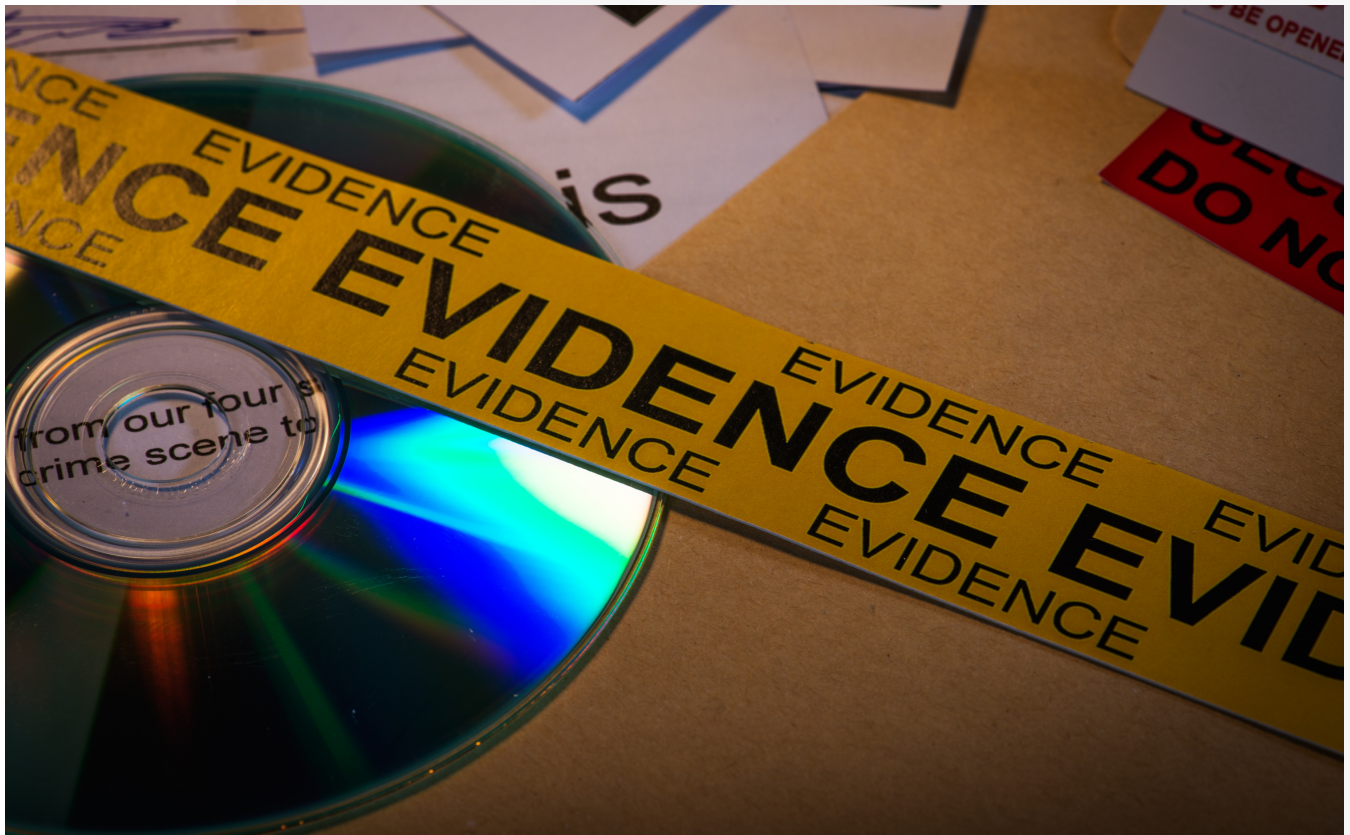


GRACE TO YOU

ROMANS 5:6-11

# "PROVE YOU LOVE ME"



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**FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH**

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# INTRODUCTION

"You *say* you love me, so *prove* you love me." Husbands, what would you do if your wife said that to you, or vice versa? Parents what would you do if one of your children said this to you? What would you be willing to do to prove you love them?

Sometimes we may even say that to God" You *say* you love me, so *prove* you love me." We might especially say that (or at least think it) when we are going through trouble (Romans 5:3). Trouble tempts us to doubt God's love for us. What is God willing to do to prove his love for us? **How does God prove his love for us?** Romans 5:6-11 provides three incontrovertible proofs that God loves us.

