

Loving God
by Loving Others

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

The Bible says we are to love the Lord our God with all of our heart, with all of our soul, with all of our mind, and with all of our strength. How do we express this love to Him? We do it by sharing with others the love we receive from Him.

When you allow the love you receive from God to flow out of you, then you are loving Him with all of your heart, soul, mind, and body. As you will see, there is no shortage of places where God's love can go.

Loving God is not a works program. These pages will show that the love we are speaking about is unconditional love. It takes the Holy Spirit to produce it in us (Romans 5:5) and to bear the fruit of it (Galatians 5:22).

Chapter One
THE HEART ISSUE

“And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?

“And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord:

“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; this is the first commandment” (Mark 12:28-30).

The heart is the supreme center of all communications, feelings, and decisions that apply to the physical body. It is the premise for all motivational thinking and the basis of all human operation. The heart produces both positive emotions and negative emotions, which result in positive or negative volition. Based on those conditions, we either honor and glorify God

with our bodies or do not.

The soul has five parts: the mind, the emotions, the conscience (with its norms and standards), self-consciousness, and the free volition. The old sin nature, which was the result of Adam's decision to disobey God, also operates from the soul.

The mind is a collection of correlated single thoughts that characterize our knowledge of a subject. From those thoughts, we make observations that result in an understanding (whether right or wrong) of the subject and an awareness to apply what we know. The mind reveals the attitude of the soul, which is determined by the information given by the conscience, controlling our attitude and directing our will. It is the place of understanding and logical thinking—the intellectual, reflective faculty of man. As that part of us that perceives, thinks, and concludes, the mind is the decision-maker of the soul. (See Romans 1:28, 7:23 & 25, 12:2; 1 Corinthians 2:16, 14:15; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 4:17-18, 5:17.)

Finally, the “strength” the Lord referred to speaks of the physical body with which we can serve and glorify God or not.

First and Foremost

The Word of God teaches me that if I love the Lord my God with all of my heart, then I will be motivated to help everyone with God's love, no matter who they are.

If I love Him with all of my mind, I will spend time in meditation, communicating with Him, letting the Word dwell richly in my heart.

If I love Him with all of my soul, then the five parts of my soul will be submitted to the new heart and the new spirit of Ezekiel 36:26:

“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.”

If I love Him with all my strength, then I will keep my body pure and I will not give it over to drugs or to any lifestyle that would cause it harm. In loving God with all my strength, I will not give my body over to promiscuity because I understand that my body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. I therefore preserve my body to glorify God (Romans 12:1-2).

A Need Brings a Call to Love

“And the second [commandment] is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as

thymself. There is none other commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:31).

The real secret to being right with God is not whether we make mistakes or not. The issue is not what we do overtly. The key to having a right relationship in our hearts to God is in the measure of our obedience to Jesus Christ's commandments to love, as expressed in Mark 12:30-31.

For example, if a husband loves his wife with all his heart, treating her with kindness and gentleness, communicating with her, and providing for her, then that husband is loving God. Every time he loves his wife or children, he loves God, because the proportion of his love for God is reflected in how that love is shared with others.

A person's need is God's call to love. Those who answer God's call for evangelism share God's love with strangers. They love Him at every door they go to. They are loving God with their bodies. They are loving God with their hearts, souls, and minds by sharing Jesus Christ with those who need Him. That is one way you can tell if a person loves with God's love.

For this reason, we are known by our fruit (Matthew 7:16-20).

Aman was dying in a hospital. He was not a

member of my church, but his friend who was newly saved asked me to visit him. This man had been brought up in religion, but had never received Jesus Christ as His Savior. I started visiting him daily and eventually led him to Christ. At three o'clock one morning a nurse called me to say that he was dying and wanted me to be there before he went. "You are his favorite friend who visits him. He loves you and wants you to come now," the nurse said.

Loving that man was loving God.

Chapter Two

UNTO THE LEAST

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

“And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

“And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

“For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

“Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

“Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

“When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

“Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

“And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

“For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

“I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

“Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

“Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

“And these shall go away into everlasting

punishment: but the righteous into life eternal” (Matthew 25:31-46).

Another way to love God is to forgive and forget as God forgives and forgets (see Ephesians 4:32). Giving by grace in the offering is loving God. Jesus said in Matthew 25:40, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” Every time we obey God by loving someone we are loving God. Feeding the homeless is loving God. The folks who visit the nursing homes are loving God by loving those people. Those who go into the prisons to teach and to show kindness love God.

Our value is not determined by what we do for others in works. Rather, our value is measured by a faith that serves by love (Galatians 5:6, 14).

The Value of Every Soul

“But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,

“And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

“And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

“Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?”

“And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise” (Luke 10:33-37).

The Samaritan had compassion on the wounded man, unlike the Levite (representing the law) and unlike the priest (representing religion). Jesus told us to give our neighbors mercy just as the Samaritan did.

