





LOVING GOD

“Do I love God, or just love loving Him ?”

- *John Piper*

*How to
DO
It !*

The Broader view of Loving God

- Reason # 1: I can love God for what He does for me
 - David's observation in Ps 119.109-110
 - Note Jamieson, Fausset, & Brown's comment on this in the *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*

"...safety and guidance is in the truth and promises of God". x

The Broader view of Loving God (cont'd)

- Here are a **few** of the key promises to love God for
 - Ps 103.2-5 > an overview
 - Ps 34.4 = God answers prayer to remove fears
 - Ps 34.7 = God's angel protects those who hold Him in awe
 - Ps 34.9-10 = Believer will not be in "need", God provides good things
 - Ps 34.17 = God will deliver the righteous from their troubles
 - Ps 34.18 = God will restore the believer from hopelessness
 - I Cor 10.13 = God provides believer with a way out of strong temptation
 - John 16.23 = God will answer requests made in His Name x

The Broader view of Loving God (cont'd)

- Perhaps one of the very best fulfilled promises is in John 14.16 = He puts the Holy Spirit in us, the Comforter

Here's Warren Wiersbe's observation on the value of this ...

“We usually think of “comfort” as soothing someone, consoling him or her; and to some extent this is true. But true comfort strengthens us to face life bravely and keep on going. It does not rob us of responsibility or make it easy for us to give up. Some translations call the Holy Spirit “the Encourager,” and this is a good choice of words” x

The Broader view of Loving God *(cont'd)*

- Reason # 2: I can love God for **Who** He is

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer's advice ...

"What a mistake to think that it is the task of theology to unravel God's mystery, to bring it down to the flat, ordinary human wisdom of experience and reason! It is the task of theology solely to preserve God's wonder as wonder, to understand, to defend, to glorify God's mystery as mystery."

- Or as John Piper put it more simply

"This is the essence of what it means to love God:
to be satisfied in Him. In Him - not just His gifts,
but God Himself, as the glorious person that He is !" x

Some Key Attributes I Should Love God for

- **God is Holy & Righteous** (He is, I'm not)
 - God's Holiness
 - God's perfect **character** > integrity, reliability
 - Moral excellence of God
 - Sets the standard for "holiness"
 - Why should God be loved for this ?
 - He is the ideal we wish to be
 - He is developing us to be like this > Rom 8.28-29
 - God's Righteousness
 - God's perfect **behavior**, revealing His holiness
 - God's commitment to His holy standard in all things
> Habakkuk 1.13a, Deut 32.4
 - Why should God be loved for this ?
 - He sets the perfect standard for our walk, how we live
 - Although He is supreme and sovereign, He condescends to guide us through life to live the holiness that is in us x

Some Key Attributes I Should Love God for *(cont'd)*

- **God's Love for mankind**

(His is perfect, mine is flawed and limited)

- God's love: "Agape" is love out of concern for the one loved
- Distinguishing meaning: To love the undeserving, despite disappointment and rejection
 - > 1 John 4.10
- 1 Cor 13.1-8a
 - Love IS Jesus, and love for Him in us must come from Him ^x



Some Key Attributes I Should Love God for(*cont'd*)

- **God's Faithfulness**

(His is infinitely reliable, my faith is sorely unreliable)

> Ps 117

- “lovingkindness” = covenant loyalty for/to His people
- This is “great” toward His people, it covers and protects and provides and guides
- “truth” = faithfulness to His word and promises
- “truth” strengthens lovingkindness x

WHY should we love God ?

- 1st: Jesus initiates love for God in our heart by cancelling our sins & putting His Holy Spirit in our hearts
 - > Luke 7.36-48
 - Being joined with Jesus establishes love for Him in us
 - > John 15.5, 9-10
- 2nd: God commanded that we must **deeply** love Him
 - > Luke 10.27 (Jesus quoting Deut 6.5)
 - The center and substance of the Deuteronomic covenant relationship is *not legalism but love.* x

WHY should we love God ? (cont'd)

Breaking down Luke 10.27 for better understanding ...

- "with all your heart"
 - Prov 4.23
"Watch over your heart with all diligence,
For from it flow the springs of life."
 - You can't begin a love relationship without your will, desires, passions, affections, perceptions, and thoughts rightly aligned to God from within
 - Loving with all your heart includes a **passionate pursuit of God daily** through conversational prayer, and reading and meditating on His Word
- "with all your soul"
 - Loving God with all your soul means dedicating your life to **Him**, living according to **His values**
 - We must look for ways to increase our commitment to Him every day x

WHY should we love God ? (cont'd)

- "with all your mind"
 - Ratio Christi President Corey Miller
"The heart can no longer embrace what the mind cannot believe"
 - Benjamin Franklin said, "If passion drives you, let reason hold the reins."
 - God wants you to use your reasoning to know Him and to love Him deeper

- "with all your strength"
 - The OT word for might/strength means
"very" in Hebrew / "power" in Greek / "wealth" in Aramaic
 - The expanded meaning appears to be that our "veriness" includes all that we have at our disposal
 - So we are called to love God with everything we are, we have, we have produced, and our relationships, like family
 - Better stated by Jason DeRouchie, professor of Old Testament and biblical theology at Bethlehem College & Seminary

"This means that the covenant love we're called to must be wholehearted, life-encompassing, community-impacting, exclusive commitment to our God" x

