

## ***Session 6 Stage #3: Loving Jesus With Our Whole Person***

### **I. REVIEW: THERE ARE 5 STAGES TO GROWING IN LOVE**

- A. The foundational premise in this teaching series is that God loves us with the same intensity that God loves God (Jn. 15:9; 17:23). This quality of love is foundational to life in God's kingdom. Jesus called us to abide in love—to continually live in and stay *focused* on it.
- 9“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.” (Jn. 15:9)***
- B. The love burning in God's heart has at least 5 expressions that are deeply interrelated. Each of these expressions represent the 5 stages of how a believer can grow in love. We seek to understand and walk in all 5 stages simultaneously since they are revealed and imparted to us by the 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 very own 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).
- C. Stage 1 is to receive increased understanding of the perfect love that is found in the relationships within the Trinity. The Son loves the Father (Jn. 14:31), and the Father loves the Son (Jn. 3:35; 5:20; 15:9; 17:23). We best understand God's love as we consider the Trinity. Why? The way that God loves within the Trinity is the *only* way that He loves us—*He always loves in fullness*.
1. Each person of the Trinity enjoys and fully engages in the relationship with the others.
  2. Jesus has joy and enthusiasm in His love for the Father. He is moved in loving the Father and in being loved by the Father. He is never bored in His relationship with the Father.
- D. Stage 2 is to receive increased understanding of the love that God has for us (Eph. 1:17; 3:18-19). Jesus declared that He loves the redeemed in the same way that His Father loves Him (Jn. 15:9). This is a most dynamic truth for which we say, “Thank You,” and ask the Spirit to reveal more of **God's love for us** and to impart more **love for God in us**.
- 9“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.” (Jn. 15:9)***
- E. When God wants to empower us to love Him, He reveals Himself as One who loves us. We will only love God to the measure that we see that He loves us. It is the core truth that transforms us. We will not love God more by “trying harder” to love but by “seeing more” of His love.
- 19We love Him because [we understand that] He first loved us. (1 Jn. 4:19)***

### **II. STAGE #3: OUR LOVE FOR GOD**

- A. Stage 3 is to receive an increased impartation of love for Jesus. Jesus prayed that the Father's love would be imparted to us (Jn. 17:26). The grace to love Jesus is the Spirit's gift to us (Rom. 5:5).

<sup>26</sup>“...that the love with which You [the Father] loved Me may be in them...” (Jn. 17:26)

<sup>5</sup>...the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit... (Rom. 5:5)

### III. LOVING GOD IN THE 4 SPHERES OF OUR HUMAN MAKE-UP

- A. Mark 12:30, God’s mission statement for the human race, is what the Lord desires most from His people. The Lord created us to love Him in 4 spheres of our life—our heart (affections), soul (personality), mind (intellect), and strength (resources) because He loves us in this way.

<sup>30</sup>***You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.*** (Mk. 12:30)

- B. The command to love God in Deuteronomy 6:4-5 is called the Shema. The first word, “hear,” is the Hebrew word, “*shema*.” For centuries, the Jewish people have recited the “Shema Israel” twice a day in synagogues. It is the command to hear because the Lord has something to say.

<sup>4</sup>***Hear [Shema], O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!*** <sup>5</sup>***You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.*** (Deut. 6:4-5)

- C. The 4 spheres of life in which we are to love God—all overlap and impact each other.

1. To love God with all our heart refers to our affections and what we set our heart on.
2. To love God with all our mind relates to how we think and what we feed our mind with.
3. To love God with all our strength is to use our strengths or natural resources.
4. To love God with all our soul focuses on living from our true spiritual identity.

### IV. SPHERE #1: LOVING GOD WITH ALL OUR HEART—OUR AFFECTIONS

- A. We are to set our heart intentionally on loving Jesus by making it our primary life goal. We set our affections on anything we choose. We change our mind, and God changes our heart (emotions). Our emotions will follow whatever we set our heart to pursue in a diligent way.

<sup>14</sup>“***Because he has set his love [heart] upon Me, therefore I will deliver him.***” (Ps. 91:14)

- B. We set our love on God by determining that the *primary dream* (goal and definition of success) of our life is to walk out the first commandment by grace. Our *secondary dreams* and definitions of success are related to our family, friends, vocation, ministry etc.—they flow from loving God.

1. In doing this, we determine the course by which our emotions develop over time. As we change our goals, the Spirit changes our heart (emotions).
2. One of the most important decisions in our life is when we intentionally determine that our *primary dream* is to walk out the first commandment.

- C. David set his heart to love God as his primary life goal vision (Ps. 18:1; cf. 16:8; 27:4; 36:8; 37:4).

***<sup>1</sup>I will love You, O LORD, my strength. (Ps. 18:1)***

- D. Delighting in the Lord includes setting our love or affection on Him. Do not underestimate the power of setting our hearts on God. In doing this we put ourselves in the path of the Holy Spirit.

***<sup>4</sup>Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. (Ps. 37:4)***

- E. Our heart speaks of our emotions, affections, longings, and the very impulse of our desires that affect every decision that we make. The heart is the hidden current that moves our inner man. Our heart has powerful emotions that color the way we see everything. Our heart defines our core reality and drives all that we do.

