing of our perfect unity as a body.

Soak Time

Re-read the title of this devotional: YOU are chosen, wanted and loved. How does this statement make you feel? Do you believe it?



Day Two: Only the Loved Can Truly Love

Quite simply, until we are established in God's love for us, nothing else comes. The very foundation of everything in the Kingdom of God is love because God is love. The Bible also tells us that our faith works by love. Until we are truly established in His love for us, we won't experience the blessing, vision or promises He has for us because we will not know who we really are.

➤ **See:** 1 John 4:8; Galatians 5:6

Without receiving His love we also are unable to truly love each other. After all, we cannot give what we don't have and it's only when Jesus' love is flowing through us – because we have received it from Him in a way that is real and tangible – that we are able to share His love with those around us.

Experiencing His love for us is where our sense of identity and security comes from. Without this, we'll always be apt to fall into a sense of inferiority, rejection or offense when we see others being blessed or when we see the treasure within them on display. We won't realise that we have our own treasure to display. This is a major roadblock to our oneness with each other.

The most significant thing though, is that until we are secure in who we are in His love, we will never be able to come into a sense of oneness with Him. We'll always see ourselves as separate, and we'll always be questioning ourselves and our relationship with Him. If we can't come into oneness with Him, we definitely will not experience it with one another! But if we will truly receive His individual love for us, there's no limit to what we can experience!

The foundation of our revelation of oneness, our sense of self, or of any promise we ever receive is our revelation of how much we are loved!

REVELATION OF HIS LOVE = IDENTITY = ONENESS

Our receiving of His love for us is what brings us into our true sense of identity as one with Him and therefore His promises. When we know we are loved and we know who we are in Him and what we are called to do, we are not vying



and jostling for position. Rather, we feel settled and confident in our identity and we know our place (where we fit in His body – what we’re called to and what we’re not called to). Isn’t that the biggest struggle for most people? Figuring out who we are and what we’re on the planet for? Once we’ve got that settled and we see the value in our own lives because of the love of Jesus for us, it will not be difficult to see the value in the lives on those around us and to realise that they have something we need and we have something they need. But while we still feel ‘needy’, we won’t believe that we have anything to give.

If we will receive His love for us, oh there is no stopping us as individuals and as a body! The ones who will receive and believe His love become part of this vineyard of lovers He is raising up, His army of lovers who are going to function as one, establish His covenant on the earth and see the nations transformed!

➤ **See:** Song of Songs 6:10 & 7:12 (TPT)

Soak Time

Do you have a strong sense of your identity as being one with Him?



Day Three: Unshakeable Love

Of course, if I asked you, “Does God love you?”, you’d probably answer, “Of course He does!” And for most Christians we know in our heads that this is true. However, there is a difference between mental assent and heart revelation.

God wants us to know that we know that we know how much He loves us! He wants the heart revelation of this love to be so much a part of us that nothing in the world can ever make us question it. That’s when we truly know it - when it has become part of our sense of identity and who we are.

Sometimes we fool ourselves into thinking that our faith is operating in a higher level than it really is. “Yes, I know God loves me!” we may say emphatically. But what happens when something in our lives doesn’t work out just how we planned or we feel (mistakenly) that God has somehow let us down? Do we ask the same question I many times found myself asking from the depths of my disappointment, “God, don’t you love me?”

And what about when we see someone else get blessed – maybe even with the very thing we were believing for? Do we feel like God’s promises are for everyone... everyone that is, except for us? “God, I know you can do it, but *will* you do it *for me?*”

Or perhaps we find ourselves in a situation where we haven’t acted in a way we can feel good about. Do we sit there in our own condemnation and find ourselves either slowly or suddenly withdrawing and distancing ourselves from God? Or do we run all the faster to Him?

Do we know that we know that we know that we know that He loves us? Is it so much a part of us that nobody can ever take it from us?

God wants us to be so secure in His love for us that nothing in the world can even make us question it! He wants us to get to the point where such a thought is totally off limits! In fact, He wants us to be the type of people who will say, “If something good is going to happen, it’s going to happen for ME!”



Of course, we may wonder if this kind of mindset is being vain and reign ourselves in under the pretence of humility. Yet humility is not thinking badly of ourselves. Jesus certainly didn't think badly of Himself. What made Him humble was His willingness to exalt God's thoughts and opinions above His own. He asks us to do exactly the same thing.

What are we going to hold higher in our lives? Our opinions about ourselves and our imperfections and weaknesses? Or are we going to hold His thoughts towards us as our highest authority? It all sounds very 'humble' when we put ourselves down, but in reality that is not being humble at all – it is exalting our opinions above His! Humility is agreeing with God and He says that He loves us and that He is no respecter of persons and that what He will do for one He will do for another because we are all 'Whosoever' and WE get to choose.

I choose to believe that God loves ME!

Soak Time

Ask yourself: Do I know that I know that I know that God loves me? Is this so much a part of my sense of identity that nothing can take this away from me?

Have you experienced situations in the past which made you ask, "God, don't you love me?", "God I know you can do it but *will* you do it *for me*?", or caused you to withdraw from Him? Why do you think this has happened?



Day Four: Known and Believed

If we're still feeling concerned that it's not being humble to dwell on how much God loves us individually, let's take a look at yet another perspective. Do you think we'd be doing OK if we patterned ourselves after some of the early disciples? Do you know that in the book of John, John is described as 'the disciple whom Jesus loved'?

