

I have to **start** w/ an **apology** to the Wed night group

We have a **really incredible** Wed night **group** here

& I **REALLY** look forward to Wed nights – ***you should JOIN us***

But I have to **apologize** to the Wed night group

Because I **HAVE** to teach the **truth** we discussed Wed –
to the entire church **TODAY**

I **didn't plan it** that way

But it fits **TOO Perfectly** in what we're going thru in **ABIDING**
& it's **TOO Important** to not focus on for the **whole church**

We're going thru **Henry Blackaby's - Experiencing God** study
which should be **MANDATORY** for every Christian

& **as I lived with** the **message** from Wed night

I just couldn't help "**Bringing it**" to the whole church

So - **thanks** to the Wed Night Group for **listening again**

& maybe the **2nd time thru** – it'll really **stick** with you

& so **today** – we're going to **look** at the

Absolute – **Number 1** - **TOP PRIORITY** in the Christian Life

which is - **a LOVE RELATIONSHIP with God**

Let's Pray

Let me just say (b4 we get started) **for further study** on this subject -
“**Experiencing God**” (Blackaby) – “**Abiding in Christ**” (Murray)

What if I told you that . . .

Your Love Relationship with God is the Single Most Important , Top Priority, in your life.

Now – if you’re a **Christian**
you **MIGHT** have an **Immediate Response** of . . .

Of Course it is . . .

But just **STOP** a minute & think about it . . .
Don’t just **give** the answer you know you **SHOULD** give

Think about the **answer** that your **ACTIONS** actually **PROVE**

WHAT is the **ANSWER** to **THAT** statement
That the **ACTIONS** of your Life – **ACTUALLY PROVE** ??

OK – Let’s go around the room . . . we’ll start right here . . .

Seriously - if you would Quickly SAY to that statement – YES,
***My Love Relationship with God is the Single Most Important,
Top Priority, in my life***

Is **there a chance** that Maybe, More Honestly,
what you really **mean** is . . .

My Salvation Relationship with God is the Single Most Important , Top Priority, in my life.

We might **ACTUALLY** be saying – *Yeah,*

*I definitely want my **SALVATION** relationship to be Important,
cause I definitely want to go to HEAVEN*

BUT – We’re actually learning

WHAT ABIDING in Christ **MEANS** - & HOW to do it

& **ABIDING** in Christ is;

*The Driving Force in your Christian life – **AFTER** Salvation*

ABIDING in Christ is the Critical Requirement

for all those – who’ve **already** put their **FAITH in Christ**

This is a truth that **MUST** be understood

by those who **already** consider themselves - **Christians**

For **anyone** who would say – they’ve **Put their FAITH** in Jesus Christ
that they’re “**Following Christ**”

*Then I **would say** to you . . .*

*The Single Most Important , Top Priority, in our lives
Is our **Love Relationship** with God*

WHY ??

Why the **Big DRAMA** – Why am I **CHALLENGING YOU**
about your **Love Relationship** with God

Here’s **WHY** → →

Because -

**EVERYTHING in your Christian Life DEPENDS
on the Quality of your Love Relationship with God**

Man – THAT is such a HUGE statement - - - Really, Everything ??

[REPEAT]

If I'm going to make a statement THAT BIG –
I better be able to back that up with Scripture – RIGHT?

In O.T. Judaism – There was
a “Confession of Faith” - a Proclamation

That eventually became (by 2nd Century AD)
to be considered the “Minimum Required Study” of the Torah

& eventually was viewed even as a SUMMARY
of all God's Teachings to Israel in the O.T.

NO Sabbath Worship was conducted without reciting these Vs's
& Religious Jews still Recite these Vs's Every day

Even in the NAME that these Vs's are known by –
there is an URGENCY – a COMMAND – to HEAR & RESPOND

This SUMMATION of God's Teaching to Israel in the O.T
Is found INITIALLY in Deut 6:4-9

& is called – THE SHEMA

The FULL Shema ended up being THREE passages
Two in Deut (6 & 11) - & One in Numbers (15)

But the entire **SHEMA** is **BASED** on these Vs's in **Deut 6:4-9**
that came to **SUMMARIZE** all of **God's Commands** in the OT

Deuteronomy 6:4–5 (ESV)

4 "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.

