

**BIBLE ADVENTURE 5:**  
**SALVATION - What Did Jesus Willingly Die on the Cross?**  
*created by: Lady Violet*



**Ephesians 5:1-2** Therefore, imitate God like dearly loved children. Live your life with love, following the example of Christ, who loved us and gave himself for us. He was a sacrificial offering that smelled sweet to God.

**1 Corinthians 13:4-7** Love is patient, love is kind, it isn't jealous, it doesn't brag, it isn't arrogant, it isn't rude, it doesn't seek its own advantage, it isn't irritable, it doesn't keep a record of complaints, it isn't happy with injustice, but it is happy with the truth. Love puts up with all things, trusts in all things, hopes for all things, endures all things.

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**Discovery Treasures:**

So why did Jesus die willingly on the cross? Great question! Best answer? Love. Unconditional love for you and me, and all of the people before us, and all of the people who will live after us.

Love can be found in several scriptures, but we are going to focus on Ephesians 5:1-2 and 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

We are to live a life with love. That means loving our neighbor, loving ourself, and most importantly loving God. Yes, we are to love God the most of everyone we love.

In the Old Testament, in the days before Jesus, you will find that God would have people offer up animal sacrifices. The animal's blood would serve as an atonement for the person's sins. (Leviticus 4:27-35)

**ATONEMENT:** Literal English meaning: at - one - with, being in harmony with someone, in this case, God. Satisfaction of a wrong. The Hebrew words for atonement are the noun *kipur*, and the verb *kaphar*. The verb means to cover, to purge, or cover with pitch (*pitch meaning "slime"*)

Now let's jump to atonement in the New Testament. Check out Hebrews 9:11-12 which reads, *He [Jesus] came as High Priest of this better system that we now have. He went into that greater, perfect tabernacle in heaven, not made by men nor part of this world, and once for all took blood into that inner room, the Holy of Holies, and sprinkled it on the mercy seat; but it was not the blood of goats and calves. No, he took his own blood,*

*and with it he, by himself, made sure of our eternal salvation.*

Jesus loves us. Notice I said **LOVES**, not **LOVED**, will think about loving us later. Not past or future tense, but present tense. You may be asking, *But how can He love me - I've done wrong things. And what happens if I do them again?* He loves you because, *love never fails.* (1 Corinthians 13:8) And better yet, the love God has for us is unconditional.

Rather than a dictionary definition, we're going to explore 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, which I believe, describes unconditional love, best.

*Love is patient, love is kind, it isn't jealous, it doesn't brag, it isn't arrogant, it isn't rude, it doesn't seek its own advantage, it isn't irritable, it doesn't keep a record of complaints, it isn't happy with injustice, but it is happy with the truth. Love puts up with all things, trusts in all things, hopes for all things, endures all things.*

Notice the scripture uses present tense when describing unconditional love. The verbs "is" and "does" are both present tense. Nowhere in this scripture does it say that love "was," "didn't," or "won't." Now that you understand the meaning of unconditional love, think about Jesus while He walked on the earth, then think about Jesus now living in Heaven - the perfect place. Jesus was, and is, and always will be our best example of unconditional love. He willingly sacrificed himself on the cross because he loves us, and loves his father (God) even more. He wanted to please God, and do His will. (John 10:17-18)

The last thing in 1 Corinthians chapter 13 verse 7 says is, ". . .[love] endures all things." Enduring isn't usually associated with pleasantries. It entails long-suffering (which is a fruit of the spirit found in Galatians 5:22-23). Let me paint a picture in your mind; envision Jesus's mother, Mary, at the cross, watching her son dying a brutal death. She cries out to God over and over to help her son, to save him, to stop the suffering. Imagine God opening a window to Heaven, allowing Mary to see Him with tears in His eyes, then shaking His head "no" while mouthing the words to her, "I cannot. This endurance has to be." How do you think Mary would have felt? I don't know about you, but at that moment I may not have understood the fact that unconditional love involves enduring all things.

But let's flip gears for a moment. What if God would have answered Mary's cries, and brought Jesus down from the cross in the midst of the crucifixion to suit Mary? Think hard, then imagine this; if God would have answered Mary's cries, no one would have the opportunity to receive salvation. Let's look at it another way; if God would have put an end to Jesus's suffering while enduring the cross by miraculously removing Him and healing his wounds right there on Calvary, then everything Jesus had spoken to his disciples before hand would have then been recognized as lies. Know this: Lies no know love.

So the next time you're "enduring" something and crying out to God, remember, if God's answer is "no," then He is doing what's best for you, and possibly many others. He's doing it because He loves you, unconditionally.

Jesus died willingly because he loves us. Salvation is love.

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## SALVATION ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES:

### Memorize Ephesians 5:1-2 and 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Name something you have asked God for, but His answer was “no,” Then describe why “no” was the right answer.

Ephesians 5:1-2 asks us to be like Jesus. What's one way you have “lived with love,” by following the examples of Christ?

Say 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 outloud: *Love is patient, love is kind, it isn't jealous, it doesn't brag, it isn't arrogant, it isn't rude, it doesn't seek its own advantage, it isn't irritable, it doesn't keep a record of complaints, it isn't happy with injustice, but it is happy with the truth. Love puts up with all things, trusts in all things, hopes for all things, endures all things*

Now use your own words to either describe experiences that you've had that relate to each word below, or tell what the word means to you regarding unconditional love.

### UNCONDITIONAL LOVE IS. . .

Patience:

Kindness:

Jealousy:

Bragging:

Arrogance:

Rudeness:

Only doing something for me:

Irritable:

Complaining:

Injustice:

Truth vs. Lies:

Putting up with something that annoys you:

Trust:

Hope:

Endurance:

**FAMILY & FRIENDS ACTIVITY:**

You will need to have mom or dad get you a posterboard, construction paper, scissors, a marker, small star stickers, and some glue.

Cut out 15 hearts, one for each of the things “Love Is” and write Love Is at the top of each heart, then under “Love Is” write one of the 15 words once on each star. Randomly glue the cut out hearts to the posterboard. Hang the poster board where it's easy to get to.

Throughout the week when you experience one of the things “Love Is” ask mom or dad for a star sticker and stick it inside the heart of the corresponding “love word.”

At the end of the week, gather as a family and discuss all of the stars. Share with each other, your “Love Is” moments and how they have changed your walk with Jesus by living your life with love and following Christ's example.

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**TIME TO TALK TO GOD:**

**As a family, or with your friends, join hands and say the following prayer out loud to God. He will listen...I guarantee!**

Dear God, I want to live my life with love. I want to follow Christ's example. Please help me to understand all that Your unconditional love is. I believe You went to the cross on your own doing for me, and for all others. I thank You, Jesus, for giving Yourself freely as a living sacrifice on the cross so that I may have eternal life, and be free from death and sin. Without you and your faithfulness to endure the cross, we would all be lost. Thank you God for making me someone special. Thank You God for sharing your Son and Your unconditional love with me. In Jesus's name I pray. Amen.