Every soul in the universe is so valuable. It doesn't matter who they are or where they are. Those eating out of garbage cans have value to God. The ones who have made terrible, terrible mistakes and are now in prison have value to God. The children left neglected and wounded because of a broken home have value to God.

Three children belonging to a drunken couple started coming to our Vacation Bible School. One of the little ones came to me and asked, “Please go talk to my father and mother—they

drink all the time, and they scream and argue.” So we went over to their house.

Within an hour, both the mom and dad were on their knees, praying to receive Jesus Christ. Soon they were both baptized. That day, the six-year-old boy came to us and said, “Thank you for loving my mom and dad and making our home happy again.”

Going to that home was loving God with all our hearts, all our minds, all our souls, and all of our strength.

Forgiveness and Restoration

We do everything in our power to teach our young people to stay pure and to keep themselves as virgins. We preach and teach and have programs in our schools designed to keep them from living in sin. Yet, an isolated one, here and there, will fail. These ones we take in, and we counsel them, love them, and treat them just as if they had never sinned. That is God’s love.

Some were ready to give up—they thought that no one would ever let them have a church wedding because of their sin. But we went ahead and married them. Why? Because they repented, and now they need God’s love, not a probation period.

Jesus Christ doesn't put people on probation, although some crimes require we be obedient to honor the ordinances of law. Still, spiritually there is no probation for anyone who rebounds after his failure.

Chapter Three

SUPERNATURAL GRACE IN ACTION

Every time we love someone in a pure and godly way we are loving God. When someone fails and hurts us, we go to him and say, "I forgive you, and I want to help you. It doesn't matter that you have failed. I want to help you; I want to restore you to God." This is loving the sinner where the sinner is at in his failure. It is an expression of supernatural love and supernatural grace through the supernatural communication of the Word of God.

Do you know someone who is off? Someone you think needs correction? Just remember this: While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Were we sinners? Yes. Did Jesus wait until we got right before loving us? No. While we were yet sinners, He shed His blood and died for us just as we were. Did we merit that kind of love? No. Did we receive that kind love? Yes.

Jesus came into the world not to impute our trespasses unto us, but He came instead to give us a ministry and a word of reconciliation (see 1 John 2:1-2, John 3:16, 2 Corinthians 5:18-19).

Don't misunderstand me: Every soul on earth must be saved in order to go to heaven. They must make a decision to become born again. By grace through faith each of us is saved. But while we were sinners, Jesus loved us with all of His heart and no longer imputed sin to us. The moment we believed, we received His righteousness and had our names written in the Lamb's Book of Life for all eternity.

A Vision Beyond Borders

All of us have a part in the vision our overseas missionaries have for their countries. They are making a great impact, but they couldn't do it without our love and support. Some of us will never go to another land. Yet, others couldn't be sent without the prayers, the encouragement, and the financial support of those here.

Every time someone goes to Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, the Philippines, Uganda, Ghana, Thailand, Russia, India, and all the places we go, it is an expression of our body loving God. They go and represent

Jesus Christ, walking in distant fields, living under unusual conditions and adversity, risking their health and their lives at times. When they do this, we share the reward—members of the body of Christ in the local church loving the Lord with all of our hearts.

Working the Fields

We have a woman in our church whose husband is very sick in the hospital, and she has two small children. Still, she is so calm and precious, with the peace of God, loving her husband and her kids. With all that she is going through, she is showing God's love at every moment. She is loving God with all of her heart.

Staying true to the Truth and being faithful to three church services a week is loving God with all of our hearts. We are just a group of sinners in need of God's love but going forward. This is one of the beautiful things about being in a city such as ours. We have such a field with great needs. All of our ministries—for the women, for the youth, for the down-and-out, for the up-and-out—all of them are about showing His love. Any cup of cold water given in the name of the Lord is an expression of the love of the Lord.

Expressing God's love is something very practical. It is down to earth. Still, we can all touch heaven as we love God by loving others. There is no greater thing on earth.

CONCLUSION

Moses had an impediment in his speech (Exodus 4:10). According to Exodus 4, he came up with four excuses—reasons why God could not use him. When he realized his excuses did not impress his Creator, he insisted that God use Aaron to speak for him. Still, God mightily used Moses.

Paul was said to have a speech pattern that was contemptible (2 Corinthians 10:10). This wasn't speaking of his theology but of his high, squeaky voice. Though he was a brilliant man of God, he must have been hard to listen to when he preached all night. Those with him at the time, however, fell in love with what he had to say. Therefore, it wasn't a problem to listen to him preach all night and every day. They could hear him because they loved God.

Be reconciled to God and start loving Him with all your heart, soul, mind, and body. We have so little time here on earth. We can't afford

to waste it in defeat and disagreement. We need to reveal Jesus Christ to someone. There are so many who desperately need to be shown the love of God.

The power, peace, and provision of God is available to us. We will bless people in special ways—simply by loving them with God’s love.