



The **Attributes of God**

Attributes of God

Week 7: God is Love

Pastor Emeritus Mark Petersburg - Reston Bible Church - Sunday, August 24, 2025

Your unfailing love, O LORD, is as vast as the heavens; your faithfulness reaches beyond the clouds. Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your justice like the ocean depths.... How precious is your unfailing love, O God! All humanity finds shelter in the shadow of your wings.... Pour out your unfailing love on those who love you...

Psalm 36:5-10 NLT

The profound depths of the lines moved us to preserve the words for future generations. Not until we had come to California did this urge find fulfillment, and that at a time when circumstances forced us to hard manual labor. One day, during short intervals of inattention to our work, we picked up a scrap of paper and added the first two stanzas and chorus to the existing third verse lines.

~ *Frederick Lehman*

**The love of God is greater far than tongue or
pen can ever tell,
It goes beyond the highest star and reaches
to the lowest hell,
The guilty pair, bowed down with care, God
gave His Son to win:
His erring child He reconciled and pardoned
from his sin.**

**When years of time shall pass away and
earthly thrones and kingdoms fall,
When men, who here refuse to pray, on rocks
and hills and mountains call,
God's love so sure shall still endure, all
measureless and strong:
Redeeming grace to Adam's race**

– the saints' and angels' song.

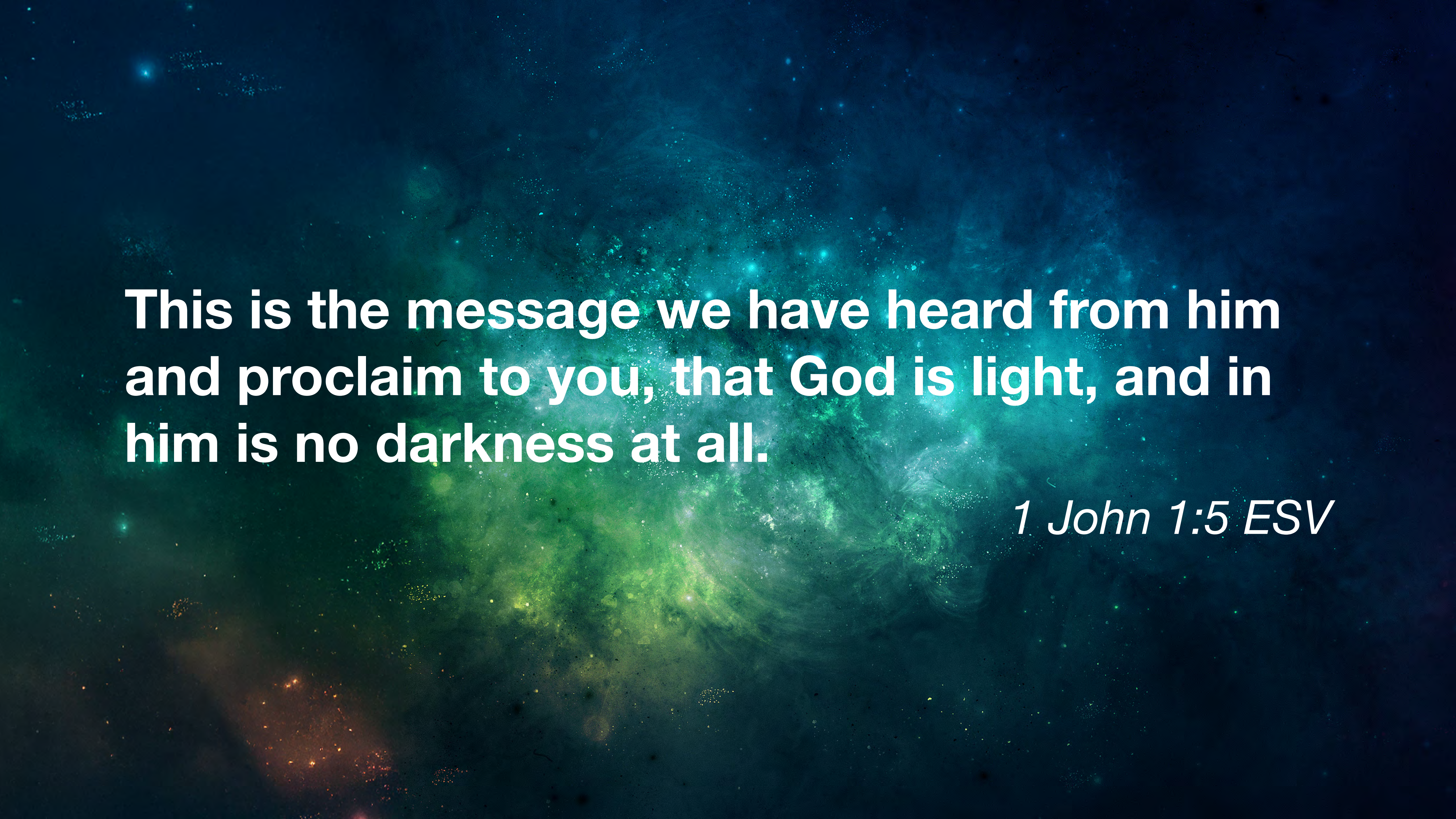
Could we with ink the ocean fill and were the
skies of parchment made,
Were ev'ry stalk on earth a quill and ev'ry man
a scribe by trade
To write the love of God above would drain
the ocean dry,
Nor could the scroll contain the whole tho
stretched from sky to sky.