Q: Who wrote the book of John?

John wrote the book of John! So he actually called himself, 'The disciple whom Jesus loved'! Was John some sort of prideful, conceited individual? Was he saying that Jesus loved him more than the other disciples?

Absolutely not! He was simply a man who had received a revelation! He knew the nature of Jesus was to love them all. But what he was saying was that he saw HIMSELF as loved by Jesus.

It wasn't about how Jesus saw him. It was about his own sense of identity. Jesus' feelings and thoughts towards each and every one of us are consistent and unchanging. It's only our thoughts towards Jesus and towards ourselves which can be fickle.

Q: Can we say that? I am the disciple whom Jesus loves!

It can initially feel quite uncomfortable to believe and to say things like, "Jesus loves me!" or even, "Jesus is head over heels in love with me!" But it's all part of the process of truly receiving the revelation of His love for us. And if we haven't walked fully in this before, it's not going to happen overnight. We will need to plant God's Word in our heart and spend time with Him in order to know His love and to experience it for ourselves.

John 4:16 (NKJV) ...We have known and believed the love God has for us.

Q: Could I ever truly know I'm loved by someone if I've never experienced or felt their love?



If you are married, think about your husband as he pursued you. If he hadn't shown you that he loved you by telling you, spending time with you, bringing you gifts or otherwise allowing you to experience his love, he would have been no different to you than any man walking down the street. Love is to be known and believed. It is to be experienced, and it's no different with God's love.

He wants you to receive, experience, know and believe the love of God. He wants you to hear the voice of Jesus in your heart telling you that you are loved. He wants it to be so experiential and so meaningful that nothing in this world could ever convince you anything other than the fact that you are loved by Him!

This is a journey which is without parallel... and we are all invited to walk in it.

Soak Time

Say the following phrases out loud:

I am the disciple that Jesus loves.

God loves me.

Jesus is head over heels in love with me.

I have known and believed the love that God has for me.

How do these phrases make you feel? Do you really believe them?



Day Five: A Journey of Experience

We all have to receive, experience, know and believe the love God has for us, Jesus has for us, and Holy Spirit has for us. It's a journey and a process, and it starts with your decision to believe the Word of God above how you feel and what you hear.

Q: So what you have decided?

You might find it interesting (or sad) to know that not everyone will support you on this journey of truly receiving the love of God into your heart. Sometimes it's because others have never walked that journey themselves and don't understand what it entails. Other times it's because every time someone goes further in their walk with Christ, it can make those surrounding them feel threatened or needing to justify where they are at with their own walk.

So the best rule of thumb is simply this: Look to the Word, believe what it says, and ignore everything else that does not line up with God's Word.

In my own journey, I was starting to discover in the Word about how much God loves me. I could see it everywhere I looked and I knew it was an important foundation for my life. In fact, I had felt while spending time with Holy Spirit, that He had directed me to spend my study time for an entire year establishing in my heart God's individual love for me. He had shown me that I couldn't go further in any area of life without this foundation in place, and so I had started to dig into the Word and was amazed at what I discovered!

It was, quite simply, almost too good to be true! I started to really meditate on these scriptures about His love for us. I put them in a separate document, in various translations, and then I also personalised the scriptures (for example, putting "me" in where it might have said "us"), and used them as confessions. My mind had departed so far from what God said about me in His Word that I had to renew my mind and re-write these truths on my heart.



Proverbs 3:3 (NIV) *Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.*

➤ **See:** Romans 12:2; Proverbs 7:3

I would spend time in prayer and praise with the Lord over these scriptures, praising Him, confessing these Words over myself, and seeing myself in these scriptures being loved by Him. However, a funny thing started to happen! I began to feel His Presence – literally feel Him with me, in me and surrounding me. It was tangible and beautiful. I revelled in these times, and started to expect to experience His Presence more and more. But I had a real internal struggle, as the ‘wise counsel’ of others brought me ‘back to reality.’

I had been told many times before by people in the church, not to look for the ‘goosebumps’. Like there was something wrong with seeking to actually feel and experience His love! Understandably, this counsel was also given from the perspective that we need to choose to believe that He is with us (and actually in us) even if we don’t ‘feel’ anything. However, this counsel had also led me to wonder if it was actually wrong for me to seek His felt Presence. It was as like I’d been told, ‘Don’t expect His Presence and don’t expect to feel Him.’ However it didn’t sit well with me. ‘That would be like someone telling me not to expect to feel the touch of my husband though, wouldn’t it?’ It didn’t seem to line up.

The more I read the Word, the more I realised that God wants us to experience Him. He wants us to feel Him. He wants His love to be a ‘knowing’ in our hearts – not just a decision we make – because we have experienced it and nothing can take that away from us. It’s only when we experience His love that He becomes heart knowledge to us, not intellectual knowledge.

So I decided that I would just believe God’s Word. He obviously wanted me to experience His Presence, so I began to seek Him more and more. And guess what?!?! He showed up more and more! And each time I knew with a deeper and deeper measure that He did indeed love ME!



Soak Time

What untruths have you heard which have made receiving God's love difficult?

Have experienced and felt God's love for you? If so, how has this impacted you?
