

**LET GOD LOVE YOU!**  
**DEUTERONOMY 7:7-11**  
 SERMON

We live in a performance driven society. Have you been watching the Winter Olympics? Talk about pressure to compete! A good friend of mine who swam with me in high school and college and who was in our wedding has a daughter on the Olympic ski team. Her name is Brita Sigourney and she competes in the Freestyle ski, halfpipe event. Brita won a silver medal at the recent X games in Aspen, Colorado. We have a picture of Brita and I believe she competes today in the qualifying portion of her competition.

If we perform well on the ski slopes or in the swimming pool or on the soccer field or on the basketball court we receive praise from our coach and teammates. If we excel in a piano or vocal performance we receive accolades from appreciative listeners. If we beat the Patriots in the Super Bowl we become a folk hero. If we exceed our sales quota at work, we might win a bonus.

The Lord wants us to strive for excellence in everything we do, whether work or sports, music, school work, etc. The Apostle Paul wrote, **“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord, and not for men”**. **Colossians 3:23**

Though God wants us to strive for excellence in every sphere of life, to do our very best in whatever we do, we must realize and accept the fact that *God loves us in spite of our performance or success!* Hear it loud and clear: **God loves us unconditionally! God loves you unconditionally!** Let that Biblical truth sink into your conscience for a moment. **God loves me unconditionally** with an everlasting love, no strings attached! **God loves me unconditionally!**

God loves us whether we get “A’s in our classes at school or whether we’ve never received an “A” in any class. God loves us whether we’re good looking or homely. God loves us if we have lots of friends or very few friends. God loves us if we have an extroverted personality or an introverted personality. God loves us if we can sing or can’t sing at all. God loves Brita Sigourney if she wins the gold medal in the halfpipe or if she fails to qualify. God loves us if we can tell a joke or always forget the punch line! **God loves us, he loves you and me unconditionally!!** Don’t ever forget that truth!

Do you let God love you? Do you ever take time to simply bask in His great love for you? Do you ever pause and consider the fact that He created you; God knows you by name, how many hairs are on your head, God knows your innermost thoughts and yet still loves you with a deep, abiding, passionate, everlasting love??

Some people believe they must *earn* God’s love. Perhaps you believe you must *earn* God’s love. Where does this misguided belief come from, that we must *earn* God’s love?? It could come from parents who only gave us conditional love. Some people were raised by parents who gave them love with a great big, fat “IF”. IF we did our chores, IF we made the honor roll, IF we stayed out of trouble, IF we excelled in sports, IF we mastered the piano then and only then would our parents love us. Were you raised by parents who communicated love with a big “IF”? They offered you only conditional love? If you did, you might have trouble accepting God’s unconditional and everlasting love.

Good news! **God loves us, He love you and me with an unconditional, everlasting love!** There simply are no “ifs” in God’s love for us. God loves you without any strings attached! You don’t have to succeed, win, or perform for God! Hear this Biblical truth loud and clear: *God loves us for who you are, not for what you do*. Let me say it again: *God loves you for who you are not what you do!*

This unconditional love also applies to serving God. God wants us to use our spiritual gifts and serve Him. We will have to give an account one day of our stewardship of the gifts God has given us. But one of my seminary professors expressed it this way: ***we are God's children before we are his servants.*** In other words, God loves us as His children first. God loves us with an everlasting love and it is not conditioned by how well we serve him.

This unconditional and everlasting love of God has some further dimensions we will explore as we look at our text. The first two dimensions concern God's love for us and the third and final dimension concerns our love for God. Before we investigate this teaching on love let me review the essential purpose of the book of Deuteronomy.

The book of Deuteronomy, the fifth book of the Old Testament, expounds the implications of the agreement at Mt Sinai between God and His people. Remember, Moses received the Ten Commandments at Mt. Sinai. The purpose of Deuteronomy was to maintain the loyalty of the Israelites to God which they professed at Mt. Sinai when the Ten Commandments and its associated laws were ratified. We observe in our text:

### **1. God's unconditional love chooses!**

**Vs.7-8** The phrase "**set his love on you**" means to "bind oneself to, hang upon a person out of love". God bound himself to us in love! In addition to setting his affection on us, he chose us. The author makes it clear that God didn't choose his people due to their great numbers for as a matter of fact they were the "**fewest of all peoples**". ***God chose the Jews simply because he loved them!***

Imagine being in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. You love recess and playing basketball. One day you're standing out on the playground. Some older kids in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade decide to choose up teams for a basketball game. You quickly scan the kids lined up to play: they're much bigger, faster and stronger than you. As the two captains prepare to choose the teams, you feel anxious, worried, and apprehensive. You know one of the captains, an older friend who lives up the street from you. But a scary thought suddenly runs through your mind: "what if I'm the last one chosen? How embarrassing!" Just as these troubling thoughts shoot through your mind, the selection process begins. The captains choose several older kids and then you hear your name called out by the kid who lives up the street from you. Surprise, elation and joy flood through you. You ask the captain why he chose you and he responds, "because I know you".

God chose you and me to be on his team, to be his own people. Why did he choose us? Look in **vs.8** "**But it is because the Lord loves you...**". God chose us to be his own people, to be on his team, to belong to him because he loves us!

When did God choose us? In the New Testament the Apostle Paul explains, "**Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him**". **Ephesians 1:4**

God chose us to be his people before he created the world! Isn't that amazing? God set his sights on you and me, He chose us before He created the world!!