– the saints' and angels' song.

1) God is love.

Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.... So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

1 John 4:8, 16 ESV



**This is the message we have heard from him
and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in
him is no darkness at all.**

1 John 1:5 ESV



**Love is something true of God,
but it is not God.**

~ A.W. Tozer

2) God's love is supremely demonstrated at the cross.

In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins....

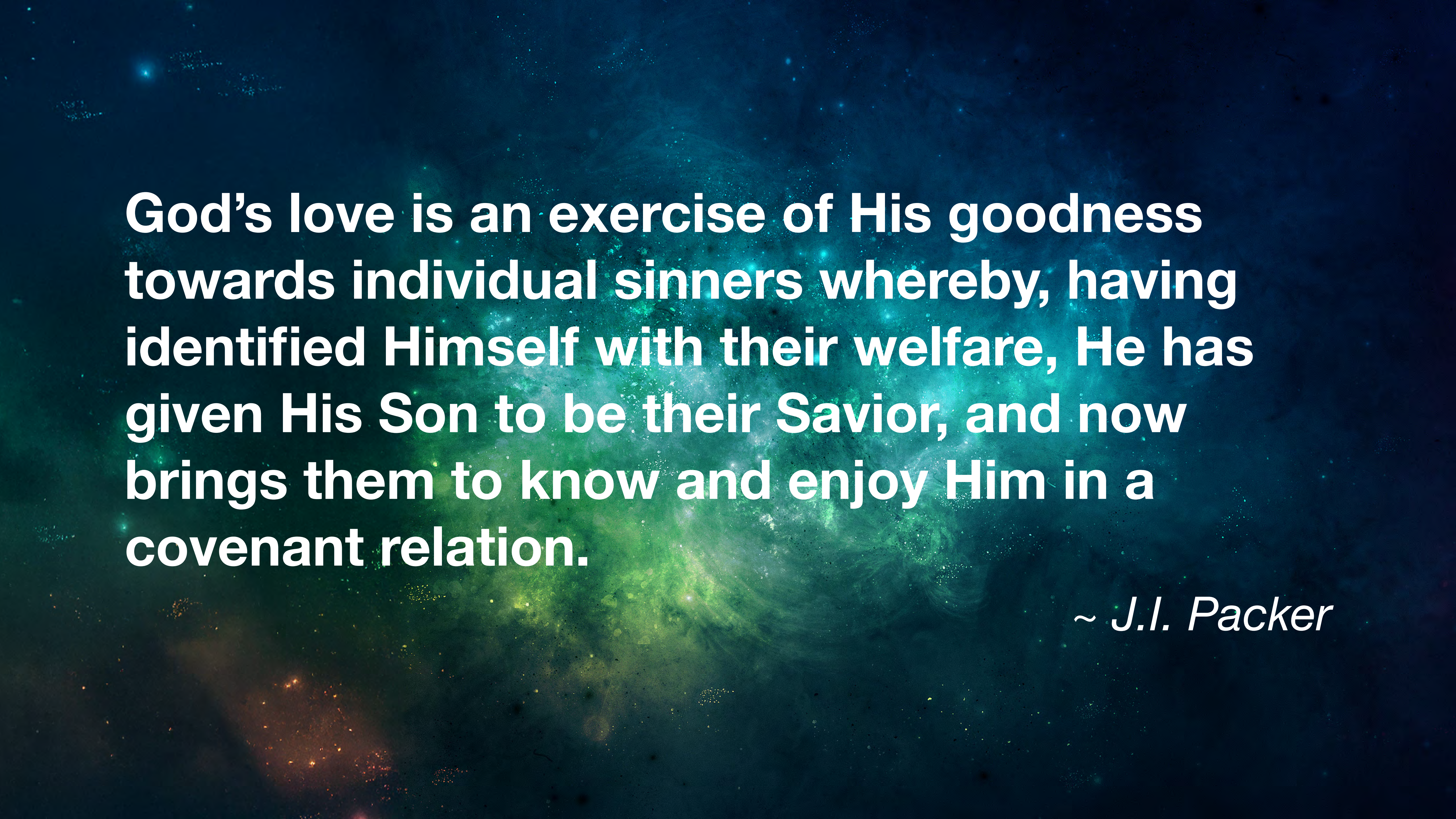
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1 John 4:9-10, 16

