

Advent Love
Psalm 103
Study Guide

1. Read Psalm 103:1-2 & 19-22. What do you think it means to "*bless the Lord*"? Can you do this whole-heartedly right now? Why or why not. Discuss.
2. Read Psalm 103:3-5. Discuss the way God loves you personally- forgiveness, healing, redemption and satisfaction. How have you experienced these things in your life? How will you experience these in the future?
3. Read Psalm 103:6-7. Discuss the ways God loves those who are oppressed or less fortunate. Give examples of how you think God does this.
4. Read Psalm 103:8-10. Notice that God doesn't give us what we deserve. Is God not just? Does He simply ignore our sins? Discuss what happened on the cross of Christ regarding our sin. Discuss the concepts: mercy, grace, slow to anger, abundant in steadfast love. Which of these are you most thankful for?
5. Read Psalm 103:11-18. Recount the benefits for those who "*fear*" God, those who respect Him enough to give Him their attention. How can you rearrange certain things in your life to regularly, "*bless the Lord*" and give Him honor? Discuss.
6. If you can get access, listen to the song, 10,000 Reasons by Matt Redman. Then spend some time in prayer, "blessing the Lord" for all His benefits.

Message Slides

The Greatest Virtue

Matthew 22:37-40

³⁷ ... 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.

Agape- The highest level of love. A love that transcends; that serves regardless of circumstances; not based on condition but on principle.

Love is from God

1 John 4:8b-9a

"God is love. In this the love of God was manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him."

Bless the Lord (v.1-2)

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!

² Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits,

A. Internal Love (v.3-5)

³ who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases,

⁴ who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,

⁵ who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Nouwen:

As long as I keep running about asking: "Do you love me? Do you really love me? I give all power to the voices of the world and put myself in bondage because the world is filled with "ifs". The world says, "Yes, I love you if you are good-looking, intelligent, and wealthy. I love you if you have a good education, a good job, and good connections. I love you if you produce much, sell much, and buy much." There are endless "ifs" hidden in the world's love. These "ifs" enslave me, since it is impossible to respond adequately to all of them. The world's love is and always will be conditional. ...when I forget that voice of the first unconditional love, then ...[other voices] pull me into the "distant country".

B. External Love (v.6-7)

⁶ The Lord works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed.

⁷ He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel.

C. Depth of Love (v.8-10)

⁸The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

⁹He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever.

¹⁰He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.

D. Height of Love (v.11-18)

¹¹For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;

¹²as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

¹³As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.

¹⁴For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust.

¹⁵As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field;

¹⁶for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more.

D. Height of Love (v.11-18)

¹⁷But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children,

¹⁸to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments.

Bless the Lord (v.19-22)

¹⁹The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all.

²⁰Bless the Lord, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, obeying the voice of his word!

²¹Bless the Lord, all his hosts, his ministers, who do his will!

²²Bless the Lord, all his works, in all places of his dominion. Bless the Lord, O my soul!

Story of Love

Luke 2:16

“So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.”