

## BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

*We're in... Unit 8: The God Who Loves*

### Unit 8 Big Question and Answer and Song:

"What Is God's Love for His People Like?"

PFI NIV Songs 8, Tracks 3,4

### Unit 8 Bible Verse and Song: 1 Chronicles 16:34 NIV 1984

"Give thanks to the LORD for He is good. His love endures forever."

PFI NIV Songs 8, Track 5

## BIBLE TRUTH

*We're learning... Bible Truth 6:*

### God Will Never Stop Loving His People

Our love for others often changes. Sometimes it is strong; sometimes it is weak. Sometimes it fades away completely. God's love for His people never changes. The Bible calls God's love "hesed:" steady love and kindness, flowing out to sinful people who don't deserve it.

God loved His people before they were created. He kept on loving them when they rebelled against Him. And He chose to send His dear Son, Jesus to save them from their sins. God will go on loving them forever and ever.

Why does God's love for His people never change? It's not because His people are so good and lovable. It's because God loves His people through Jesus, the perfect Son of God, who died for their sins. With His blood, shed on the cross, Jesus made a covenant—a forever promise—with God, His Father. His blood would be the perfect payment for the sins of God's people. He took God's punishment for their sins so they didn't have to bear it themselves.

Because of Jesus, God would forgive them and love them forever. Praise God for sending Jesus! He is why God will never stop loving His people.

## BIBLE VERSE

*How do I know this is true? The Bible tells me so!*

### Bible Truth 6 Bible Verse:

#### Romans 8:31-21,35,37-39

"If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any power, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

## CASE STORY

**Our story is called:**

### The Case of the Giant Joy.

**As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:**

1. Who came to know Giant Joy? What did the joy come from?
2. How did joy help her through her whole life? What did she look forward to?

Musket shot, cannon fire, soldiers on the march, and Indian attacks. These were all part of life in New England in the early 1700's

The French and British had both begun to settle in the great, new land of America. First there were little settlements of people in colonies along the East Coast. But there was much unexplored land further inland to the west. How big was America? What secrets lay in the wilderness? Both the French and the British wondered in a greedy sort of way. If the riches they had found so far were anything like what lay in the lands beyond, both French and British wanted as much as they could get. They began to fight each other for it.

The French especially used Native Americans to carry out raids on the British. These raids often left villages burned and settlers killed. Life in America back then was not exactly safe and worry-free.

It was into this dangerous, anxious time that a little girl named Sarah Pierrepont was born in the British colony of Connecticut. Her father was the pastor of First Church in New Haven, the most important town in the colony. As a pastor's daughter, Sarah was expected to be trained in all the womanly arts and graces of the day. She had to learn everything from cultured manners and proper tea settings to good literature and fine writing.

Yet there was more to Sarah than just good training. She knew how to put people at ease and was admired for her kindness. And far more important than all these things was what Sarah's treasured in her heart. For as long as she could remember, she had loved God and had a deep sense of His faithful, everlasting love for her. Sarah loved to ramble the countryside and think of God. She sang to Him and prayed to Him as she looked at His beautiful creation around her. She thought much of His saving love shown to her through Jesus; and her heart was filled with joy.

As Sarah grew up, she became very, very beautiful. Many a handsome young man came to her door in hopes of wooing her to be his wife. But Sarah's answer was always "no."

But then, a certain skinny, shy, awkward, young man named Jonathan came along. He wasn't that much to look at, but he had something that Sarah valued more than a good-looking face: Jonathan loved God and took joy in God's faithful, everlasting love for him just like Sarah did. He loved to study God's Word, to preach it and to write about it. This love for God made Jonathan more attractive than all the handsome men who came to her door.

Jonathan felt the same way about Sarah as she felt about him. Like the other men, he could not miss her extraordinary beauty, but it was her love for God and her joy in God's faithful, everlasting love for her that made her irresistible to him. So, at the age of just seventeen, Sarah married Jonathan and they became Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Edwards.