***<sup>23</sup>Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life. (Prov. 4:23)***

- F. Loving Jesus with all our heart includes pursuing and obeying Him with enthusiasm. Some search for Bible verses or definitions of grace to validate giving less of themselves in pursuing Jesus.
- G. Jesus defined loving God as being rooted in a spirit of obedience (Jn. 14:15-21). We are to love God on God's terms. Loving Jesus includes committing to walk in a spirit of obedience, even when it is costly, and resisting all that diminishes our affections (bitterness, lust, self-promotion, etc.).

***<sup>15</sup>"If you love Me, keep My commandments." (Jn. 14:15)***

- H. We set our heart on loving God by regularly asking for the Spirit's supernatural help to love Jesus. Ask God to pour His love for Jesus into your heart and to direct your heart into His love.

***<sup>5</sup>May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God. (2 Thes. 3:5)***

## V. SPHERE #2: LOVING GOD WITH ALL OUR MIND—OUR THOUGHTS

- A. We express love for God with our mind by putting things in our mind which inspire love for God instead of things which diminish our capacity to love Him. What we do with our mind affects our ability to receive and express love. Thus, we value taking time to fill our mind with His Word.

***<sup>5</sup>Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh...***

***<sup>6</sup>For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. (Rom. 8:5-6)***

- B. To love God with all our mind involves taking time to fill our mind with God's Word and to agree with biblical paradigms of God. This involves refusing lies about Jesus as our Bridegroom, King, and Judge. We gain revelation of God's love and beauty by meditating on it from God's Word.

- C. Loving God with our mind includes refusing to feed our mind on lust (Job 31:1). The end-time explosion of pornography is Satan's attack on the first commandment. In the generation the Lord returns, immorality will reach unprecedented heights (Rev. 9:21; 14:8; 17:1-4; 18:3, 9-10; 19:2).

***<sup>1</sup>"I have made a covenant with my eyes; why should I look upon a young woman?" (Job 31:1)***

- D. The language of the mind is images. It is an internal movie screen that provides us with pictures. Our memory is a vast reservoir of near endless visuals. Imagination was given to us by God to visualize His truth and to interact with Him in a deep and continual way throughout eternity.
- E. Much of our life occurs in our mind because we can never turn it off. We cannot shut down the images in our mind, but we can direct them. Through meditation, we can take the reins of our mind and write “the script of the movie” we continually watch within. In this way we can avoid wasting the glorious potential of our mind. Our mind defines so much of who we are and how we love.

## VI. SPHERE #3: LOVING GOD WITH ALL OUR STRENGTH—OUR RESOURCES

- A. We express love for God in the way we use our strength or natural resources (physical energy, time, money, talents, words, influence, etc.) to seek and serve Jesus and to help others also do this.
- B. Jesus described 5 grace-releasing activities that position us to receive more in the grace of God. We **serve and give** (charitable deeds: giving service and money; 6:1-4, 19-21), **pray** (6:5-13), **bless adversaries** (forgive, 6:14-15; 5:44), and **fast** (6:16-18). We “fast” our strengths, especially in the 5 activities Jesus emphasized in Matthew 6:1-18. These 5 areas express voluntary weakness because we commit these natural strengths (time, money, energy, reputation, etc.) into the Spirit’s hands.  
*<sup>9</sup>My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness [this includes the voluntary weakness of the fasted lifestyle]. (2 Cor. 12:9)*
- C. We tend to use our strength first to increase our honor, comfort, influence, etc.
- D. God takes pleasure in the small things that His people do when they invest their strength in ways that express love for Him and help others to love Him (Heb. 6:10).  
*<sup>10</sup>For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. (Heb. 6:10)*

## VII. SPHERE #4: LOVING GOD WITH ALL OUR SOUL—OUR PERSONALITY

- A. We express loving God *with our soul* when we exert the emotional energy to realign our heart to base our identity on our relationship with God instead of on our accomplishments, recognition, etc.
- B. Our identity is determined by how we define our success and value and by how we see ourselves.
- C. Our *primary success* and *identity* are found in being ones whom God loves and who love God, confessing, **“I am loved by God, and I am a lover of God; therefore, I am successful.”**

- D. Our soul speaks of our personality and sense of identity. It is the way we see ourselves, the way we carry our heart before God and people. To love God with all our soul includes living from a right identity that determines how we see ourselves, carry our heart, and express our personality.
- E. When our identity is rooted in what we achieve or who applauds us, then we are more likely to burn out and live in an “emotional storm” (being preoccupied with self). Thus, we must exert the energy that is needed to realign our thinking to agree with His love and the truth about our lives.
- F. In our failure we confess, ***“I’m loved by God and I am a lover of God; therefore, I am successful.”*** We are not defined by our failures or our accomplishments. We are to live by our spiritual identity (what we look like to God) instead of merely our natural identity (what we look like to others).
- G. We can confess, “Jesus, I am Your beloved—a disciple You love, one of Your favorite ones.”  
***“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you...” (Jn. 15:9)***  
***Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” (Jn. 21:7)***