

# Free and Simple

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[ 0 : 00 ] A pastor's reflections, free and simple. John 3.16. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

! 1 Corinthians 13.8. Love never fails. 1 John 4.7. Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God.

And everyone that loves is born of God and knoweth God. The reality and simplicity of God's love is often overlooked in our superficial age of effort-based acceptance.

In the world, love is not something given freely, but must be earned, and often only after great effort. However, that type of love cannot produce something enduring or of permanence.

Performance-based love can only last as long as the effort can be maintained. What is then produced is something that on the surface may look like love, but in reality is simply an effort to conform to a standard that will allow acceptance.

[ 1 : 16 ] That is not love. That is a life trapped in bondage to an ever-changing standard of acceptance. God's love, however, is quite different and quite simple.

God's love is acceptance given freely, not based on effort, but merit. God loves, accepts those who merit his love.

However, that merit does not come from effort, but from receiving. God deems anyone who will receive his love worthy of acceptance.

How does one receive the love of God? By believing in the person and purpose of his one-of-a-kind son, Jesus. John 3.18 He that believes on him is not condemned, but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. How simple it is to believe that God's love gives me merit through the sacrifice of his Son, but how difficult it is to accept that all of my efforts have no merit with God.

[ 2 : 30 ] The barrier to belief is not how hard it is to believe or receive God's love, but how hard it is to believe and receive the fact that my efforts do not merit anything with God.

Today, let's put all of our effort, not in seeking to please God, but in seeking to receive from God. His love accepts us.

Won't we accept his love? Father, thank you that we can freely receive your love, because Jesus paid the price for that love.

Thank you that our standing with you is not because of, or in spite of, our own efforts and merit.

Thank you that in Christ the effort is accomplished and the merit earned on our behalf.

Amen.