





# Loving God:

A Self-Sacrificial Commitment




## The Main Thing

- What is the “main thing” of the Christian life?
  - Living a holy life?
  - Glorifying God?
  - Fulfilling the Great Commission?
  - Having a personal relationship with Jesus?



## Jesus on the Main Thing

- Matthew 22:23-40
  - Sadducees silenced on the resurrection issue (23-33).
  - Pharisees are delighted, so they pull out their hardest question (34-36).
  - What is the greatest commandment in the law?
  - Jesus answered ...




## Jesus on the Main Thing

**Matthew 22: 37** And He said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."

38 "This is the great and foremost commandment.


- What OT passage does Jesus quote as the greatest commandment?
  - Deuteronomy 6:5



## Jesus on the Main Thing

**Deuteronomy 6:5** "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

- heart = inner self
- soul = total person
- might = total capacity



## The Second Main Thing

**Matthew 22:39** "The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'

- The second most important command comes from ...

**Leviticus 19:18** 'You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD.'



## It All Hangs On These

**Matthew 22:40** "On these two commandments hang the whole Law and the Prophets."

- Hangs = depends upon
- Everything God wants from us begins and ends in these two commands.
- There is nothing God wants more than these two things: Love Him and love others.



## It All Hangs On These

-If you love God and others, you will have kept the whole law.

- **Romans 13:8** he who loves another has fulfilled the law.
- **Galatians 5:14** For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."



## The Problem with Love

- We love ...
  - Ice cream
  - Our pets
  - Our parents
  - Our grandma and grandpa
  - Having a good time

... and we love God too!



## The Definition of Loving God

- To love God is:
  - to self-sacrificially commit oneself
  - to delight in Him,
  - to rejoice in serving Him,
  - to desire continually to please Him,
  - to seek one's happiness in Him,
  - and to thirst day and night for a fuller enjoyment of Him.



## A Total Commitment

- Jesus' paraphrase of Deut. 6:5 implies that loving God requires total commitment.

**Matthew 22: 37** And He said to him, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.'

**Luke 10:27** And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all you strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."



## Love is a Commitment

- Love is a commitment of uncompromising loyalty to God (Deut. 13:1-4).

**Deuteronomy 13:1** If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a miraculous sign or wonder,

## Love is a Commitment

2 and if the sign or wonder of which he has spoken takes place, and he says, "Let us follow other gods" (gods you have not known) "and let us worship them,"

3 you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. The LORD your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul.

## Love is a Commitment

4 It is the LORD your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him.

## Conclusion

**Love for God is first and foremost a commitment of uncompromising loyalty to God.**

## Loving God Involves Sacrifice

- Loving God means loving everyone and everything less than we love Him.
  - **Deut. 13:6-11** We are willing to sacrifice any close relationship that threatens our relationship with God.

## Love sacrifices rival relationships

**Deuteronomy 13:6** "If your brother, your mother's son, or your son or daughter, or the wife you cherish, or your friend who is as your own soul, entice you secretly, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods ' (whom neither you nor your fathers have known,

7 of the gods of the peoples who are around you, near you or far from you, from one end of the earth to the other end),

## Love sacrifices rival relationships

8 you shall not yield to him or listen to him; and your eye shall not pity him, nor shall you spare or conceal him.

9 "But you shall surely kill him; your hand shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people.

### Love sacrifices rival relationships

10 "So you shall stone him to death because he has sought to seduce you from the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

11 "Then all Israel will hear and be afraid, and will never again do such a wicked thing among you.

### Love sacrifices rival relationships

- Jesus confirms that love For God involves self-sacrifice.

**Matthew 10:37** "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

38 "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

### Love sacrifices rival relationships

39 "He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.

### Loving God Involves Sacrifice

- Loving God means loving everyone and everything less than we love Him.

1. Deut. 13:6-11 We are willing to sacrifice any close relationship that threatens our relationship with God.

### Loving God Involves Sacrifice

2. Deut. 13:12-18 We sacrifice acceptance by any "crowd" that threatens our relationship with God.

### Love is Self-Sacrificing

**Deuteronomy 13:12** "If you hear in one of your cities, which the LORD your God is giving you to live in, *anyone saying that*

13 some worthless men have gone out from among you and have seduced the inhabitants of their city, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods ' (whom you have not known),



### Love is Self-Sacrificing

14 then you shall investigate and search out and inquire thoroughly. If it is true *and* the matter established that this abomination has been done among you,

15 you shall surely strike the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying it and all that is in it and its cattle with the edge of the sword.



### Love is Self-Sacrificing

16 "Then you shall gather all its booty into the middle of its open square and burn the city and all its booty with fire as a whole burnt offering to the LORD your God; and it shall be a ruin forever. It shall never be rebuilt.



### Loving God Involves Sacrifice

- There are two ways to look at the sacrifice that love for God involves:
  - Longing and regret because of the things we are sacrificing for the Lord
  - Joy and delight because of the relationship we gain by our sacrifice.
  - Illustration: marriage vow



### Loving God Involves Sacrifice

- Jesus laid down his life for us in order to redeem us.
 

**Hebrews 12:2** fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.



### Loving God Involves Sacrifice

- Jesus calls us to the same kind of self-sacrificial love for Him.
 

**Luke 14:26** If any *man* come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.



### Loving God Involves Sacrifice

**Matthew 16:24** Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me

## Loving God Involves Sacrifice



- “deny himself” – say “no” to what you want
- “take up his cross” – cross is an instrument of death. When we die to our desires we are taking up our cross
- “follow me” – dying to self’s desires must always be following by living to Christ’s desires.

## Loving God Involves Sacrifice



- Examples of self-sacrifice
  - Ambitions
  - Material prosperity
  - Time
  - Anything that conflicts with total loyalty to God must be laid on the altar.
  - Whenever our way is contrary to God’s way, love for God sacrifices our way for His way.

## Loving God Involves Sacrifice



- Love’s sacrifice will not lack a reward.

**Matthew 19:29** "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, will receive a hundredfold, and will inherit eternal life.

## Loving God Involves Sacrifice



- The reward for such love is far greater than any loss.

**Philippians 3:8** More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ,

## Loving God Involves Sacrifice



9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,

10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;

11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

## Conclusion



**Loving God is a self-sacrificial commitment of uncompromising loyalty to God and God alone.**