Without the cross, we could never have imagined the depth and seriousness of what it means to say that God is love. On the cross we see the great holiness of God's love, that the light of his pure love will destroy the darkness of sin and evil. On the cross we see the intensity and strength of his love that it is not an insipid thing at all, but majestically strong as it faces a death, battles evil and gives life.

~ Michael Reeves



God's love is an exercise of His goodness towards individual sinners whereby, having identified Himself with their welfare, He has given His Son to be their Savior, and now brings them to know and enjoy Him in a covenant relation.

~ J.I. Packer

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience – among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved – and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 2:1-7 ESV



**But God demonstrates his own love for us,
in that while we were still sinners, Christ
died for us.**

Romans 5:8 NASB

...only one act of pure love, unsullied by any taint of ulterior motive, has ever been performed in the history of the world, namely the self-giving of God in Christ on the cross for undeserving sinners. That is why, if we are looking for a definition of love, we should look not in a dictionary, but at Calvary.

~ *John Stott*

A cosmic background featuring a vibrant green nebula or galaxy core in the center, surrounded by dark space filled with distant stars and smaller, fainter nebulae. The colors transition from deep blues and blacks to bright greens and yellows near the central light source.

**There is therefore now no condemnation
for those who are in Christ Jesus.**

Romans 8:1 ESV

**Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?
Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution,
or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?
... For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor
angels nor rulers, nor things present nor
things to come, nor powers, nor height nor
depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be
able to separate us from the love of God in
Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Romans 8:31-39 ESV

**3) God manifests his love in our hearts
through the Holy Spirit.**

**Hope does not disappoint, because the love
of God has been poured out within our hearts
through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.**

Romans 5:5 NASB

The whole idea of ‘shed abroad,’ meaning ‘poured out,’ is one of profusion and of abundance and of overflowing – torrents. The implication of this should be obvious. If the love of God is thus shed abroad in our hearts, there can be no doubt about it, there is no uncertainty concerning it, because the whole idea is one of a superabundance and of a great profusion.

What Paul says here, therefore, is that the Holy Ghost in this way gives us an abundant assurance of God's love toward us. The Holy Ghost, then, makes us abundantly certain and assured of the love of God to us in Jesus Christ our Lord.

~ D. Martin Lloyd-Jones

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4) God's love calls forth an attitude of gratitude and a commitment to obedience.

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love... We love because he first loved us.

