

REVIEW

Francis suggested that if we were to ask some of our friends what God was like, we'd get a variety of answers based on their thoughts, feelings, and opinions. **How would your friends describe God? Where would their ideas about God come from?**

God describes himself in Exodus 34 as "abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands" of generations. That means his love is consistent and ongoing—it never changes. **If God's love never changes, what do you think he sees when he looks at you, even after you sin?**

Francis said God's steadfast love "should make us want to scream." God, who is holy and almighty, loves us with overflowing and unchanging love. We do not deserve it and there is nothing we can do to make God stop loving us. **When are we most likely to feel like God does not love us? In what ways does it encourage you to know that God will not remove his love from you?**

Francis showed us that it was God's love that motivated him to send Jesus to the cross. The love that God has for us is so deep that Christ was willing to die so that we might be forgiven. **In what ways does this picture of God's love change the way you think he sees you? How important is it for you to keep this picture of God's love at the forefront of your mind?**

God's love is sacrificial. It is not defined by feelings or our behavior, but by what he is willing to do for us. **When have you been motivated to love sacrificially? What drew you to that sacrificial love? How did that situation turn out?**

Sometimes, "our baggage" can convince us that what God says about himself isn't true. Francis shared parts of his story that make it difficult for him to trust God's love. Our experiences can also affect the way we think about God's love. **What experiences or thoughts make it hard for you to believe what God says about himself? How might your baggage create a barrier between you and God?**

Francis talked about his fear that no one wanted him in their life. After being given up for adoption and bouncing

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BIBLE JOURNEY

If you are struggling to believe that God loves you, turn to the book of Romans. We can be sure that God doesn't withhold his goodness or his love from us. God loves us so much that he bends and shapes all things for our good. Read Romans 8:28–30.

God works all things together for the good of those who love him. This passage even says that “we know” that God is concerned for our good. **Do you feel like you know God is concerned for your good? Why, or why not?**

Notice these verses don't say that God gives us only good things. Instead, he says God works all things together for our good. Not everything that happens in our lives will be good—God never promises that. Instead, in his wisdom, God will use everything we encounter to make us more like Jesus. It's important to make that distinction. **What things have you faced in life that weren't good? Has God used any of those things to bring about good in your life? If so, how? What good things are you currently asking God for? What good things do you think God wants for you?**

The ultimate good God accomplishes for us is making us like Jesus. **How has God used your life circumstances—even the baggage of your life—to make you more like Jesus?**

Because God loves us, he uses our circumstances to make us more like Jesus. When we are put in places that force us to depend on God more, we learn what it means to be close to God. **Would you say it's loving for God to make us like his son? What things change about us as we become more like Jesus?**

Part of what it means to be made more like Jesus is to be “called according to [God's] purpose.” In other words, we get to serve God just as Jesus served God. **In what specific ways have you been called to join God's work?**

If you don't know (which is ok!), what can you do to learn what role(s) you might play in the work of God? Who are the people in your life you could talk with to help you learn?

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The ultimate good that God is leading us toward—being finally made like Jesus—is what Paul calls “glorification” in verse 30. If you are a Christian, God will make you like Jesus. He will put you around people and into circumstances that may not always be comfortable but will make you like his son. **What opportunities is God giving you today to live more like Jesus?**

LAST WORD

God is good. And because he’s both good and loving, he works all things together for *our* good. That is amazing! Spend some time this week reflecting on the steadfast love of God. If God’s love is steadfast, how does he relate to you? What does he think of you? In what ways does he act on your behalf? What implications do his steadfast love and faithfulness have on your life?

When we remember that God is love and that his love is steadfast, we’ll remember that his plans for us are good; that he is working all things together so that we might become more like Christ. So, when things feel chaotic or when you struggle to interpret the baggage of your life, remember God and his love for you. Remember that he’s working all things together for your good and that your future, regardless of how life looks right now, is a future in which you’re not only like Christ but with Christ forever. Remember that God’s heart is loving.