

“The Gift of Love”

Part 2 of “Unwrapping the Gifts”

Pastor Al Brice | December 9, 2018

Matthew 6:19-24 AMP: ¹⁹ “Do not store up for yourselves [material] treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in and steal; ²¹ for where your treasure is, there your heart [your wishes, your desires; that on which your life centers] will be also.

²² “The eye is the lamp of the body; so if your eye is clear [spiritually perceptive], your whole body will be full of light [benefiting from God’s precepts]. ²³ But if your eye is bad [spiritually blind], your whole body will be full of darkness [devoid of God’s precepts]. So if the [very] light inside you [your inner self, your heart, your conscience] is darkness, how great *and* terrible is that darkness!

²⁴ “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon [money, possessions, fame, status, or whatever is valued more than the Lord].

1. There are only two loves in this world: The Love of God and the love of the devil, which is spiritual darkness.

John 3:19-21 AMP: ¹⁹ This is the judgment [that is, the cause for indictment, the test by which people are judged, the basis for the sentence]: the Light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For every wrongdoer hates the Light, and does not come to the Light [but shrinks from it] for fear that his [sinful, worthless] activities will be exposed *and* condemned. ²¹ But whoever practices truth [and does what is right—morally, ethically, spiritually] comes to the Light, so that his works may be plainly shown to be what they are—accomplished in God [divinely prompted, done with God’s help, in dependence on Him].”

2. How does the devil get a person to love him?

Matthew 4:8-10 AMP: ⁸ Again, the devil took Him up on a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory [splendor, magnificence, and excellence] of them; ⁹ and he said to Him, “All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me.” ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, “Go away, Satan! For it is written *and* forever remains written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.’”

The devil always points out the externals of life to try and change our focus (**Matthew 4:8**). If he can get us refocused, he can influence our passion, desires, and pursuits which will affect our priorities and prayers. This will in turn have the capacity and power to produce effects in my actions and behavior.

The devil is after your love because, what or who you love, you will worship!! He knows how much God loves you and he can't change or affect that unconditional love. Therefore, he attempts to turn our love away from God to the things of this world, other relationships, or anything else that will turn us away from the love of God.

He doesn't present himself to be worshipped but presents things that he has and can give. By these methods, the devil can get his worship.

"All these things" (**Matthew 4:9**): Look how Jesus addressed things of this world:

Luke 12:30-32 AMP: ³⁰ For all the [pagan] nations of the world greedily seek these things; and your [heavenly] Father [already] knows that you need them. ³¹ But [strive for and actively] seek His kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. ³² Do not be afraid *and* anxious, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

- The devil's perversion method:

1 John 2:15-17 AMP: ¹⁵ Do not love the world [of sin that opposes God and His precepts], nor the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the lust *and* sensual craving of the flesh and the lust *and* longing of the eyes and the boastful pride of life [pretentious confidence in one's resources or in the stability of earthly things]—these do not come from the Father, but are from the world. ¹⁷ The world is passing away, and with it its lusts [the shameful pursuits and ungodly longings]; but the one who does the will of God *and* carries out His purposes lives forever.

- The devil's **perverting** ('to alter something from its original course') methods include: power, seeking reputation, selfish ambition, sex, money...and all this leads to idolatry:

Colossians 3:5 AMP: So put to death *and* deprive of power the evil longings of your earthly body [with its sensual, self-centered instincts] immorality, impurity, *sinful* passion, evil desire, and greed, which is [a kind of] idolatry [because it replaces your devotion to God].

2 Timothy 3:1-5 AMP: But understand this, that in the last days dangerous times [of great stress and trouble] will come [difficult days that will be hard to bear]. ² For people will be lovers of self [narcissistic, self-focused], lovers of money [impelled by greed], boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy *and* profane, ³ [and they will be] unloving [devoid of natural human affection, calloused and inhumane], irreconcilable, malicious gossips, devoid of self-control [intemperate, immoral], brutal, haters of good, ⁴ traitors, reckless, conceited, lovers of [sensual] pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ holding to a form of [outward] godliness (religion), although they have denied its power [for their conduct nullifies their claim of faith]. Avoid such people *and* keep far away from them.

3. Love's priority:

a. God's number one priority:

1 John 4:9-10 AMP: ⁹ By this the love of God was displayed in us, in that God has sent His [One and] only begotten Son [the One who is truly unique, the only One of His kind] into the world so that we might live through Him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation [that is, the atoning sacrifice, and the satisfying offering] for our sins [fulfilling God's requirement for justice against sin and placating His wrath].

b. Our number one priority:

Mark 12:30-31 AMP: ³⁰ and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul (life), and with all your mind (thought, understanding), and with all your strength.' ³¹ This is the second: 'You shall [unselfishly] love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

1 John 4:7-8 AMP: ⁷ Beloved, let us [unselfishly] love *and* seek the best for one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves [others] is born of God and knows God [through personal experience]. ⁸ The one who does not love has not become acquainted with God [does not and never did know Him], for God is love. [He is the originator of love, and it is an enduring attribute of His nature.]

1 John 3:14-15 AMP: ¹⁴ We know that we have passed out of death into Life, because we love the brothers and sisters. He who does not love remains in [spiritual] death.
¹⁵ Everyone who hates (works against) his brother [in Christ] is [at heart] a murderer [by God's standards]; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.