Sarah and Jonathan began their new married life together in Northampton, Massachusetts, where Jonathan had just recently joined his grandfather, Solomon Stoddard, in pastoring the important Northampton Church that sat in the center of town.

Sarah's first Sunday at Northampton was unforgettable. The whole town awaited her arrival at the church. Pastor's wives were a very big deal back in those days. There were certain customs everyone expected her to keep. She was to wear her wedding dress to church her first Sunday, and twirl slowly around at the front of the church so everyone to get a good view of it from every side. Then, she was to take her place in the special high seat right next to the pulpit that facing towards the congregation, so everyone could watch her during the very long services.

Watch her they did, Sunday after Sunday, for any signs of improper movement or boredom. And you can be certain that if they did see her do even the smallest thing wrong, they would be sure to talk about it. Yes, the pastor's wife was to be more than just a woman who loved God and took joy in His faithful, everlasting love. It seemed she was to be perfect.

Can you imagine what it would be like for everyone to be staring at you and looking for ways you fall short of perfection? It would be easy for Sarah to be anxious or to be angry at those people for treating her this way, but do

you know what she did? Instead of getting worried or mad at people, she turned her thoughts to God. She thought of how His saving love shown to her through Jesus. She knew He loved her with a faithful, everlasting love. That was enough for her. Her heart took joy in God. Suddenly it didn't matter so much what those people thought or said about her.

Jonathan and Sarah stayed in Northampton for twenty years. The LORD blessed both their church and their home in great ways during those years. The LORD began to work powerful things when Jonathan preached. Many people became deeply convicted of their sins. They would wail loudly and ask God for mercy. As they turned from their sins and trusted in Jesus, the Holy Spirit filled their hearts with such peace that they would shout for joy. This happened over and over for many years.

After a while, the same, amazing things began to happen in many other churches in New England, too. Many people became Christians. This joyful time was called "The Great Awakening" because so many people became "awake" to God—which is another way of saying they were saved.

Northampton Church grew and grew during the Great Awakening. Many weeks, thirty people would become Christians at one time. With so many people coming to church and being saved, Jonathan was busier than ever. On top of caring for church members, he would often spend thirteen hours a day studying the Bible and writing sermons!

Things were as busy at home for Sarah as they were for Jonathan at church. Sarah took care of their eleven children as well as did most of the work on the farm. She cared for the many visitors who dropped by their house and tended to guests and young apprentice pastors who would live with them, sometimes for months at a time.

Sarah did everything she could to encourage Jonathan in his preaching and writing. She and the children were up with him at 5 a.m. to read a chapter in the Bible by candlelight, then kept working hard all day and long into the night, while Jonathan worked in his study. Sarah could have easily been a grumbling, bitter woman because of all the hard work she had to do, often without much help from Jonathan; but she was not. She loved the Lord and she loved what He was doing through her husband. She was so glad that she could help him be ready to tell others

about God's faithful, everlasting love that they could know, too. So instead of seeing a grumbling, bitter woman, when people talked to Sarah and watched Sarah, they saw the joy that she had in her heart.

One evening, the Lord added even more to the joy Sarah had. As she was praying, He revealed His love to her heart in an indescribably wonderful way. As she understood more of His love for her, she felt at peace with whatever He wanted to do with her life. She trusted He always knew what was best and would always be with her. More than ever she knew His faithful, everlasting love for her.

How kind it was of the Lord to give Sarah this special taste of His faithful, unending love! It would be her special comfort in the many hard times that were soon to come! Jerusha, their second daughter died of tuberculosis when she was only seventeen years old. Later, the Northampton Church members got mad at Jonathan for wanting only Christians to take the Lord's Supper as the Bible says. They fired him with no pay. Jonathan and Sarah had to somehow scrape together enough money to feed their large family for a whole year before Jonathan had another money-making job.

Hardest of all was the year when their daughter Esther, her husband, Aaron, and Jonathan, himself, died. Later that year Sarah became deathly sick with dysentery.

