Love For God

(Selected Scriptures)
4/3/05

Introduction: Has your passion for God left?
Scripture has many admonitions to love God.

I. Love for God is the automatic response to His love for you
I John 4:19
**In order for us to truly love God, we must know (be assured of) His sacrificial love for us.

The woman, who loved much: See Luke 7
Lu 7:47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loveth little.

> Love for God is the grand mark of a true child of God

II. Love for God is the Greatest of all Commands - Matthew 22:37-40

HOW should we love God?
When we love God totally (with our whole being), He is:
1. The center of my affections
2. The center of my life
3. The center of my thoughts
4. The center of my activity

III. Love for God is the secret to a fulfilled Christian life

A. Loving God is the key to cheerful obedience
(The greatest stimulus [motivating factor] to obeying God is to love Him)
I Jn. 5:3

> View all temptation as a test of your love for God. Go to the Lord in prayer and say: "God I really want to give in to this temptation, but you are worthy of my obedience. I love you. And I offer my obedience to you as a sweet sacrifice to you.

B. Loving God is the key to close fellowship with Christ
Jn. 14:23

C. Loving God is the key to blessedness.
Rom. 8:28; Ja. 1:12 *SEE Psalm 91:14-16

> *The Greatest detractor from having Love for God is Love for the World (or the things in the World)* - I John 2:15

*Good substitutes cannot replace your first love! (Example: the Church of Ephesus: Rev. 2:1-f)

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Introduction:

Scripture has many admonitions to love God.
Here is a small sampling:

Deuteronomy 6:5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

Deuteronomy 11:1 Therefore thou shalt love the LORD thy God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments, alway.

Joshua 22:5 But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the LORD charged you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.

Joshua 23:11 Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the LORD your God.

Psalms 31:23 O love the LORD, all ye his saints: for the LORD preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.

Ephesians 6:24 Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen. <<To the Ephesians written from Rome, by Tychicus.>>

Luke 11:42 But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

I. Love for God is the automatic response to His love for you

HOW CAN I LOVE GOD?

SEE I John 4:19

If it is true that we "love Him because He first loved us", it is imperative that we really know how much He loved and loves us so that we will love Him more.

God's love for us was unconditional (the verse does not say, "He loved us because we first loved Him.").
Our love for God, however, is conditional. It is conditioned by our knowing His love for us.

No one loves God (in the true sense) who has not first experienced His love. The times we love God are the times when we see clearly His love for us.

In order for us to truly love God, we must know (be assured of) His love for us.

Why do some Christians leave "their first love"? (Rev. 2:4)
ANSWER: They lose sight of God's gracious love for them.

1. We lose sight of the cross (when first saved, this is all we thought about)
2. We forget what wretched sinners we were when God's unconditional love found us.
3. We doubt His wondrous love for us now that we are saved and yet still sin.

"How little real love there is for God. One chief reason for this is because our hearts are so little occupied with His wondrous love for His people. The better we are acquainted with His love--its character, fullness, blessedness--the more will our hearts be drawn out in love to Him (Pink, Attributes, p. 77)

Psalm 116:1
I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.

**In order for us to truly love God, we must know (be assured of) His sacrificial love for us.

The woman, who loved much: See Luke 7

Lu 7:47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loveth little.

Love for God is the grand mark of a true child of God

1Co 16:22 - If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.
Romans 8:28 - And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

II. Love for God is the Greatest of all Commands

Matthew 22:37-40 - Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second *is* like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

V. 35

"Tempting Him" - testing Him

After hearing Christ's good answer to the Sadducees, this lawyer (doctor of the Law of God; a master in the Scriptures) tested Him with an ethics exam.

The Jews of Christ's day had documented 613 commandments in the Law (248 positive and 365 negative) (Wiersbe, p. 81).

V. 36

"The great commandment" - Which command is paramount? reigns supreme? ranks as the top? is first and foremost?

Loving God is not merely a N.T. priority, but is an eternal priority that also applied to the Old Testament saint.
SEE - Deut. 6:4-7 Deut. 10:12

HOW should we love God?

