

## Chapter 10

### THE EVERLASTING SEASON OF LOVE

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**Song of Solomon 1:4 NIV**

**Take me away with You—let us hurry!  
Let the King bring me into His chambers.  
We rejoice and delight in You;  
we will praise Your love more than wine.  
How right they are to adore You!**

Christian, God's love for you is to be the foundation of your life. His love for you must be addressed often and repeatedly. It is always the right time to remind yourself of God's love for you, but it is imperative that you remind yourself during these off-seasons because these times can cause you to doubt His love more often.

We must focus on the infinite love that God has for us during the off-seasons because it is too easy to believe that He is mad at us and is withholding blessings from us. Our behavior alone can cause us to doubt His desire to bless us. When we focus on ourselves rather than on Christ we are being selfish and we *will* doubt. We need to surround ourselves with His love and leave the doubt behind.

Take me away, Jesus, and take me quickly! We need to promptly get alone with God. Let Him take you into His presence – abide in the Word without delay. Go to that quiet place, that place of shelter and love – especially when times are tough.

When we get alone with God and let Him love on us something happens – we rejoice! The trial that we are going

through does not seem to matter as much at that time – we are overwhelmed with His love and all that we *can* do is rejoice! The love of God will change us!

We will rejoice and delight in Him when we are receiving His love.


REJOICE: brighten up. To cause or make to be full of glee (delight, hilarity, excitement, joy). Cheer up.

DELIGHT / BE GLAD: to spin around because of aggressive emotion (usually the emotion of joy).

What awesome definitions for what the love of God can do for us! The love of God will brighten the off-seasons in life. We will find ourselves full of joy when we embrace His love.

Do not reject the love of God; do not even limit the amount of His love you receive. The love of God has the power to turn your situation around and take you from a depressing state to pure delight. Fill yourself with His love!

There are too many of us running low on God's love for us! Understanding His love for us enables us to endure the off-season without being full of worry regarding what is happening.

 **W**hen we abide in His Word, we will know that He loves us and that He has nothing but our best interest in mind. We will know that His love will see us through and it will work everything together for our good and His glory.

As I think about God's love during our trials I am reminded of a song entitled "Surrender" by the Christian artist

Flame. This song speaks about allowing God to accomplish His perfect work in your life.

SURRENDER by FLAME

I'm never gonna run away, away from You  
I open up my heart to You, I'm Yours  
I'm pulling out my flag and I, I surrender  
Anchor of my ship, You can hold me down  
I'm never going to run, no, I'm never going to run.

I'm never going to run, I AM TRULY CONVINCED  
THAT YOUR WAYS ARE BETTER, I'M NOT ON THE FENCE  
Who distributes joy, who sets the soul free,  
Who can forgive sin, Jesus, who died for me,  
Yes it's true that I've been captured by Your love,  
I've been captured by Your grace, I've been covered by  
Your blood, I was lost but now I'm found, yes it's true  
You hold me, Jesus here's my white flag, I surrender  
right now.

We can surrender our lives to Christ when we begin to understand the immense love that He has for us. What does it mean to surrender? To surrender means to declare defeat and to relinquish possession of something. To Spiritually surrender is to realize that you are defeated if you run away from God; only when we connect with Christ do we see victory. To Spiritually surrender is to give the trial over to God; it is letting go and putting it in the Lord's capable hands. Spiritual surrender is simply another Spiritual fruit that is produced by continuing in the Word of God.


When we surrender Spiritually we rest in Christ knowing that He is only doing what is best for us. We understand that He has good plans for us. When we do not understand His plan for our lives we will live in fear. Fear of the future, fear of the trial, and so on, will torment us. Fear

keeps us from surrendering. Fear believes that what we are going through is an absence of God's love for us.

Are we truly convinced that whatever He is doing in our lives is best? We can be if we abide in the Word on His love for us. We can let go of the trial and place it in His hands when we are convinced that His ways are better. We can be captured by His love!

CAPTURED: taken prisoner. Seize place or gain  
control over. Dominate someone's thoughts.  
Win someone's love.  
Represent something accurately.

