

# The Gospel Truth

BIBLICAL INSTRUCTION AND ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE  
MISSION FIELD WORLDWIDE.

## GIVE ME YOUR HEART

*(Mark 10:17-23; Luke 18:18-24)*

The sun beat down on the rocky hillside as Jesus and his disciples walked down the dusty road. It had been a long day and they were weary of the crowds of people that normally thronged them.

Suddenly, a richly clad man came running down the road toward them. Panting, he knelt in front of Jesus. With anticipation in his voice, he asked, "Good Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Jesus stopped and looked at the man with compassion. "You know what the commandments teach," He replied. "Do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, defraud not, honor thy father and mother." With a heart of sincerity, the young man said, "I have followed those commandments from childhood."

Jesus turned his head to one side thoughtfully, as he considered the man before him. He knew that the man was

a ruler and had great riches. He was moved that this good young man had humbled himself and had some desire to please God. With great love in His voice, Jesus said, "There is one




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*Morality and good  
conduct are not  
sufficient to gain  
eternal life.*

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thing that you lack. Go and sell everything that you have and give it to the poor and you shall have treasure in heaven. Then, come and join me and my disciples."

Disappointment clouded the ruler's face as he slowly stood up, considering the internal conflict. He was stricken with grief because he wanted so badly to follow the Master. Yet, he had much wealth and was unwilling to sell it. With sorrow in his eyes, he shook his head and slowly walked away. Jesus' eyes glistened with tears as he watched the young man.

While Jesus acknowledged the good, moral qualities of this man, He knew they would not enable him to gain Heaven. It would take the man surrendering his whole heart and loving God more than everything else in life. God wanted the very seat of the young man's affections. