

# Why We Don't Receive

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Why do so many Christians fail to receive what God has promised? Have you ever wondered about that? We have all heard good sermons about such faith limiters as doubt, fear, unforgiveness, etc. You know the list, but I would like to share with you one faith limiter that is both common, and commonly unknown. Most – even mature – Christians will say that they are aware of this topic, but sadly, it resides in their head as child-like information, rather than in their heart as God-given revelation. There’s a huge difference!

Keep in mind as you read this article that truth does not make you free. The Bible says that the truth you know makes you free! Your Bible, for example is full of truth, but unless you pick it up, dust it off, and study it – it does you no good! Meditate on the information in this article and allow it to break any related resistance the devil has positioned against you.

Let me begin by saying that Christianity, above all else, is about love. We’ve all heard those sermons as well, but let me break this idea down a little bit. There are several dimensions of love. First we are to love God. Second we are to love one another and third we are to love ourselves. Yes, that’s right, we are to love ourselves.

***Mark 12:29-31 (KJV) - And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: 30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. ...***

That’s the first dimension (love God).

***... 31 And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour AS THYSELF. There is none other commandment greater than these.***

And there's the second (love one another), and the third – love ourselves! Did you notice the phrase “as thyself”. Let me ask you, “How are we doing with Jesus’ instructions here if we loath ourselves?” “If we loath ourselves, are we to then hate our neighbor also? Of course not.

***God's Word  
requires that  
we appreciate  
who we are in  
Christ.***

Some have taught that the Bible instructs us not to think highly of ourselves. The fact is, that's not what the scriptures say. What the Bible actually teaches is that we are not to think more highly than we ought to think:

***Romans 12:3 (KJV) - For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.***

As with all of God's wisdom, there are ditches on both sides of the righteous road. The truth is, the devil doesn't much care which ditch you get stuck in. He just wants you stuck. It is just as bad to think of yourself (God's precious creation) as a worthless “nobody” as it is to be prideful and arrogant.

All that is well and good, but there is another dimension of love that, while acknowledged, is not well understood by the modern Christian. That dimension is the fact that God loves us.

***John 3:16 (KJV) - For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.***

The average Christian would say, “I know that – I learned that in Sunday school as a child!” I want to

show you, however, how shallow this knowledge often is. But first let me explain that if our revelation of God's love towards us is weak, it can dramatically limit and even corrupt the other three dimensions of love. One of the reasons why modern Christians often don't have the same results as those described in the Book of Acts is that they fail to understand the importance of John's sentiments in the fourth chapter of his first epistle:

***1 John 4:9-11 (KJV) - In this was manifested the love of God TOWARD US, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.***

If we truly understood the magnitude of God's love toward us we would follow Him; we would obey Him; we would lay down our lives for others. Man's religion has distorted God's message. It has done that from the very beginning. Jesus addressed this in:

***Luke 11:42 (AMP) - But woe to you, Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and every [little] herb, but disregard and neglect justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done without leaving the others undone.***

***Revelation goes far beyond mere understanding.***

In other words, "You pay close attention to God's obvious, unchanging commandment to tithe ten percent of your income, but you are missing the big picture!" The

Pharisees were very big on following the rules (especially as they interpreted them), but they were constantly skipping over justice (inventing loopholes) and overlooking God's love for His people.

You might wonder how Jesus can be so critical of the Pharisees and in the same breath accuse them of not fully understanding the concept of love. Were the words of Jesus Luke 11:42 an expression of love? The answer is a resounding, "Yes!" Jesus could be critical of religious, mean spirited people because He was willing to die for them. (And He did!) Are you willing to die for those you are critical of?

Again, many of our problems in faith-walk are rooted in our failure to fully appreciate God's extraordinary love for us. Even our English language works against us. In the United States, it's common to hear:

*"I love bowling."*

*"I love rock music."*

*"I love the color purple"*

*"I love pizza."*

Sadly, you then hear people say, "And I love God!" But what does that really mean? And when the roles are reversed, what do we think it means when we hear that God loves us? I would like to think that God loves us a good deal more than He loves pizza!

Let's take a look at some other Bible words that might help us better envision God's love for us:

***Psalm 145:8-9 (KJV) - The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. 9 The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.***

The phrase "full of compassion" is a single

Hebrew word (Rachuwu) that means to be consumed with compassion. It describes someone who tends to show favor instead of deserved punishment; someone who is always striving for a forgiving relationship. It is the same word used in:

***Psalm 103:13 (KJV) - Like as a father pitieth [rachuwu] his children, so the LORD pitieth [rachuwu] them that fear him.***

The phrase “great mercy” found in Psalm 145:8 is the Hebrew word “Racham”. It means to have a great depth of compassion; a deep tender love. The Hebrews often used the word to mean “womb.”