5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

Guys – **pls hear this** – The **COMMAND** that became the **SUMMARY**
of **ALL** Israel's **life** with the Lord **is**

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might

& the **FIRST WORD** in **V.4** – the word "**HEAR**" – is **SHEMA**
& it is written as an **URGENT COMMAND**

HEAR O Israel – **HEAR & RESPOND** . . .
LOVE the Lord your God – with **ALL** that you are

Now – **maybe** you're **starting to drift** on me a little bit

maybe you're **thinking** . . . **DUH** – what **Christian** doesn't know
you're **supposed** to **LOVE** the Lord

BUT . . . I'm **not** asking if you **KNOW IT**
I'm **asking** you - if your life **SHOWS IT**

What **ACTIONS** in your life **SHOW** ?? . . . that

**The Single Most Important , Top Priority, in your life
Is your Love Relationship with God**

If it were a **CRIME** to **LOVE** Jesus Christ (*someday it might be*)
& **if** you were **CHARGED** with that **CRIME**

Would there be enough **HARD EVIDENCE** to **CONVICT YOU** ??

Or would the **EVIDENCE** of your **LOVE** for God
Be **ONLY** - - **HEAR-SAY** ??

Now – **Here's** what's really **COOL**

The **SHEMA** – is **ONE Urgent Command** (to Love God)
FOLLOWED by an **EXPLANATION** of **HOW** to Love Him

Let's start in Deut 6:5 - again

Deuteronomy 6:5–9 (ESV)

5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (the command)

& now – comes **the Explanation** of – **HOW**

6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.

NLT - *you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands*

7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

Diligently **TEACH** your children to **LOVE** God - - & **TALK** about **Loving God**, when you **Sit**, **Walk**, **Go to Bed**, **Wake Up**

8 You shall bind them (these words) as a sign on your hand, and they (these words) shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

Jews take this very Literally – But the Spiritual Point is:

Let Everything you **DO** (hand) – Everything you **THINK ABOUT** (head)
be **DIRECTED** (Bound) by your **LOVE** for God

9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Again – the **Spiritual Point** is:

Allow your **LOVE** for God to be **CLEARLY SEEN**

In **HOW** you *live* - & in **WHERE** you *live*

But Now - ***Wait a Minute***

If you're already **thinking** – **MAN** – I have got to **DO MORE**

I've got to **CLEAN UP** my Life More

I have to **LOOK MORE** like a Christian . . .

Then **SADLY** . . . you might be **missing** the **whole point**

RELIGION says I have to

DO MORE - - CLEAN UP - - LOOK MORE LIKE

But God's **HIGHEST** Command is – **TO LOVE HIM MORE**

The **SHEMA** is **ONE** Urgent Command → →

Deut 6:5 - You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

& then – **The Following Vs'** - Explain **HOW** to do that

HOW – **Do** you **Love the Lord** your God with all your **Heart**, with all your **Soul**, & with all your **Might** ??

1) V.6 (From NLT) - **Commit** Yourself **WHOLEHEARTEDLY** to your **Love Relationship** with God

2) V.7 – Diligently **TEACH** your children **HOW** to **Love God**

3) V.7 – **TALK** about **LOVING GOD**;
When you're **SITTING** in your house
When you're **WALKING** by the way
When you're going to **BED** at night
When you **WAKE UP** in the morning

4) V.8 – Allow your **LOVE for GOD** to **CONTROL** (BIND) what you **DO** with your Hands

5) V.8 – Allow your **LOVE for God** to **CONTROL** (BIND) what you **THINK** about

6) V.9 – Allow your **LOVE for God** to **CONTROL** (BIND) how you **LIVE** in your Home

These are **NOT MEANT** to be Religious **Requirements**

The **SHEMA** simply says;

***Your Love Relationship with God
is the Single Most Important, Top Priority, in your life.***

& then gives you **SIX WAYS** to **GROW**
in that - ***Single Most Important, Top Priority, in your life***

Do you see it ??

The **OTHER WAY** we could describe the **SHEMA** is;

Continually ABIDE in your Love Relationship with the Lord

& **following** the Command to - ***LOVE the Lord with ALL we have***
are **SIX WAYS** to **ABIDE** in that **Love**

Is that COOL – or what ?