"Heart . . . soul . . . mind. . . strength" = Love Him with your whole being; with everything you have.

When we love God totally (with our whole being), He is:

1. The center of my affections

   "Heart" - my inner being which thinks, feels, and chooses (what I feel deeply about reflects my priorities).

2. The center of my life

   "Soul" - the immaterial part of man as it relates to this life (what I live for reflects my priorities).

3. The center of my thoughts

   "Mind" - my ideas, convictions, thoughts, philosophies of life should revolve around God. (what I spend my time thinking about [dwelling on, pondering] reflects my priorities).

4. The center of my activity

   "Strength" - my physical ability (so translated in I Pet. 4:11), talents, etc., should be used for God (what I use my abilities on reflects my priorities)

III. Love for God is the secret to a fulfilled Christian life

1. Loving God is the key to cheerful <u>obedience</u>

(the greatest stimulus [motivating factor] to obeying God is to love Him)

I Jn. 5:3 - "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous."

--Love makes obedience easy!

The reason "Love" is stated as the top priority attitude is because it is the <u>motivating factor</u>
behind everything we do.

If one loves God, he will seek to <u>please</u> God.
If one loves God, he will be <u>holy</u>.
If one loves God, he will <u>do right</u>.
If one loves God, he will <u>keep His commandments.</u>
--John 14:15, 21

View all temptation as a test of your love for God. Go to the Lord in prayer and say: "God I really want to give in to this temptation, but you are worthy of my obedience. I love you. And I offer my obedience to you as a sweet sacrifice to you.

2. Loving God is the key to <u>close fellowship</u> with Christ

Jn. 14:23 - "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words:
and my Father will love him,
and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."
I Cor. 8:3 - "But if any man love God, the same is known of Him."
Ja. 4:8 - "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you . . ."

3. Loving God is the key to <u>blessedness</u>.

Showers of benefits fall upon those who make it their priority to love God.

Rom. 8:28 - "...All things work together for good to them that <u>love</u> God..."

Ja. 1:12 - "He shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love
him."

*SEE Psalm 91:14-16

If the greatest command is to love God, then the greatest sin is to not love Him!

"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema" (I Cor. 16:22).

God foretold that in the last days men would be "lovers of their own selves . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (II Tim. 3:2, 4).

As the End draws near, lovelessness will be a sign: "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Mt. 24:12).

Christ's combines Lev. 19:18 with Deut. 6:5 to summarize the whole Law.

V. 40
All of the Old Testament Law and prophets could be hung on these two commands. The pole that supports the hanger holding all of God's commands is love.

Rom. 13:9-10 - *"For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."*
Gal. 5:14 - *"For all the law if fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."*

The Greatest detractor from having Love for God is Love for the World (or the things in the World) - I John 2:15

1Jo 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

Love for the world's system & things <u>forfeits your capacity to love God as you should</u>

"If <u>any man</u> love the world" - No one is excluded; worldliness affects everyone's fellowship with God.

"The love of the Father is not in him" - <u>Not</u> speaking of God's love for the person, but the person's love <u>for</u> God.

You cannot love the world and God at the same time.

You can't give your heart to materialism and vanity and give it to God at the same time. You can't love two masters. God calls love for this world spiritual "<u>adultery</u>." (James 4:4 - "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.")

Ephesus: The Church which had left it's first love:

Cp. Rev. 2:4 - "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."

*Good substitutes cannot replace your first love!
(Ephesus was a working [v. 2a], discerning [v. 2b, 6], and enduring [v. 3] church, yet had left her first love)

How do I know I have left my first love?

1. When you serve but don't find joy in it.

2. When you teach, but are cold and uncompassionate.

3. When you work at church for the applause or recognition of men

4. When you take a stand for Christ, but do so with bitterness and a "holier than thou" attitude toward everyone else.

Why do Christians leave their first love?

1. Other things look more appealing.

2. We take it for granted (thinking: "it will still be there when I come back").

3. We neglect it and don't nurture it and thereby forget about it (therefore, God calls on us to remember – Rev. 2:5).

Loving Christ even comes above loving our family and everyone else (Mt. 10:37 - "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."