



# GOD'S LOVE

## PREVIEW

We sometimes forget that God loves us and wants us. We know that, of course, but I don't think we try to wrap our heads around that often enough. Think about it: the God of the whole universe loves you! He is the most powerful, most awesome person to have ever existed, and He not only took the time to make you, but He cares for you and loves you. He yearns to know you and is sad if you don't choose to know Him. In fact, the Bible states God is jealous over you. Can you believe that!? I don't know about you, but that kind of love dumbfounds me.

## PRAISE

- Open up with discussion on some of the largest foods to have ever been created. Here is a link to an article that mentions some: <https://www.ranker.com/list/biggest-foods-in-the-world/chef-jen>
- You can research specific foods and show pictures. Discuss the hugeness of the foods and the work that must have gone into making them.

## PARABLE

Why would someone take so much time creating such huge portions of food? To you it may seem like they're wasting their time. But think about this: how much time do you spend on the things you love? Whether you play sports, read novels, create art, play video games, or watch your favorite TV shows, you love certain things and devote a lot of time to them. You care about these things and might even become defensive if people don't appreciate them the way you do.

## PRESENT

Read Zechariah 1:14.

This verse has always interested me because time and time again the Bible references God as being a jealous God. (See also Exodus 20:5; Deuteronomy 4:23–24; 5:9; 32:16; Joshua 24:19; Psalm 78:58.) "Jealous" is certainly not an adjective I would want to use to describe God, but He Himself said He was a jealous God. All of the above passages mention the reason for God's jealousy: the people forgot their covenant to worship the One true God and turned to the worship of idols.

Think about how this applies to us: God is jealous of things that steal our time, our attention, our admiration, and our love from Him. It is humbling and makes me awestruck to think that the God of the universe gets jealous over what I love and how I spend my time. It makes me not only appreciate God's love for me, but also the effect it has on Him when I don't love Him the same way.

## PRACTICE

Read Deuteronomy 32:16.

This verse discusses God's feelings toward Israel during their time in the wilderness. After God brought Israel out of Egypt, they soon began to complain about a number of things. Worst of all, they began to worship other gods. They fell into a troubling cycle: sin, forgiveness, following after God, and then complaining and sinning again. In this verse, God reveals that Israel sparked jealousy within Him when they turned to other gods. But despite this, God time and time again took the Israelites back. He never let them down or turned completely away from them.

God has that same love for us. We can't do anything bad enough that He won't forgive. We can't go anywhere that God's love can't reach us. We mentioned that He is the God of the universe. That means He can reach us in any way, at any time, at any place, and under any circumstances. And He will. You're that important to Him. In fact, you're the most important thing to Him. It's one of the mysteries of godliness—that we can all be the most important to Him.

God knows you, and He loves you. He knows everything you've ever done, everything you've ever said, and everything in your future. He knows the good, the bad, and the ugly. Yet He still loves you. That is comforting to know. This is also a great demonstration of how we should treat others. It's a beautiful cycle of receiving His love and showing His love to others.

## PRAY

God, it's hard to wrap my head around the fact that You care for me and love me. You show me compassion even when I hurt others or make You sad by devoting too much time to things that will make You jealous. You made me exactly as I am supposed to be, and You know everything there is to know about me. Thank You for simply being the loving God that You are. Help me to always remember Your grace and love no matter what happens to me or what I happen to do. And help me to treat others with godly compassion and kindness. I love You, just as You love me. In Jesus' name, amen.



## PLUS

As an object lesson, draw a picture (making it really bad). Without telling your group that you are the creator of the drawing, ask them their opinions and give some feedback yourself. I know it sounds weird, but encourage some criticisms of the drawing.

Now tell the group that you are the one who drew it. Take note of their reactions and ask how they feel knowing that their comments were heard by the one who made the drawing. Also let them know you drew the picture that way on purpose. If you had been making your best effort, you would have cared more about their negative criticism.

Explain: Just as I heard you criticize my drawing God hears what you say about yourself. How do you think it makes Him feel when He hears the negative things you say about yourself? After all, He took the time to create you with the precision, imagination, and talent of a master painter. When you say bad things about someone He loves so greatly, you are criticizing His handiwork.