

# Attack of the “Love Buts”

◆◆ Keith Giles ◆◆

Try this experiment.

**Step 1:** Post “*God is Love*” on Facebook or Twitter.

**Step 2:** Wait 10 minutes.

**Step 3:** Read dozens of posts from Christians who are eager to remind you that God is love, BUT God is also a God of wrath.

Almost every single week, I get responses from Christians – always Christians – who cannot allow a post like “God is love and all who live in love live in God, and God in them” rest on its own without adding the asterisk about God’s wrath.

Just last week I posted: “For those who say we focus on Love too much, please remember: God IS Love.”

The first comment was from a friend of mine, Leyna Nguyen, who is not a Christian. Her response was: “There are people who say this?!”

And around five comments below hers, the wave of wrath started to crash. 115 comments later, the post led us to statements like this one:

I’m thinking of when it comes to the love of God:

“For God so LOVED the world...” (John 3:16).

“The LOVE of God is higher, wider, longer and deeper than anyone can imagine” (Ephesians 3:14-21).

“Nothing will ever separate us from the LOVE of God” (Romans 8:31-39).

“The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through LOVE” (Galatians 5:6).

“LOVE is patient. LOVE is kind. LOVE keeps no record of wrongs.”

(1 Corinthians 13).

“God is LOVE.” (1 John 4:7-21).

Do you know what you will *never* read following any of these pontifications on the amazing, unending, extravagant love of God?

You will never once read anything about the wrath of God to “balance” out this teaching.

You also never once read any statements about how you and I are unworthy of God’s love, or how we can’t earn or deserve God’s love.

Never. Not even once.

Instead, what we read is page after page, verse after verse of the fantastic, endless, transformative LOVE of God that is poured out

on us night and day like a never-ending waterfall.

So, like it or not, we are loved.

What I don’t understand is why some Christians are so eager to shut down this love train. Why do they seem so afraid of a God whose character is love? Why are they threatened by a God who IS love?

Worse: *Why are some Christians MORE afraid of a God of love than they are of a God of wrath?*

That’s what I legitimately do not comprehend.

Perhaps this is “Big Brother” syndrome? Like when the Prodigal Son returns home and the Father forgives him so completely and quickly

## Why are some Christians MORE afraid of a God of love than they are of a God of wrath?

“God loves and never stops but he also hates. Hate is not the opposite of love and God has shown He does both continuously.”

[sigh]

My friend Glenn Warner calls these people “Love Buts,” because when you remind them that God is love, they must respond with, “Yes, God is love, BUT...”

Why is this? Why are some Christians so insistent upon contradicting all the numerous verses in the New Testament that practically gush with the extravagant love of God?

I mean, this is just a small sample of the verses

and throws the party for him, it's the older brother who can't handle it. He hates the idea of this extravagant love being shared with his brother the "sinner" who deserves to sleep outside with the servants.

Maybe that's the reason why some Christians today want to pencil into the margins of their Bibles a long list of wrathful God examples to balance out the overly-loving verses about a God who reconciles, forgives, embraces, restores, and loves his children no matter what they do.

What's strange to me is that their New Testament scriptures don't reflect their bias towards wrath, so they literally have to reach all the way back to the Old Testament — before Jesus came to

us with the gospel (and grace and truth) — to find the pictures of a God they like better. Then they cut and paste that angry God's face over the face of Jesus so they can sleep better at night; rest assured that they are loved and those other "sinners" are going to get what's coming to them in the end.

But I can't buy that. I have to take the New Testament and the "Good News" of Jesus for what it is — Good News!

We are LOVED by a God who IS Love! We were created by this God of Love—in God's image—so this means we are LOVED! Created by Love, in the image of LOVE, to BE Loved.

- This is who we are.
- Love is who God is.
- Love is what God does.

- Loved is who we will always be.

There is no "Love But..." verse in the New Testament. There is only love. Endless, boundless, unending, unrelenting, exceptional, amazing, fantastic, glorious love that we can only experience to believe and receive.

Hopefully one day those who call themselves followers of Jesus will relax and get comfortable with the idea of a God who really is love, inside and out. No *ifs*, *ands* or *buts* allowed.

Until then, I'll just keep posting about the God who loves us more than life itself.

Won't you join me? ☐

*Keith Giles and his wife Wendy are local program directors for Peace Catalyst International in El Paso, TX.*



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in the image of LOVE,  
to BE Loved.**