Are you captured by His love? Does His love dominate your thoughts? We saw in our main verse for this chapter that we are to praise or remember His love more than wine. This means we are to mark His love in our lives so that we can recognize it and speak about it; we are to make His love for us the center of our thoughts.

 **We mark His love in our lives by focusing on verses that proclaim His love for us. Marking requires repetition and time. It takes time for something to leave its mark on your mind and in your life.**

To praise or remember also means to consider His love; we are to think on it and be mindful of it. We need to think on His love – be mindful of His love. Let His love dominate your thoughts by abiding in His Word on His love for you! If His love for us is going to dominate our thoughts, it is only going to be because His Word dominates our attention. The Word will have to have the priority in our lives. Our minds need to be focused. The Bible tells us that we can get rid of the thoughts that agree with the flesh by concentrating on the Word of God (2 Corinthians 10:5). If we

stand arbitrarily by and never consider what monopolizes our thoughts, we will never see the victory God has in store for us. Our thoughts determine our lives (Proverbs 23:7 KJV); our thoughts eventually become our actions. Our thoughts must be centered on His love for us.

Jude 1:20 MSG ...staying right at the center of God's love, keeping your arms open and outstretched, ready for the mercy of our Master, Jesus Christ. This is the unending life, the real life!

Are you right at the center of His love? Are you encircled in His love or are you enveloped in doubt and fear? When you are surrounded by His love you will be full of expectation. Your arms will be open and ready for His *mercy* – His love reaching out to meet your need in spite of you. You cannot live in expectation when you are living outside of His love. His love for you will eradicate your shortcomings; if you are not surrounded by His love you will be painfully aware of your inadequacies. You will doubt His promises because you are too focused on yourself. Surrounding yourself with *His* love puts the focus where it needs to be – on Him! When you live in His love that is when you are living a Spiritual life – the eternal life, the real life!

His love is everlasting – nothing we can do and nothing we go through can change that. We must remember that God loves us. He is not angry with us – look at everything God's Word says about anger – does it describe God's relationship with you? The Word says anger is cruel and overwhelming (Proverbs 27:4); God is not! God does get angry, but His anger is righteous and it is for those who reject His Son – not us! Jesus Christ paid the price to turn God's anger from us; He paid it in full.

The Word tells us that God has great love for us! What is love? The first book of Corinthians, chapter thirteen, tells us that love is patient – if love is patient, then God is

patient. If love does not keep a record of wrongs, then God does not keep a record of wrongs, and so on. Take the time to study the thirteenth chapter of the second book of Corinthians so that you can discover the attributes of God's love for you. We can never remind ourselves too much of His love for us.

Lamentations 3:21 NIV Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.

Calling His love to mind gives us hope. Be captured by His love – let it dominate your thoughts! Keep your focus on His love. It is only because of His great love that we are not consumed. If He did not love us so, He would have never sent His Son to pay the price for our sin so that we could be reconciled with Him. Every morning we need to be reminded of His great love for us.

Psalms 26:3 AMP For Your loving-kindness is before my eyes, and I have walked in Your truth [faithfully].

Stay focused on His love – it is the greatest (1 Corinthians 13:13), it makes faith work (Galatians 5:6), it enables us to love (1 John 4:19), it never fails (1 Corinthians 13:8), and so much more! His great love is what keeps us going – it gives us hope (the ability to wait, trust, and expect). We never have to worry about what happens next when we are abiding in His love. Keep His loving-kindness before your eyes – remain focused on it!

We need to remain focused on *His* faithfulness and *His* love no matter what season in life we are in. When we begin to feel like we are lacking faithfulness we must focus more on *His* faithfulness! Our love for God will also increase when we

focus more on *His* love for us! Spiritual love and faithfulness are *not* about us!

1 John 4:10 This is love: NOT that we loved God, BUT THAT HE LOVED US and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

When we are told to “love” God it is the Hebrew word *ahab*. This word means to have affection for; to love; to like. It is masculine which denotes that it is not fruit producing. The Hebrew spelling of the word “ahab” tells us that love is the connection between God and man. We are also connected by grace – grace is defined as the Word, or His love letter to us, and its influence on our hearts in our daily lives. Connecting with God in this way makes Him the Master of our house and it releases His power in our lives.