The **SHEMA** – is about **ABIDING**
in a **LOVE RELATIONSHIP** with God

COMMITTING yourself wholeheartedly to it
Diligently **TEACHING** your children about it
Always **TALKING** about it
Allowing it to **CONTROL**;
what you **DO** & what you **THINK** and how you **LIVE**

The **SHEMA** – is about **ABIDING**
is your **Love Relationship** with God !!

Just **think for a minute** - about a **Strong Love Relationship**

& then **listen** to this Definition of **Abiding in Christ** (Pastor Craig Caster)

***To abide means to have intimacy and unity,
to have permanence with Jesus Christ,
to remain united with Him in heart, mind and will.***

THAT is a **Great Definition** of **ABIDING** - &
It is **ALSO** a **Great Definition** of the **SHEMA**

& **THAT** is why

***Your Love Relationship with God is
The Single Most Important , Top Priority, in your life***

Because, TRULY

***EVERYTHING in your Christian Life DEPENDS
on the Quality of your Love Relationship with God***

12 times in the OT – the **command “to Love the Lord”** – is given

& **every time** it is given as a **“Summary”** of our life with God

Buuuut – that’s **OLD TESTAMENT**, right ??

Everything’s changed in the **N.T.** hasn’t it ??

well, let’s see . . . Turn over to **Mk Ch 12**

In **Mk Ch 12** the Sadducees were trying to Trip Jesus Up
throwing misc questions at him

& then – **A SCRIBE** (A Teacher of the Law)
steps in – apparently with **pure motives** (as we'll see)

& asks Jesus **WHICH** (LIT “What type, or Kind”)
of the **Commandments** – was **Most Important** (LIT First in Priority)

Now – **This Scribe** may have been referring to
NOT ONLY the original **TEN Commandments**

But **ALSO** the Additional **613 Commandments**
the Jews Developed out of the **TORAH** (1st 5 Books)

But it didn't matter **HOW MANY** of the **COMMANDMENTS**
the Scribe was referring to (**10 or 623**)

Jesus was going to **SUMMARIZE** & **PRIORITIZE**
ALL the **commandments** of God

Mark 12:28–30 (ESV)

28 And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, “Which commandment is the most important of all?”

29 Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.

30 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’

Hmmmm . . . **Where** have we heard **THAT** before ?

Jesus **SUMS UP**
ALL of the **Vertical Commandments** of God

With **the same statement** that Summed them up in **the O.T.**

***You shall Love the Lord your God – with ALL that you are
with all your heart, soul, mind, strength***

& **THEN** to finish – Jesus **SUMMED** up all the
Horizontal commands – In **V.31**

Mark 12:31 (ESV)

***31 The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’
There is no other commandment greater than these.’***

& so - with the All-Encompassing Commandment of **LOVE**
Jesus **SUMMED UP** the entire **LAW**

In the **Parallel account** - in **Mat 22:40**
the **AMP Bible** reads

Matthew 22:40 (AMP)

***40 These two commandments sum up and upon them depend all
the Law and the Prophets.***

Now **THAT** – is a **HUGE TRUTH**

& so allow me to say again

***The Single Most Important , Top Priority, in your life
Is your Love Relationship with God***

To have **INTIMACY** & **UNITY** – To have **PERMANENCE WITH**
to **REMAIN UNITED** in heart, mind, & will – with **your LORD**

& **THAT** – is what we mean by – **ABIDING** in Christ

OK – I think we've made that pretty clear

But NOW – HOW is it – that I can say

EVERYTHING in your Christian Life DEPENDS on the Quality of your Love Relationship with God

BECAUSE – Thru-out the Bible

God **FIRST** pursues a Love Relationship with His people

& then **THRU** that Love Relationship

God **accomplishes** His **will** - both **IN** that person's life
& **THRU** that person, for others

We can go **ALL** the way **BACK** - to **Adam & Eve**

It would take all day to try to list **ALL**
that **God** was **accomplishing** thru **Adam & Eve**

But with **ALL** that God planned to do thru **Adam & Eve**
HOW did He first **begin** His Work

He **began** it – with a **Love Relationship** with them
Where God "**Walked with Them**" in the **Cool of the Day**

FIRST – there was **RELATIONSHIP**

THEN there was **God's purpose** coming **THRU** that Relationship

How about **Noah** ?? → →

FIRST – Noah had a **VERY LONG Relationship**
of **Love**, & **Trust**, & **Obedience** with God

THEN – God **accomplished** the **Saving of Mankind** on Earth
THRU His Relationship with **NOAH**

How about **ABRAHAM** ??

