

Ladies Bible Study
All Things for Good
Chapter Four
Lesson Five

Chapter 4

Five things concerning love to God:

1. The nature of love to God
 - a. Love to God is longing for God as the supreme and sovereign good.
 - i. We should love God because of who he is.
 1. Holy, wise, powerful etc...
 - ii. We should love God because of what he has done.
 1. He is our creator:
 - a. Angels and unfallen man get to worship God as their creator
 2. He is our redeemer:
 - a. “There is no joy like the joy engendered by **redemption**... In **redemption** God opens up Himself to man in a wholly unprecedented manner... One who is being saved explores and receives more from God than unfallen man or unfallen angels ever could” (Vos, Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation, 295).
 - b. “For the religion of **redeemed** man is deeper and richer religion than that of unfallen man could ever have been. The sad experiences through which he has passed; the glorious experiences into which by **redemptive** grace he has been brought; has not only deepened and enriched his religious nature, but have also deepened and enriched the contents of his religious understanding and religious experience. There are aspects of the divine nature, there are whole regions of religious experience, to the apprehension and enjoyment of

which only the **redeemed** soul has access. And the morality of the **redeemed** man is equally fuller and richer than the morality of unfallen man could ever have become. There are obligations of gratitude, for example, which fall on him – obligations on the one hand to a humility of quite distinctive character, and on the other hand to **love of an absolutely peculiar quality** – to which unfallen man must have remained a stranger" (Warfield, Shorter Writings, Vo. I, 44-45).

2. The ground of love to God; that is, knowledge

a. Does having right knowledge really matter?

i. Matt. 13:19, 23

b. "We cannot love that which we do not know" (67).

c. What is it that we need to know in Him?

i. We need to know his **fulness**. His fulness of grace to cleanses us, of glory to crown us, and boundless goodness like a sea without bottom or shore.

ii. We need to know his **freeness**.

1. "Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and price" (Is. 55:1).

a. "God does not require we bring money with us, only appetite" (68).

2. Read Is. 55:8-9. What is the context of these words?

a. You think, "How could He forgive me? He could never forgive me!" Are your thoughts as wonderful as God's thoughts? Are your ways as high as God's ways? Put your hands over your mouth like Job and worship!

iii. We need to know his **friendship** (Watson says propriety or property but I am sticking with the letter "f" ☺)

1. We need to know that this full and free God is our God. “This God is our God” (Ps. 48:14). If this full and free God is ours it will secure our love to Him.

3. The kinds of love – which are three:

- a. Love of **appreciation**.
 - i. This love rightly values God. It appreciates God for who He is. This love so sets its gaze upon God that if we have Him we do not care that we lack all else. “All creatures vanish in our thoughts when the Sun of Righteousness shines in His full splendor” (68).
- b. Love of **complacency and delight**
 - i. This is a love that rests in God. This is a love that is not searching for other potential lovers. This love is delighting in God such that no one or nothing else is contending for the center of your affections.
- c. Love of **benevolence**
 - i. This is a love that wants to see God’s name honored. This is a love that wants to see God’s will be done in all of life.

4. The properties of love

- a. Our love must be **entire**, with the whole heart.
 - i. “God will not be an inmate, to have only one room in the heart, and all the other rooms let out to sin. It must be an entire love” (69).
- b. Our love must be **sincere**.
 - i. Sincere means pure. It is a love that is not self-interested, but God-interested.
 - ii. “He loves Thee too little who loves anything together with Thee which he loves not for Thy sake” (Augustine). What does this quote mean?

iii. “Alexander had two friends, Hephestion and Craterus, of whom he said, ‘Hephestion loves me because I am Alexander; Craterus loves me because I am king Alexander.’ The one loved his person, the other loved his gifts. Many love God because he gives them corn and wine, and not for his intrinsic excellences” (69).

1. We should not just love the gifts, we should love the giver. If you love a rich friend because they are rich, you may not really love them. You should not just love what you can get from God, you should love God.

c. Our love must be **fervent**

- i. This love must be filled with ardent affection. It is a holy love that burns like the seraphim.
- ii. No one has ever loved God too much. No one has ever loved God more than he deserved to be loved.

d. Our love must be **active**

- i. The love of God sends the mind studying God, speaking of God, and living for God.

e. Our love must be **liberal**

- i. This love is willing to give freely of itself in service to God and others.

f. Our love must be **peculiar**

- i. The love which you give to God must be unlike any love you give to anyone else. As God gives His children a special electing and adopting love so we give God a special love in return.

g. Our love must be **permanent**

- i. It never ends. It is to continue through trials and triumphs.

5. The degrees of love

a. We must love God above all other **objects**

- i. “Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you” (Ps. 73:25).
- ii. “The measure of our love to God, must be to love Him without measure” (Bernard, 72-73).
- b. We must love God more than **relations**
 - i. Think of how Abraham was willing to sacrifice Isaac.
 - ii. Luke 14:26
- c. We must love God more than our **estate**
 - i. “If the world be laid in one scale, and Christ in the other, he must weigh heaviest. And is it thus? Has Christ the highest room in our affections?” (73).

Use: A sharp reproof to those who do not love God

1. Read pages 74-75

Conclusion:

What does one do who does not feel they have love for God? Should you read your Bible? Yes. Should you pray? Yes. Should you be in worship every Lord's Day morning and evening unless providentially hindered? Yes. But what you really need is to contemplate the love of God for those who have little love for Him. Do you struggle to love God? I ask you to contemplate the love of God. You must be overwhelmed by the unimaginably deep love of God for you in Christ and to be warmed to love Him afresh. “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” (Rom. 8:35). You must love God, but you must never rest in your love for God. You rest in the love of God for you when He shed His blood for your sins on the cross. You must be caught up in the work of Jesus Christ for you.

“How can we grow in holiness, especially in trials? I will tell you, the only answer is love. The only way you'll ever grow in holiness is love. You'll never grow in holiness by being a legalist. You'll never grow in holiness by being an antinomian. It's only when your heart is filled with gospel love, with evangelical love. Love is the only road to holiness. M'Chenyne said somewhere, ‘if you are visited with seasons of coldness and indifference, if you begin to be weary or lag behind in the service of God. Behold, here is the remedy. Look again to the

bleeding Savior.' Know and sense and feel within your heart, people of God, your loved and love him in return" (McWilliams, Sermon on 1 Pet. 1:3-12)

1 O love of God, how strong and true!
eternal and yet ever new,
uncomprehended and unbought,
beyond all knowledge and all thought!
O love of God, how deep and great,
far deeper than man's deepest hate;
self-fed, self-kindled like the light,
changeless, eternal, infinite.

2 O heav'nly love, how precious still,
in days of weariness and ill,
in nights of pain and helplessness,
to heal, to comfort, and to bless!
O wide-embracing, wondrous love!
We read you in the sky above,
we read you in the earth below,
in seas that swell, and streams that flow.

3 We read you best in him who came
to bear for us the cross of shame;
sent by the Father from on high,
our life to live, our death to die.
We read your pow'r to bless and save,
e'en in the darkness of the grave;
still more in resurrection light
we read the fulness of your might.

4 O love of God, our shield and stay
through all the perils of our way!
Eternal love, in you we rest,
forever safe, forever blest.
We will exalt you, God and King,
and we will ever praise your name;
we will extol you ev'ry day,
and evermore your praise proclaim.