



I Know God Loves Me But



By Bill Yeary

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I Know God Loves Me But...

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Have you struggled with any of these types of questions?

- I know that God loves me, but why is it that I have a hard time being intimate and feeling close to Him?
- Why is it that I am afraid of giving myself completely to the Lord?
- I know God has forgiven me, but why do I still feel like there is something wrong that keeps me from Him?
- Why is it that I never seem to feel good enough to receive God's love?
- A lot of times I feel like I need to do something spiritual like read my Bible so that God will answer my prayers.
- A thought that continually troubles me is that if I do something wrong God is going to punish me.

Everyone has struggled with receiving God's love, but some never seem to grow past it. Some live years feeling crippled and unable to go on with the Lord even though they try to be a strong Christian. And what is the result of not being able to receive the all forgiving love of God into our heart? We never seem to find that closeness or intimacy needed to go on with the Lord. And thus, we continually have a hard time with forgiveness and loving others unconditionally. You can't give what you do not have.

As Christians we acknowledge the truth that God gave His Son to have us, that He accepts us just as we are, that He loves us unconditionally with all of His heart, and that He will never forsake us.

- *Romans 8:38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

The scripture is inclusive that there isn't much that can separate us from the Love of God. But the one thing not mentioned is yourself. So why would we not allow ourselves to embrace the love of God into our heart? Mostly it is because of shame and fear.

Shame is the dishonor that we feel and think about ourselves. If not resolved, it becomes an emotional and mental stronghold intertwined into the feelings and thought processes that we have about ourselves. When we identify with shame as the person we are, it defiles our spirit.

1. Shame is an identity that we accepted from the hands and/or words of another stemming from their anger or abuse.
2. Shame can come from not feeling loved, which is rejection.
3. Shame can come from "not being good enough" to live up to the expectations of the one(s) that we needed approval and affirmation from.
4. Shame can also be an identity we came into agreement with because of the sinful things we have done and also where we didn't meet our own self-imposed standards of acceptance.

Shame-based living is not forgiving and accepting yourself on God's terms. Living in shame as a Christian is a method to punish yourself. It is the subconscious thought process that if I debase myself, I will eventually be worthy enough to allow myself to accept His love. Shame becomes self-rejection and performance-based behavior. Shame is not affording yourself mercy and forgiveness which is basically a form of pride. When we won't let go of the old identity, we are still choosing our way over His. That is pride, and it keeps us from embracing the love of God into our hearts to be free.

Fear in relationships is not being able to trust because we have been hurt or betrayed. Many times these are the hurts we experienced as children. When childhood misunderstandings, feelings, and fearful thoughts are not

resolved, they can become adult issues. Fear of failure, fear of rejection, fear of being shamed, fear of success (responsibility), fear of being hurt, fear of being unwanted, fear of anger; all of these can become an iniquity or defilement in our subconscious, which is a stronghold in our spirit.

Everyone has to deal with fear growing up and even as adults we continually have to fight fear. But when it is debilitating or it always seems to be in our thoughts or nighttime dreams, that is trauma or terror.

- *Prov 3:25 Do not be afraid of sudden terror, nor of trouble from the wicked when it comes;*
- *Isa 54:14 In righteousness you shall be established; you shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near you.*

When we are afraid, we want to protect ourselves. We avoid making new friends, we limit our goals, and we avoid new experiences; but we also build walls to protect our heart. The walls we build are meant to keep the fearful things out, but the same walls also keep the love of God and the love of others from getting in. Thus, we become a captive due to fear and the walls we build block out love and our freedom. Our heart hides behind the walls and keeps out the love of God that casts out fear. And when fear-based trauma (terror) cripples our ability to trust God, that is called unbelief. And unbelief keeps us from embracing the love of God into our hearts to be free.

- *Rom 4:20 He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God,*
- *Heb 3:12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;*
- *Heb 3:19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.*

Living with crippling fear is living without grace. Grace is the ability to trust God with your heart. Grace is the courage to become vulnerable. Grace is the ability to believe and trust beyond your fears.

- *Eph 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,*

Shame and fear are partners, and they work together. Shame prompts fear to react, and fear responds to shame. Fear builds the walls for which shame hides. When these work together, our hearts cry out to be loved, but pride does not want to let go of shame, and unbelief will not let go of fear of being hurt. But affection requires trust.

- *Eph 3:17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love,*
- *Isa 54:4 “Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed; neither be disgraced, for you will not be put to shame; for you will forget the shame of your youth, and will not remember the reproach of your widowhood anymore.*

If you are unable to receive His love, you will look to others to love you and to meet your needs. Expectations give place to resentment when that person is not able to meet your needs. Resentment and disappointment lead to anger and eventually becomes bitterness. It is not that we shouldn't communicate our needs with our loved ones, but that we shouldn't put those expectations upon them. We should look to God first and foremost to meet our needs, and we need to be responsible to share our hearts with the ones that really do care for us.

To overcome we have to acknowledge the truth about ourselves, take responsibility for our part for allowing this to continue even if we were the victim, and then decide to come out of agreement with the lies and the feelings we have justified. This is called being honest with yourself, owning up, and deciding to walk in a new reality.

Heart sins are cleansed by heart confession and repentance (coming out of agreement). But we must also renew the spirit of our mind by abiding in

His love through meditating upon it. Meditation that cleanses is the continual mulling over of Biblical truths with our heart, and it is required if you want to wash out hurts, lies, and fears. Heart confession is the acknowledging of those hurts, lies, and fears and the impact it has had on our life. But confession is also the verbal declaring of Biblical truths. The verbal declaration is an act of faith made without feelings that needs to be repeated until believed. This type of confession is required to finish the process of renewing our mind and our heart to believe so we can receive. We must give ourselves permission to feel loved and believe that He desires to be personal and intimate.

His blood still speaks of better things than the blood of Abel, and we must approach the throne of grace with confidence and enter into the Holy of Holies and allow the words of His blood to enter into our heart. We must embrace mercy and grace and let them take the place of shame and fear. Humble yourself and ask Lord to fill your heart with His love and then choose to work the process with meditation and confession. This is true repentance.

- *James 5:16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.*
- *1John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
- *Heb 4:16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*
- *Heb 12:24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.*