

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. 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. The love God has for us carries different expressions. Each area represents an area 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**).

II. LOVING OURSELVES IN THE SAME LOVE THAT GOD HAS FOR US

- A. We will never love others more than we love ourselves by the grace of God. We are to see and love ourselves through the lens of Jesus’ love for us, His work on the cross, and our great value to Him.

Mt 22:39 “And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”

- B. Self-hatred comes from seeing our worth and success according to the flesh, comparing ourselves to others, and evaluating our lives by the values of this present evil age. We must not evaluate our life according to our looks, how much money, influence, or gifting we may have, but see our success and value from being in Christ.

2 Cor 10:12 They, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

- C. Self-hatred results in a deep sense of rejection that damages our ability to love and receive love. The emotional traffic of self-hatred through preoccupation with our image and what others think about us hinders our ability to love and obey Jesus.
- D. We cannot love Jesus or others well if we are overwhelmed with the “emotional traffic” of rejection, insecurities, comparisons, bitterness, etc. This leads to more “emotional traffic” of pride hidden in protecting ourselves and having to be right, so we won’t be rejected more.

III. LOVING OTHERS IS “LIKE” LOVING GOD

Mt 22:37-39 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart... The second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

- A. As we love God by encountering His love for us, we love others by regularly encountering God's love for us. To love someone who causes disruption in you, you must lock in to growing in how God loves you.

1 Jn 4:19 We love Him because He first loved us.

- B. It takes seeking to love Jesus with “all” our heart, mind, soul, and strength to love others “as” ourselves. It's in the overflow gratitude we have in being loved the way the Father loves Himself, and thus loving ourselves in His love.
- C. We are to seek others benefit “as,” or “with the same focus and energy as,” we seek it for ourselves. To walk in genuine love as defined by God is much more than sentimentalism.
- D. Walking in love requires the Spirit's power to energize us; we regularly need our emotions strengthened by the subtle impressions of the Spirit. Christianity is an ongoing encounter of love with a Person.

Rom 5:5 The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

IV. THE INVITATION TO SEE WHAT THE HOLY SPIRIT SEES IN PEOPLE

- A. Paul's prayer included the Lord helping us to see how He sees and values others (***Eph. 1:18***).

Eph 1:17-18 ...Father of glory may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know...the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints...

- B. We are to see one another according to who they are in the Spirit (or in God's eyes), not the flesh. We can't evaluate and define others according to how they look or how much money, influence, or gifting they have, but see their success and value in Christ.

2 Cor 5:14-17 For the love of Christ compels us...¹⁶from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh... ¹⁷If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation...all things have become new.

- C. To live “according to the flesh” includes agreeing with the enemy's false story he tells about others' lives. To live “according to the Spirit” includes agreeing with how God sees them in Christ.

Rom 8:5 Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

- D. The call to love one another requires a comprehensive re-ordering of how we think and process life. Seeking to love people like God loves us results in exposing our sin, need, and spiritual immaturity.

Eph 2:10 We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works...

- E. Being in unity with others is directly proportioned to *how much we see* God's glory given to other believers.

Jn 17:22 The glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one.

- F. The redeemed are crowned with glory and honor by virtue of Jesus' heart, cross, and resurrection.

Heb 2:7-10 You have crowned him with glory and honor...¹⁰It was fitting for Him [the Father]...in bringing many sons to glory..."

- G. The greatest problem in the Church today is our *low view of God*, which is followed by a *low view of salvation*, resulting in a *low view of God's people*. A high view of God and His glory will lead to a high view of who the redeemed are in Christ.