WHY should we love God ? *(cont'd)*

- 3rd: God shares friendship with those who respect Him
 - > Ps 25.14
- 4th: Loving God allows you to truly **know** Him
 - > I Cor 8.2-3
 - It is a closed loop
 - The more you know God, the more you will find reasons to love Him
 - The more you love Him, the more you will recognize more reasons to love Him x

The 1st Essential to Loving God

Loving God is obeying God's commandments

- Ultimate love is sacrificially demonstrated by Jesus
... **OUT OF OBEDIENCE** > John 10.17
“By going to the cross, Jesus showed that there was nothing that the love of God was not prepared to do and suffer for men and women, that there was literally no limit to it” – W. Barclay
- We should surrender to God's authority out of genuine love for Him
 - Trusting in His character and actions
 - Trusting that He intends to do the best for us
 - Obeying His commands as a result x

The 1st Essential to Loving God *(cont'd)*

A liberating fundamental truth

God's commandments are not intended as controls

> 1 John 5.1-4

“The world is anything that makes God’s commandments feel **burdensome** Our victory in Christ is that we see the world as unsatisfying and receive and obey God’s commandments with joy and hope” - John Piper

- Obeying God's commandments is **done out of loving God** and **wanting** to be obedient to Him and to please Him > John 14.21

“Deuteronomy’s frequent appeal for Israel to love God (6:5; 10:12; 11:1, 13, 22; 19:9; 30:6, 16, 20) shows that the aim of Old Testament law was not legalism but **love-inspired service.**”

Holman Concise Bible commentary x

The 1st Essential to Loving God *(cont'd)*

A liberating fundamental truth

- NT also shows God's commands as **beneficial**
 - > Matt 11.29-30, Lk 11.28
- Love for God is not wrought by legalistically observing commands, but by responding to one's knowledge and appreciation of God's love.

Rees, T.. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*

“When the law realizes itself as love for God and man in men's hearts, it ceases to bear the aspect of a command. The force of authority and the active resistance or inertia of the subject disappear; the law becomes a principle, a motive, a joyous harmony of man's will with the will of God; and in becoming internal, it becomes universal and transcends all distinctions of race or class.” x

The 1st Essential to Loving God *(cont'd)*

- Obeying God's commandments should be a pleasure for believers because of the benefits that it provides
 - > Ps 119.7-11, Ps 119.1-8, 97-104
- Ps 119.1-2 indicates that a believer's well-being is tied to how well the believer regards God's Word
 - God's Word contains what is best for the believer, whom God loves
- Note the zeal that the psalmist has for God's Word
 - Ps 119.92 > He would have perished without it
 - Indicates the importance of God's commandments as a benefactor in life
 - vs 93 > God's word "revived" him, i.e. kept him alive x

Allowing God to grow a loving relationship

To grow in loving God, ask Him to develop these in you

- Desiring God > Ps 63.1
- Delight in worship & being in God's house > Ps 27.4
- Love for God's word > Ps 119.97
- Self-sacrifice > Luke 14.43
- Living a life of love > 2 John 6
- Giving > 1 Chron 29.3
- Obeying God > 1 John 5.3
- Persevering through trials in faith > James 1.12 x

Allowing God to grow a loving relationship *(cont'd)*

And then there's the other commandment Jesus spoke of ...

- Loving Others > I John 4.21
- *Note what Matthew Elliot, a Faithlife staffer, writes about a fuller understanding of the meaning of the Greek word "agape" ..*

"Agape has come to be understood as a love irrespective of emotion...

In contrast to this, the Bible teaches us that we were made in the image of God. Our emotions and our reason were built to function in a relationship—as they do in God himself.

...

We often mistakenly believe that God does not care about how we feel. Stripping the emotion out of loving God and others inhibits our desire to fully live out the gospel....

When we approach Jesus' greatest commandments without emotion, we drain them of their power to transform. Love that is driven by duty and action only demands so much of us. In contrast, genuine love requires more; we can't simply check it off our spiritual to-do list. It's not easy to obey Jesus' command: "But to you who are willing to listen, I say, love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you" (Luke 6:27–28). Feeling a real love toward **those who are difficult to love** requires God's power to move in us." x

Summary

- Loving God = The believer appreciating Who/What God is, and immersing himself in God as Benefactor/"Senior Partner" in walking this life
- Ps 37.1-7
 - Note the verbs in verses 3-7

3^a Trust in the LORD and do good !!!;
^bDwell in the land and ^{1c}cultivate faithfulness.

4^a Delight yourself in the LORD;
And He will ^bgive you the desires of your heart.

5^a Commit your way to the LORD,
Trust also in Him, and He will do it.

6 He will bring forth ^ayour righteousness as the light
And your judgment ^bas the noonday.

7¹ Rest in the LORD and ^await ²patiently for Him;
^bDo not fret because of him who ^cprosperes in his way,
Because of the man who carries out wicked schemes.

- Particularly, what does “delight” imply ??
 - Have a strong feeling of happiness about
 - Glory in, be triumphant in
 - Enjoy being immersed in
 - Be tickled pink ✕

Summary (cont'd)

- After all of the benefits we have seen, and the glory of God Himself, what's not to love ??

- A thought to ponder

“Love for God, joy in God, and peace with God are aspects of the God-centered life. In other words, we are describing unconditional love, unbelievable joy, and unperturbable peace. Can others see these characteristics in our lives ?”

Olford, S. F., & Olford, D. L. xx