## BACKGROUND

In general terms we can summarize the first four chapters of Romans as follows:

- Chapter 1. The Gentiles are guilty
- Chapter 2. The Jews are guilty
- Chapter 3:1-19. Everyone's guilty
- Chapter 3:20-31. Get from deadly guilt to healthy joy through faith in Jesus.
- Chapter 4. Follow Abraham's example of faith in the promises and you'll inherit the world.
- Chapter 5:1-5. God invites us into his love through trouble
- Chapter 5:6-8. God proves he loves us despite trouble



How does God prove his love to us?



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# 1. GOD PROVES HIS LOVE WITH SUBSTITUTION (6-8)

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (6-8).

## Normal Love

Normal love will normally give time, money, attention, help, protection, provision. Normal love will rarely give life itself. Normal love will rarely die for a moral person. Normal love may conceivably die for a kind, generous, loving person. It's almost unheard of, but it is possible to imagine that. The person may be so morally valuable, beautiful, and useful that we can see circumstances in which someone might give their life for him/her.

## Abnormal love

Jesus died *for* the weak (6), the ungodly (6), sinners (8), enemies (10). He died in their place, instead of them, as their substitute. This is an unusual love, an exceptional love, an extraordinary love, a unique love, a rare love, a surprising love, an atypical love, an unparalleled love.

## CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

**Enjoy more love by seeing how unloveable you are.** Sometimes we receive a gift that makes us think, "I don't deserve that." The result is that we love the giver even more than before. The more undeserving we feel of Christ's love, the more we will experience more of his love.

**Enjoy more love by seeing how lovable Jesus is.** When we think of how much a person sacrificed to give us a gift, we cannot but love them more. That's why we love our military so much - people of high character give up so much to give us freedom and safety. We love them even more when we consider how they sacrifice so much for not just the greatest in our society but the lowest too. The most loveable Jesus gave himself for the most unloveable sinners so that we will love him more.

WE GET HIS LOVE FOR US  
AS HE GIVES HIS LIFE FOR US



Substitution is a persuasive proof of Christ's love.  
Any other proofs?



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## 2. GOD PROVES HIS LOVE WITH PROPITIATION (9)

Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God (9).

### God's wrath was turned away

"Propitiation" means a turning away of God's anger with a sacrifice with the result that God's wrath is satisfied, placated, and pacified. This does not mean that the Father was furious with us and Jesus made him love us. No, out of his great love for us, God the Father provided his beloved Son to take the full force of his anger until it was extinguished.

Christ's body was like an umbrella that God provided to shelter us while the storm of God's wrath was poured out on his Son. Not one drop got through to us, not one drop is left to touch us. When God's wrath is fully satisfied, the storm is over, the dark clouds of anger are emptied and disappear, and the sun shines brightly and warmly upon us. His wrath was turned away on the cross by the body of Jesus and is therefore turned away today for all who take shelter in Jesus.

### God's wrath will be turned away

"...much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God" (9). The Bible tells us that God's wrath is coming at the end of the world (Rev. 6:12-17). But for those who have the umbrella of Jesus' body, there is nothing to fear. We were saved from God's wrath at the cross and therefore we will be saved from his wrath at the end of our lives or the end of the world (whichever is sooner).

## CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

**Flee the wrath of God (Matt. 3:7).** John 3:36 tells us that if we do not believe in Jesus, if we are not under the loving umbrella of his blood, that we are under the wrath of God. It is a big dark cloud above our heads, ready to break upon us at death or the end of the world. Run as fast as you can from it to shelter under the blood.

**Enjoy the love of God.** Not one drop of God's judicial anger will ever touch you. Not one drizzle or drip of anger. Rather you are under the umbrella of his love, an umbrella he provided in Jesus' blood. Feel and sense his loving shield that not only protects you from his anger but opens a window to his love.

GOD'S LOVE  
REMOVED  
GOD'S WRATH



These are two massive arguments for God's love  
Any clincher?



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## 3. GOD PROVES HIS LOVE WITH RECONCILIATION (10-11)

**For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation (10-11).**

### We were his enemies

The most implacable world conflict is probably the Israel-Palestinian strife. All attempts at "reconciliation" have been based on "ceasefire and separation." The idea is that if the two sides can stop shooting at one another and separate from one another, there will be peace. So far, all attempts at peace have failed.