1 John 4:7-8, 19 ESV

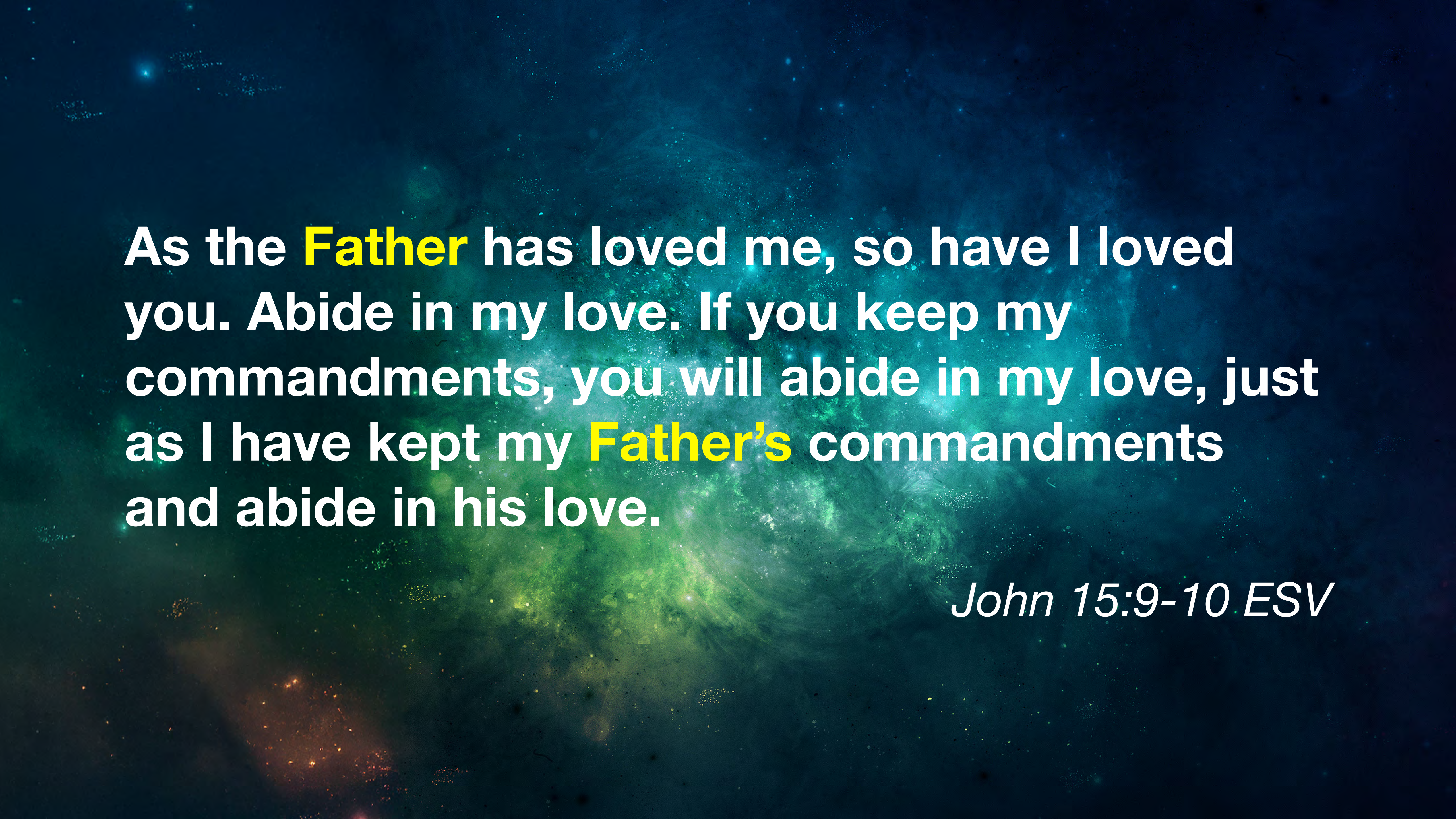
And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says “I know him” but doesn’t keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God has been perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

1 John 2:3-6 ESV



**For this is the love of God, that we keep his
commandments. And his commandments are
not burdensome.**

1 John 5:3 ESV



As the **Father** has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my **Father's** commandments and abide in his love.