When the Word talks of HIS LOVE FOR US it is the Hebrew word *ahabah*. This word means the same thing as “ahab” except it is the feminine form of the word – it *is* fruit bearing. When looking at the two different words for love, we find that our love for God does not produce Spiritual fruit. It is His love for us that produces the Spiritual fruit! It is all about Him! He deserves all the praise!

2 Corinthians 5:14 KJV For the love of Christ constraineth us...


The love of Christ is described as a constraining force. What does this word “constraineth” mean?

CONSTRAINETH: to *hold together*, that is, to *compress* or *arrest* (a prisoner); figuratively to *compel*, *preoccupy*. Constrain – hold back; restrain. Hold, keep in, stop, be taken with.

The love of Christ produces the Spiritual fruit in our lives; we see this reiterated in the definition for the word translated as “constraineth”. When we are receiving the love of Christ it will hold us together during an off-season. We will be able to resist the temptation to fall apart and yield to the flesh when we are certain of God’s love for us.

We will remain in the Spirit when we are preoccupied by His love. The love of Christ will keep us in the Word of God. No one ever wants to leave a place where they feel loved. For some Christians, the Word is not a very loving place. Some Christians look at the Word as a rule book instead of a love letter and that is why they find it easy to ignore the Word. Without a steady intake of the Word, these same people backslide and fall even further away from God.

One extra letter “hey” is used in the Hebrew spelling of this word that describes His fruitful love for us. This letter represents grace. Grace, again, is the Divine influence on our hearts in our everyday lives – it is the Word. God loves us through the Word! The Word is the key! It is the *one* thing – the one thing important enough to mention twice in the spelling of the Hebrew word for God’s Love for us.

 **G**od’s love for us must be our foundation. Without God’s love for us we are hopeless. We cannot even love God without Him first loving us. A work had to be done in everyone of us before we could love God – loving God is not something we can take credit for; it is something we should be thankful for!

Deuteronomy 30:6 NIV The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, SO THAT you may love Him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live.

As we take the focus off of ourselves and place it on God, we will begin to live life as God intended!



Your off-season is not the time for you to try to earn from God – there is *never* a time for you to try to earn from God! If you get this twisted and attempt to produce more love for God or try to make yourself more faithful, you *will* fail. Your ability to wait, trust, and expect are only found IN CHRIST! You need to understand this. If you do not, you will find yourself full of mixture.

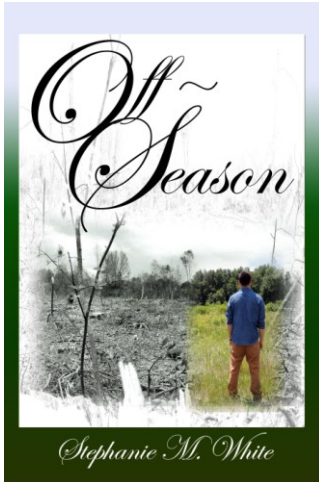
Mixture is nothing more than trying to produce Spiritual fruit in the flesh. The Bible tells us that Spirit gives birth to Spirit (John 3:6). We cannot produce the Spiritual fruit of love in our flesh; it is impossible. Love begins and ends with God. We can only love Him and others because He first loved us. The Word of God is your Seed for this Spiritual love; as you plant the Word in your heart your harvest of love will begin to grow.

Trials have a way of making us feel unloved, but that is a lie. The Word is very clear about God's unfailing and unconditional love for us. In the off-seasons of life, bear in mind that you need more love. Copy verses regarding God's love for you and meditate on them daily. The Word tells us that faith is made effective and active through love; it also tells us that faith is the victory – fill yourselves with God's love and be prepared for victory. It is imperative that you meditate on His love for you as His child; you are a dearly loved child of God. This off-season cannot defeat God's love for you and it cannot change who you are in Christ!

Off-Season by Stephanie M. White

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