But there's an even more implacable spiritual conflict, the one between God and sinners. There is a hostility on both sides, but on God's side, the hostility is holy and justified, whereas on our side it is sinful and unjustified. By birth and practice, we are opposed to God and God is therefore opposed to us. Any reconciliation has to remove hostility from both parties.

God, though did not wait until we declared a ceasefire. He did not wait until we stopped opposing him. "While we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." The most offended (and justly offended) party took the initiative to reconcile us to his favor, fellowship, and friendship.

### We are his friends

Christ's death removed the just hostility of God toward sinners like us. As we receive Christ's death by faith, the hostility to God in our own hearts is removed. This isn't just a "ceasefire and separation" reconciliation. It actually deals with the cause of the conflict and removes it. If he dealt with the greatest cause of separation and alienation by his death, much more will he save us now and forever as he lives in heaven forever.

The God we hated, we now love. The God we hated now makes us happy. "More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation" (11). This is not a mere tolerance of God but a total delight in God.

## CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

**Receive reconciliation.** We are not reconciled until we receive the reconciliation ourselves, which we do by faith. It's all done, completed, finished, with every loose end tied up. Let's open our hands and hearts to take it.

**Rejoice in reconciliation.** I've been involved in many attempts to reconcile people over the years. Most attempts failed. Some made some progress but it took a long time and a lot of work. Here's a reconciliation that is completed for us. It concerns the most important relationship in the world. Receive it to rejoice and rejoice to receive it.

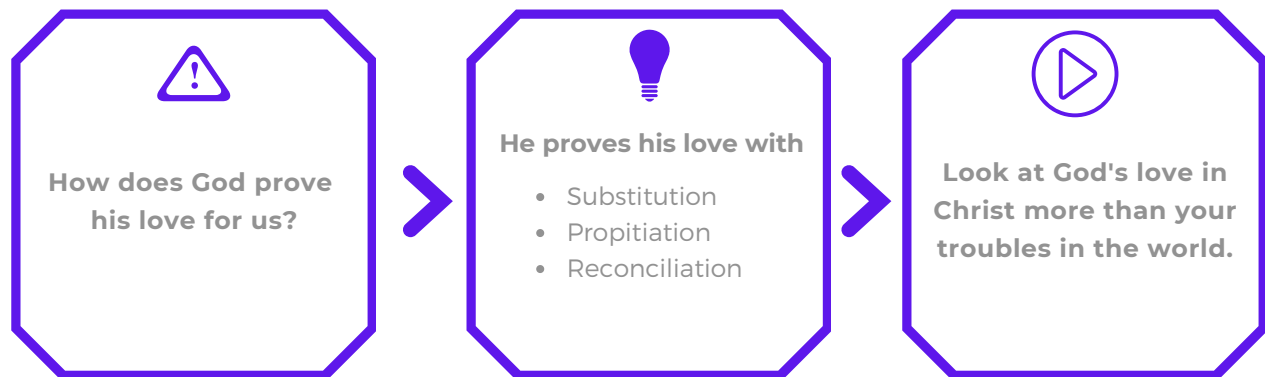
GOD LOVES HATERS INTO LOVERS



Hear God's Story > Change your story > Tell the story > Change others' stories



# SUMMARY



## A NEW CHAPTER

**God commends his love to us.** He doesn't just state it, describe it, propose it, define it. It's not a cold, casual, dutiful communication. It's not just "Take it or leave it!" He recommends his love, he persuades, he argues, he presents his best possible case to convince us. He wants to win us over, and therefore pressures us with his most powerful arguments and reasons. Receive then rejoice in this recommendation to be assured of God's love especially in trouble.

**Commend God's love to others.** We are ambassadors, representatives, spokespersons for love divine. Use the proofs and arguments God has provided in Jesus.

**Prayer.** God of love, thank you for proving your love to me through substitution, propitiation, and reconciliation. use me to persuade others with the proofs of your love. Amen.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What has made you doubt God's love?
2. Which of the three proofs is most persuasive to you?
3. How would you explain and illustrate substitution, propitiation, reconciliation to a child?
4. Which songs help in commending God's love to you?
5. What difference would it make to your life if you were fully persuaded of God's love?
6. Who will you commend God's love to this week? How will you do it?

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