Both of these words are what we call synonyms (different words meaning roughly the same thing), and each of them are translated in various places as both “compassion” and “mercy.” One of the important rules of Bible interpretation is the fact that when God repeats Himself, He is trying to draw our attention to something important. To help you appreciate the revelation available in Psalm 145:8-9, allow me to paraphrase it for you in more modern English:

***“God is compassionate, and is overflowing with compassion. He is slow to get angry and has immense, overwhelming compassion. The Lord is good and is tenderly and lovingly compassionate in everything He does!”***

Let’s apply this revelation to a specific Bible promise - the promise of healing. If you are in good health, don’t worry. You can apply the same principles to any other promise of God, whether it is freedom from poverty, deliverance from addictions, or restoration of relationships - whatever! You probably

learned this verse very early in your Christian journey:

***1 John 4:16 (KJV) - And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.***

It points to the fact that God doesn't just love, He is love. Love describes God's very essence, His core nature. Much of the modern church, however, doesn't focus all that much on God's love. They focus on God's power. They shout it from the housetops:

*"God is omnipresent." - He is everywhere.  
"God is omniscient." - He knows everything.  
"God is omnipotent." - He is all powerful.*

That's certainly all true, but my question for you is, when it comes to faith for healing, "SO WHAT!?" Before I confuse you, let me put it this way:

*"Pollution is EVERYWHERE."  
"Does that inspire your faith for healing?"  
"Harvard graduates are very INTELLIGENT."  
"Does that inspire your faith for healing?"  
"Mt. St. Helens volcano was very POWERFUL."  
"Did that inspire your faith for healing?"*

Be honest with yourself. Does God's power inspire your faith? To be honest, my faith for healing doesn't soar to new heights when someone says to me, "God is able!" Of course God is able, the Bible tells us so. But the Bible doesn't focus on that fact. It focuses on God's love:

***"Does God's power inspire your faith?"***

***Ephesians 1:19 (KJV) - And what is the exceeding greatness of his power TO US-WARD who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,***

Notice it's not just about His power. Paul emphasizes here that His power is focused on us. It is for benefiting us. The truth is, the devil doesn't care if you believe God is "able." He knows that isn't a sufficient basis for Bible faith. What makes him nervous is when we begin to believe that God loves us so much that he wants to do extraordinary things "to us-ward!". That's why he uses the "weapon of condemnation" so much. That tactic works! It places many Christians in a position of believing for punishment more than for compassion.

Even saying, "God is willing." is weak compared to the truth of God's love:

***Micah 7:18-19 (KJV) - Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. 19 He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.***

He delights in mercy. He will drop what He is doing, and turn toward us at a moment's notice to show His compassion toward us. He is continually looking for opportunities to bless us:

***2 Chronicles 16:9a (KJV) - For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself STRONG in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. ...***

Sadly, those He was speaking to at that time ignored that great love and paid the price! How much of the modern church is doing the very same thing?

Years ago, I lived in Chicago and visited the famous Shedd Aquarium there. One of their primary exhibits is a tank containing about 400,000 gallons of water. The walls of this tank are five-inch thick glass and they extend up about 20-25 feet above the floor.

Standing there looking at the beautiful creatures swimming around, you can't help but wonder what would happen if a small crack developed in the glass wall. You would end up with about twenty sharks in your lap! That water is like God's blessings and the pressure the water exerts against the glass wall is like His love and compassion. The problem is, my example is too puny to accurately depict the immensity of God's love. Consider all the waters on the face of the world walled up and raised up over the face of the earth. What would happen if that container cracked?

***God's eager  
compassion  
releases  
God's power.***

Like an aquarium, there is a spiritual wall between God's blessings and us. That wall is sin. I can almost hear some people thinking, "I knew I wasn't worthy!" If you thought that, you have missed the entire point:

***Romans 14:23b (KJV) - ... for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.***

It's not the white lie you told or the pen you took from the company supply cabinet. It's not the cigarette you smoked or the ice cream you sneaked after dinner. If you say, "I knew I wasn't worthy" (which, of course, is true, none of us are) there is an implication that God isn't willing to overpower your situation with loving kindness and tender mercies. That doubt, (that sin or absence of faith) is the 5-inch thick

glass that can keep God's promises from landing square in your lap.

God's eager compassion gives direction and focus to God's power. Knowledge and faith in that compassion releases our faith for that power. Paul prayed that we would understand this:

***Ephesians 3:18-20 (KJV) ... May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. 20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh IN US,***

Can you see that it is not just that God is powerful? It's that He yearns to manifest that power for us – in us. God's love is so overwhelming that it's not enough for Him to simply love those who love Him back. His love extends towards those who hate Him. Have you ever wondered why God tells us to love our enemies? It's because He's telling us to love them with His love – not ours!