It would have been easy for Sarah to feel abandoned and discouraged through all these sad, hard times; but she was not. She was very sad and things were very hard, but, she loved the Lord and her heart was filled with the indescribably, wonderful joy of knowing His faithful, everlasting love than for her and for these others who also were His people. This was her comfort to the very last moment of her life on earth. And no doubt, it was her shout of praise in the first moments in her dear Lord's presence in heaven and even today, where she still delights in His love and will forever.

**Our Bible Truth is: God Will Always Love His People**

**Our Bible Verse is: Romans 8:31-32,35,37-39**

"If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any power, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Did you know that these verses were Sarah Edward's favorite verses in the Bible? What joy Sarah Edwards took in God's everlasting love for her! How it gave her strength to make it through so many hard things!

What about you and me? Can we know the joy of God's faithful, everlasting love for us? Yes, we can; if we turn from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior.

Let's praise God for His faithful, everlasting love for His people. Let's ask Him to help us turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Let's ask Him to fill our hearts with the joy of His faithful, everlasting love for us.

**SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU**

**1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False:**

God still loved His people when they rebelled against Him.

Answer: True.

**2. Crack the Case Questions**

**a. Who came to know Giant Joy? What did the joy come from?**

Answer: Sarah Edwards. From knowing God and enjoying His fellowship in her heart, by the Holy Spirit.

**b. How did joy help her through her whole life? What did she look forward to?**

Answer: Even when things were very hard, the joy of knowing God helped her to endure the hard things in the way that God wanted her to. She knew that one day she would go to be with God and live in His presence forever. There, she would be wonderfully happy, knowing and enjoying Him more fully than ever she would in life here on earth.

**3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse:**

**Romans 8:31-32,35,37-39**

"If \_\_\_ is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who shall separate us from the love of \_\_\_? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor \_\_\_, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any power, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our \_\_\_."

Answers: God; Christ; life; Lord.

**AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY**

*A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication*

**A** God, we praise You for being the God who loves Your people forever.

**C** God, we confess that many times, we are not like Sarah. We complain, become angry or bitter when hard things happen to us or those we love.

**T** God, we thank You for the wonderful gifts You give to Your people, such as Your Holy Spirit living in their hearts, filling them with Your love; and, the strength to endure joyfully, everything they must endure.

**S** God, work in our hearts. Help us to turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Give us hearts that take joy in You instead of grumble and complain when hard things happen to us.

**BIBLE TRUTH HYMN**

**The King of Love**

*PFI NIV Songs 8, Track 18*

**Verse 6**

And so through all the length of days  
Thy goodness faileth never.  
Good shepherd may I sing Thy praise  
Within Thy house forever.

Words: Henry Baker, Psalm 23 Music: Traditional Irish Melody

God's people praise God for being the King of love. They delight in having Him as their king because all that He does comes from His heart of love for them that will never end or fail. God takes care of His people like a good shepherd cares for his sheep. Sheep are very stupid and need someone to take care all of their needs or else they will die. God promises to always be with His people, taking care of them throughout their whole length of days--their whole lives. And He will go on caring for them even after they die. He will take them to live with Him in heaven forever. How wonderful that will be! No wonder God's people want to sing His praise forever! We can become God's people when we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

**BIBLE VERSE SONG**

**Who Shall Separate Us?**

*PFI NIV Songs 8, Track 19*

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?  
Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?  
Shall trouble? No! Shall Hardship? No!  
Persecution, famine, nakedness? No!  
Danger or sword? No!

In all these things we are conquerors  
Through Him who loved us.  
For I am convinced that neither death nor life,  
Nor anything else in all creation,  
Will be able to separate us from God's love  
In Christ Jesus our Lord.  
Romans Eight, thirty-five, eight and nine.

Words adapted from Romans 8:35,38,39 Constance Dever © 2011

God's people may have to go through some very hard things in this life, but they know that none of these things will ever separate them from God. He has always loved them and will always love them. He will be with them, helping them through them all, to the very end. And one day, God will bring them into heaven where they will enjoy His love and the delight of His presence forever.