John 15:9-10 ESV

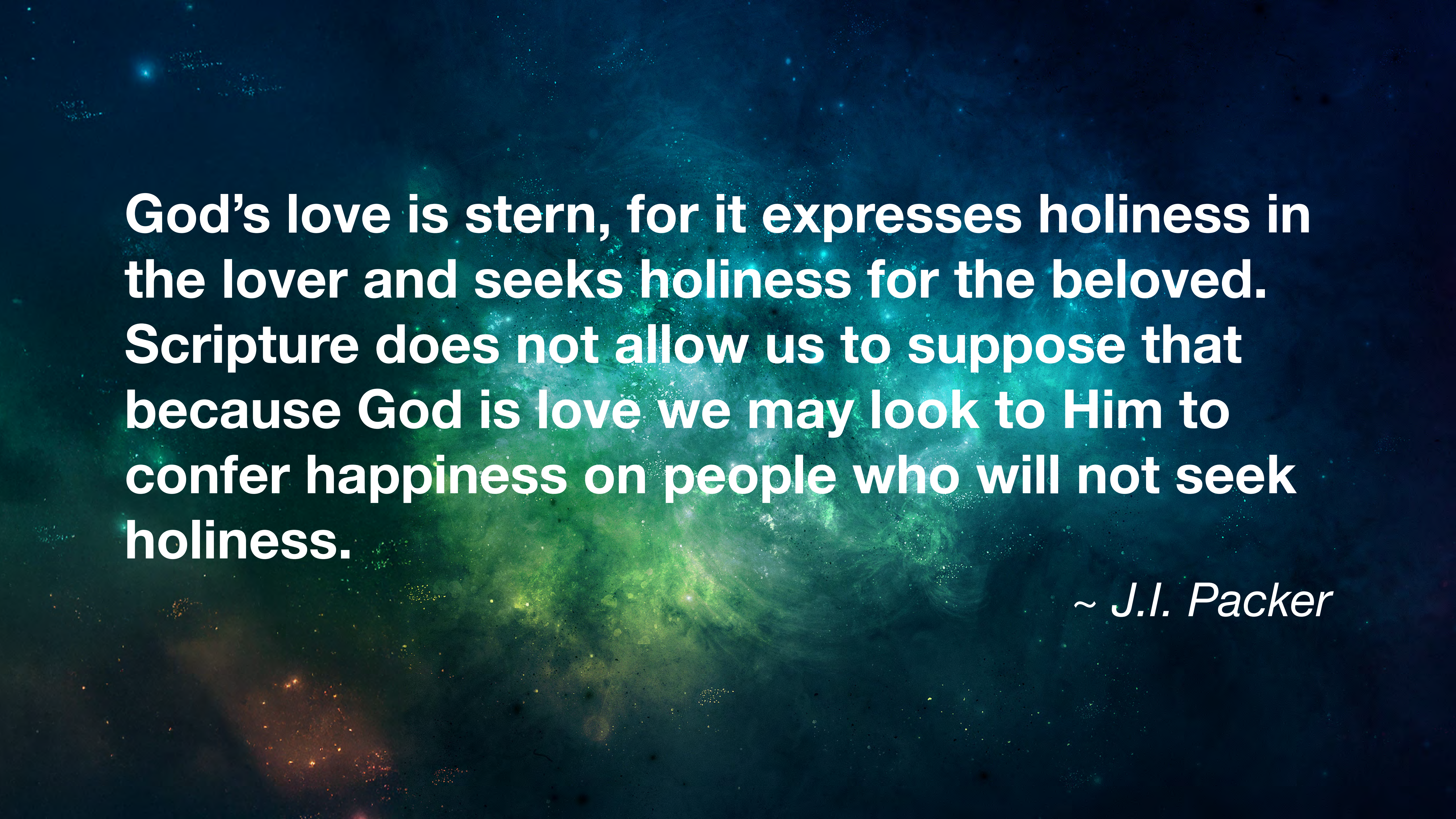
5) God's love is the reason he disciplines his children

And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." It is for discipline that you have to endure.

5) God's love is the reason he disciplines his children

God is treating you as sons. For what son is
there whom his father does not discipline.

Hebrews 12:5-7 ESV



God's love is stern, for it expresses holiness in the lover and seeks holiness for the beloved. Scripture does not allow us to suppose that because God is love we may look to Him to confer happiness on people who will not seek holiness.

~ *J.I. Packer*

To ask that God's love should be content with us as we are is to ask that God should cease to be God: because He is what He is, His love must, in the nature of things, be impeded and repelled by certain stains in our present character, and because he already loves us He must labour to make us lovable.

~ *C.S. Lewis*

The Goodness of God

... the goodness of God is that which disposes Him to be kind, cordial, benevolent, and full of good will toward men. He is tenderhearted and of quick sympathy, and His unfailing attitude toward all moral beings is open, frank and friendly. By his nature he is inclined to bestow blessedness and He takes holy pleasure in the happiness of His people.

~ *A.W. Tozer*

The Kindness of God

Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

Romans 2:4 ESV

The Mercy of God

But when the **goodness** and **loving kindness** of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own **mercy**, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his **grace** we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Titus 3:4-7 ESV

The Grace of God

Grace – getting what you don't deserve
Mercy – not getting what you do deserve

1) You matter to God! He really loves you.

