

I. THE FIRST COMMANDMENT- THE DREAM OF GOD’S HEART AND OURS

Ps 8:4 What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him?

- A. What does God want most and first? He wants our heart and He is after our love. The mystery of our life is found in this truth: He wants our voluntary love. One of the most important questions to ask God is, “What are You looking for before anything else?” *When we find what God is looking for, then we will find what we are looking for.*

Mt 22: 37 Jesus said to him, " 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 "This is the first and great commandment.

- B. First means that this is the first consideration in the heart of God. It has the greatest impact on His heart and is our greatest calling, with fruit that lasts forever. Jesus did not call this the first option, but a commandment. Loving God is the *end in itself*; however, it never ends with loving God but always overflows with loving ourselves and others (believers and unbelievers).
- C. The love God has carries different expressions. Each area represents the stages of how we grow in love. We can cultivate each of these as God reveals them and helps us by His Spirit.
1. **God’s love for God:** Each person in the Trinity intensely loves the others with all their heart.
 2. **God’s love for His people:** He loves His people with all of His heart, mind, and strength.
 3. **Our love for God:** God’s love is imparted to His people by the Spirit (*Rom. 5:5*).
 4. **Our love for ourselves:** We love ourselves in God’s love and for God’s sake.
 5. **Our love for others:** We love others in the overflow of experiencing God’s love (*1 Jn. 4:19*).
- D. He wants us to find our definition in life as being loved by Him and lovers of Him. It didn’t start with us loving God, it started with Him loving us. It existed long before creation with God’s perfect love for His Son and the Holy Spirit. This is the simplest and deepest truth in the kingdom and is also the introduction and the ultimate experience of the kingdom. This truth gives every believer the right to view themselves as one of “God’s favorites.”
- Jn 15:9 ...in the same way the Father loves Me, that is how I love you.*
- E. God’s first desire is to love. The unspoken truth in *1 Jn 4:19* is God’s invitation for us to be loved by Him. It takes the love of God to love God back.
- 1 Jn 4:19“ We love Him because He first loved us.”*
- F. The main target of Satan is to attack the human heart with shame and doubt that they don’t really love God. When this happens, we do not feel cherished in our weakness. God’s main priority is to have a people that love Him with confidence.

Eph 5:29“ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.

II. HOW HE LOVES

- A. He Lavishes His Love on Us: The Father is not stingy with this great commodity that He acts as the wholesale broker for; He lavishes it on the objects of His affection. He doesn't love you in part, He doesn't grow in love for you because it's infinite in measure and eternal in duration.
- 1Jn 3:1"See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him."*
- B. He does not withhold His love when a sincere believer stumbles or struggles with sin. Our spiritual immaturity does not affect the way He feels about us. He never loves us less in this age than He will love us in the age to come when we live in the perfection of the resurrection state.
- C. The Love of God Then Comes into Us: God's love is then described as being in a person who has been transformed by God's love.
- Rom 5:5“God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us”*
- D. He Overflows in Love: The Lord declared about Himself that He was the God who abounds in love, whose love is powerful and all consuming.
- Ex 34:6“And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness”*
- E. His Love is Unfailing: The psalmists had great insight into the depths of God's emotions, making it a premiere place to search for details about His love. His love for mankind is unfailing and readily available to any who would seek Him.
- Ps 36:7 “How priceless is your unfailing love, O God! People take refuge in the shadow of your wings”*
- F. He Directs and Sends His Love: His love is described as being directed at us, sent to us, and poured out into us as into an empty vessel.
- Ps 42:7-8 “Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your waves and breakers have swept over me. By day the Lord directs his love, at night his song is with me— a prayer to the God of my life.”*
- Ps 57:3“He sends from heaven and saves me, rebuking those who hotly pursue me— God sends forth his love and his faithfulness.”*

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- G. We are to be students of how the Father loves the Son. We are called to look at, or understand, the quality of the Father's love for us (**1 Jn. 3:1**). To *look at and abide in* or to *keep ourselves* in God's love includes studying how the Father loves Jesus, so that we gain insight into how God loves us. Pray, "*Holy Spirit, let me see and feel what You see and feel about the Father's love for me.*"

1 Jn 3:1 Behold [focus on] what manner [quality] of love the Father has bestowed on us...

Jude 21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus...

- H. As we experience more of God's love, we feel joy—a *deep sense of well-being with confidence*—even in the face of disappointment, temptation, and persecution.

Jn 15:9-11 The Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love...¹¹These things I have spoken to you, that...your joy may be full.

- I. When God wants to empower us to love Him, He reveals Himself as One who loves us. We will only love God to the measure that we see that He loves us. It is the core truth that transforms us. We will not love God more by "trying harder" to love but by "seeing more" of His love.

Eph 3:18-19 ¹⁸May be able to comprehend...what is the width and length and depth and height—¹⁹to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.