***Romans 5:6-10 (KJV) – For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be***

***saved by his life.***

There is no faith where there is no love:

***1 John 4:19 (KJV) - We love him, because he FIRST loved us.***

Personally, I love Him because until I was 36 years old, the only time I referred to God was in a joke or as a cuss word. Sadly, we don't realize how often we doubt

***There is no faith where there is no love.***

God's love and how our doubt is reflected, not in denial of His love for us, but in our lack of faith in the magnitude of that love. This type of doubt often sounds something like, "God loves me, but..."

Imagine, if you will, that you are a world-renowned doctor and you have a ten-year-old daughter. Imagine that this precious child comes down with a life-threatening illness. Now, consider which of the following scenarios would be more painful to you:

- (1) The child tells you, "I know you want to heal me, but I realize that there's no cure for this and there's nothing you can do."
- (2) The child tells you, "I know you can heal me. I know you specialize in this particular disease, but I realize that you might choose to let me die. Maybe this is for my own good. After all, I haven't always been a very good kid."

Seriously now, would it hurt you more to hear your daughter say that you don't have the POWER to heal her, or that you don't have the WILLINGNESS?

In the Greek there are several words meaning compassion that

carry the idea of suffering with and for the sufferer - in other words, “experiencing the pain of another.” (This can be a

***Doubting  
God’s love is  
sin at the very  
highest level.***

common experience in Intercessory Prayer.) It’s the same thing parents experience when preparing to spank one of their children. You hear them say, “This is going to hurt me more than it does you.” What parent doesn’t suffer

when they see their child suffer?

Well, God is our Father. The truth is – those who accuse God of condoning sickness should ask for mercy - but that’s actually part of the problem. We tend to think of mercy as only applying to forgiveness.

***Matthew 20:30-34 (KJV) - And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have MERCY on us, O Lord, thou Son of David. 31 And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have MERCY on us, O Lord, thou Son of David. 32 And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you? 33 They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. 34 So Jesus had COMPASSION on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.***

Notice that the blind men asked for mercy and what they received was healing. Jesus gave them exactly what they asked for. Healing is a mercy. The Book of James teaches on God’s mercy:

***James 5:11 (KJV) - Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of***

***the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.***

Do you remember that Job was healed when he prayed for his friends? He received mercy (in the form of healing), when he extended mercy (in the form of forgiveness). This is sowing and reaping in action and is a fulfillment of Matthew 5:7:

***Matthew 5:7 (KJV) - Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.***

Have you ever noticed that Jesus followed this discussion in James 5 by giving instruction on calling the elders to minister physical healing?

***James 5:14-15 (KJV) - Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: 15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.***

Notice how closely associated healing is to forgiveness in this verse. Why? Because they are both mercies. Forgiveness is an act of mercy. Healing is an act of mercy. Both are acts of love and compassion. Can you see that? Some would have us believe that in this new and better covenant, God has changed His mind:

***Healing is an expression of God's great mercy and compassion.***

***Matthew 9:35-10:1 (KJV) - And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel***

**of the kingdom, and healing every sickness  
and every disease among the people. ...**

Some believe that we should preach a different Gospel now:

***... 36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with COMPASSION on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. ...***

Some give us the impression that Jesus is now only compassionate toward the unsaved. They want us to focus only on salvations, quoting:

***... 37 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; 38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest. ...***

I'm struck by the fact that the very next verse connects the harvest with healing:

***... 1 And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.***

I realize we've jumped from chapter nine to chapter ten, but notice the conjunction "and." Verse 38 of chapter 9 is connected to verse 1 of chapter 10 by both thought and context.

***Do you believe  
in and fully  
trust God's  
great love?***

If healing has passed away, then the idea of harvest has passed away, too! Of course that's foolish logic. Jesus didn't call us to "lesser works." He called us to "greater works." He is no less compassionate right now, sitting at the right hand of our Father God,

than He was when He walked the earth.

Do you remember that Christ said it would be expedient (profitable) that He go away so that He could send another Comforter? “Profit” refers to increase and improvement. Would it profit (or comfort) a sick man or woman to tell them that God wants them sick, or that God doesn’t care?

NO! Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever! At the close of the Old Testament, God’s people were once again deep in sin:

***Malachi 3:5-6 (AMP) - Then I will draw near to you for judgment; I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against the false swearers, and against those who oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, and who turn aside the temporary resident from his right and fear not Me, says the Lord of hosts. 6 For I am the Lord, I DO NOT CHANGE; that is why you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.***

Verse six is saying, “My compassion forces me to choose mercy over judgment.” Well, that’s the same reason you and I aren’t consumed RIGHT NOW! Thank God we serve a High Priest who desires to restore to the church the revelation of His will concerning our entire well-being: spirit, soul, and body. He wants you well more than you want yourself well. The question is – Do you believe Him?

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