**God loves us; not because we are loveable
but because He is love, not because He needs
to receive but because He delights to give.**

~ C.S. Lewis

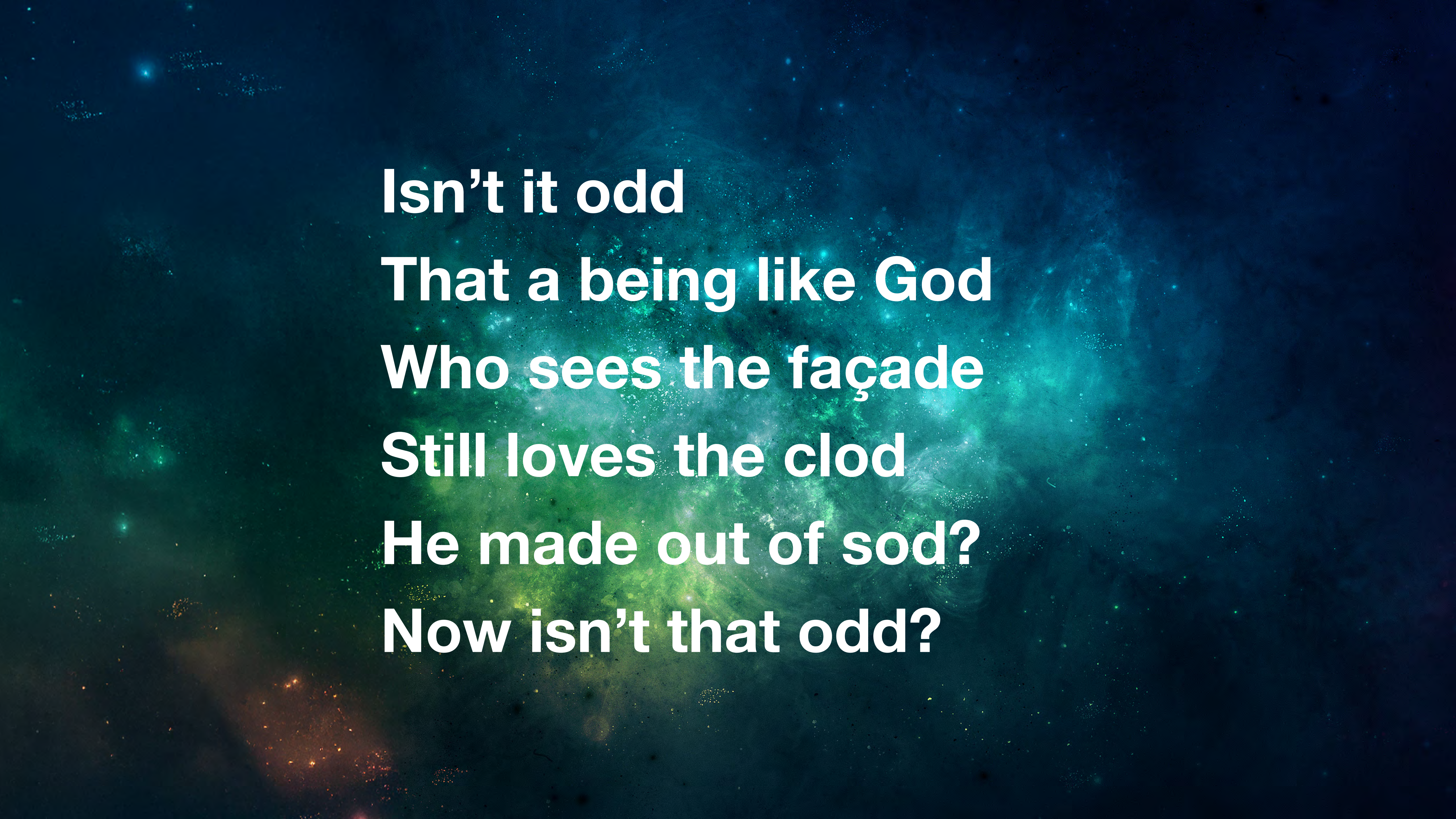
2) God's love changes the direction of our focus: work **from** God's love, not **towards** God's love.

Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so; Little ones to him belong; they are weak but he is strong. Yes, Jesus loves me; yes, Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus loves me; the Bible tells me so.

3) God's love does not operate apart from his holiness

The love of God, with arms extended on a cross, bars the way to hell. But if that love is ignored, rejected, and finally refused, there comes a time when love can only weep while man pushes past into the self-chosen alienation which Christ went to the cross to avert.

~ Michael Green



**Isn't it odd
That a being like God
Who sees the façade
Still loves the clod
He made out of sod?
Now isn't that odd?**