God chose us before the creation of the world because He loves us. ***But why does God love us?*** Most of us realize that we aren't any better than anyone else. God chose us in spite of our failures and sin. We really don't know the answer to the question of why God loves us. The question as to why God loves us remains elusive, a real mystery! Theologians refer to God's choice of us as "unconditional election". God chose us, He elected us unconditionally, without condition! We also observe in Deuteronomy that:

## **2. God keeps His promises!**

**Vs. 8b-9** God kept his promises to the children of Israel. Who were the “**fathers**” referred to in the text? They were patriarchs such as Abraham, Issac and Jacob. God promised He would make them the father of a great nation; he promised the patriarchs that he would give them the land of Canaan and that all peoples of the earth would be blessed through them. God fulfilled his promise to those great patriarchs!

Turn back in your Bible to **Exodus 3:7-10**. In this passage, God called Moses in the burning bush. He promised Moses that he would deliver the Jews from their bondage and slavery in Egypt. “**Then the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their suffering and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canannites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites. And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel out of Egypt.**”

Please note: *God faithfully kept the promises he made generations earlier to Abraham, Issac and Jacob and God kept the promise made to Moses about delivering his people from bondage and oppression in Egypt.*

Biblical history records numerous examples of God keeping His promises. Besides promises kept to the patriarchs and Moses, God promised David in 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel that David’s kingdom would endure forever. Various Old Testament prophets told of a Messiah who would come and save the people from their sins. God kept His promise as He sent Jesus, the eternal Son of God to earth in the lineage of David. Once again, Jesus died on a cross and rose from the grave so that those who place their trust and faith in him could experience eternal life. Once again, God faithfully kept his promise!

What should we do with these fulfilled promises? *We should remember them but also claim them and appropriate them for our lives and situations.*

When Crowfoot, the great chief of the Blackfoot confederacy in southern Alberta gave the Canadian Pacific railroad permission to cross the Blackfoot land from Medicine Hat to Calgary, the railroad gave him a lifetime railroad pass as a gesture of gratitude. Crowfoot placed the railroad pass in a leather case and carried it around his neck for the rest of his life. However, the railroad has no record of Crowfoot ever using his pass!

Many times Christians treat God’s promises in a similar way. We might underline his promises in our Bibles or hang them in plaques in our rooms at home, but when troubles arise in our lives we forget to claim these very real promises of God. We forget to appropriate them for our own lives!

Is there a promise of God that you need to claim today? God gave us his promises in love. In love, he keeps those very same promises! God keeps every one of the promises that He made to us. What promise of God do you need to claim or appropriate today? Perhaps a loved one has some health problems. Claim **Psalm 46:1: “God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble”**.

Let that promise sink into your conscience and soul, let it provide peace and comfort, emotional and spiritual relief. Are you having financial difficulty? Claim **Phil 4:19: “and my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus”**.

Perhaps you're worried about a child or grandchild? Claim **Proverbs 22:6: "Train a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not turn from it"**. By faith we can appropriate this promise for those children difficult to raise!

We've explored two dimensions of God's unconditional love for us: His election of us and his faithfully kept promises. This last dimension of love concerns *our* response to God:

### **3. Our love obeys voluntarily!**

**Vs.11-** The Biblical author in Deuteronomy provides a summary thought. The author has described God's great love and faithfulness in vs.7-9. In vs.10 he spells out the consequences of hatred and enmity towards God. God will exercise justice towards those who hate him. Then we read this concluding statement. Since God loves us and keeps his promises we must resolve to **"do the commandment and the statutes and rules"** the author has explained previously.

*God wants us to respond to his love and faithfulness through voluntary obedience. This means that we obey God not because we have to but because we want to!* We follow God's laws and decrees in scripture not because we have to but because we want to.

For two summers I worked as a lifeguard and swim instructor at Mt. Hermon Christian Conference Center in California. I had a wonderful boss named Kahleen Robinson. Kahleen's job title was "Waterfront Director". She loved the children and the families she worked with at Mt Hermon. During our first weeks working together I grew to respect and love Kahleen as a sister in Christ and as my boss. We had a small group of lifeguards and swim instructors and we began everyday with devotions and prayer at poolside before the children arrived for swim lessons. One trait I appreciated about Kahleen was her willingness to perform any task. She never expected us to do jobs that she wouldn't do herself. After some time I found myself doing jobs Kahleen asked me to do not because she was my boss and had told me to do the job but rather because I loved and respected her. Have you ever worked for someone like that?

God wants us to obey him in similar fashion. He wants us to follow his decrees, laws and commands because we love and respect him. Our love for God should feature voluntary obedience!

Which of God's commands need to be obeyed in your life? Maybe you're having trouble loving a neighbor or a boss and that command, "love your neighbor as yourself" plagues you. Or you're having some struggles with your spouse and the command "marriage should be honored by all" really challenges you. Maybe you're a teenager and you really want to do something with a friend that your Mom or Dad have said "no" to. You're having trouble with the command to "obey your parents in everything for this pleases the Lord" Col 3:20. ***We should obey God's laws voluntarily because we love God!***

God loves you and me unconditionally! God loves us without condition! Accept his great love for you. Get rid of the performance issues! As I close today, I want to give you an opportunity to invite Jesus into your life. Let God love you! He is the One who loves you so much He died for you and forgave your sins. Inviting Jesus into our lives involves ***admitting*** that we have sinned and need his gift of salvation, ***believing*** that Christ died for our sins and ***committing*** to following Him as our Lord for the rest of our lives. If you want to take this step, pray the prayer with me printed in your bulletins. I will pray it out loud and you can pray it silently. After the prayer, simply raise your hand and indicate that you have made this commitment. If you want to recommit your life to Christ today you can do that as well. Let us pray.