FIRST – God developed a **Love Relationship** with Abraham
based on **FAITH**, **OBEDIENCE**, & even **FRIENDSHIP**

& **THEN** (FINALLY) – God **brought forth** His Purpose
of creating His own Peculiar People

THRU His Relationship with **ABRAHAM**

How about **MOSES** ??

FIRST – Moses **took** things into his **own hands** . . .

THEN – God **Got Moses** on the Back Side of the **Desert**
where He could **develop** a **Relationship** with Moses, for **40 yrs**

THEN – God **accomplished** His Purpose to **FREE** His People
from Bondage – **THRU** His Relationship with **MOSES**

Do you see it ??

We could **go on & on** – Bible **Character** after Bible **Character**
Both **Men** & **Women**

FIRST – God Pursues a Love Relationship
that is – **DEEP**, & **ABIDING**, & **ALL-ENCOMPASSING**

THEN – God **Accomplishes HIS Will**
THRU that Love Relationship

& **THAT** is **WHY** . . .

***EVERYTHING in your Christian Life DEPENDS
on the Quality of your Love Relationship with God***

Because it is **IN** & **THRU** - your **Love Relationship**

That God Will **Accomplish** ALL His **Plans** & **Purposes**
Both **FOR** your life, and **THRU** your life

So . . . **IF**

***The Single Most Important , Top Priority, in your life
Is your Love Relationship with God***

AND **IF** . . .

***EVERYTHING in your Christian Life DEPENDS
on the Quality of your Love Relationship with God***

THEN - **WHAT** are we doing about our Love Relationship with God??

Now – **Be careful** – Please **don't misunderstand** me → →

I'm not asking

if you **CALL** yourself a **CHRISTIAN**

if you **LOOK** like a **CHRISTIAN**

if you even **ACT** like a **CHRISTIAN** (*when around other Christians*)

I'm asking – **is there Evidence** in our lives

of a **REAL, TANGIBLE** Love Relationship with Jesus Christ

Because God **ONLY** works

IN & THRU – A **Genuine LOVE Relationship**

So – **WHAT** does that **LOOK LIKE** ???

WHAT does that **GENUINE** Love Relationship - Look Like ??

Now – **Believe me** – We are going to **Spend some Time** -

on **HOW** to Develop a **GENUINE** Love Relationship with God

But **I have to** Give you **SOME HINT** of what it looks like **today**

So . . . for today – Let's **consider** what a

Genuine LOVE Relationship **on Earth** Looks Like

WHAT does that **GENUINE** Love Relationship - Look Like ??

Communication

Honesty

Intimacy

Trust

Permanence

Unity . . .

In the sense of a Marriage – we would even say – Our lives are so intertwined – that we have become ONE FLESH

Like Paul saying (Gal 2:20)

It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me

CAN WE DEVELOP

Communication - Honesty - Intimacy

Trust - Permanence - & Unity

IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST ??

YES we can !!

& If we WANT God – to WORK IN our Lives

& If we WANT God – to WORK THRU our Lives

Then we MUST MAKE the Developing

of THAT Relationship with Him - - PRIORITY # 1

Amen ??

& let me address Just One Last Thing -
as look forward to the NEXT MESSAGE

IF - we will Make our Love Relationship with Jesus
our TOP PRIORITY

THEN – HE will Provide us

Peace that Passes Understanding

The Joy of the Lord

& the Power to live Victoriously in this World

We **DON'T** have to **STRIVE** for these things

All we have to do – is learn;

To **ABIDE** in Him

To **SEEK HIM** First – *as our Top Priority*

& ***ALL these things – will be added unto us***

In our **NEXT MSG** – we're going to look
at the **Promise of God** . . .

That HE will

STRENGTHEN US,

ESTABLISH US, &

KEEP US **STEADFAST**

If we will Remain ***Vitally United to Him,***
as the **Healthy Branch** is to the Vine

If we will simply ***ABIDE in Him***

Let's Pray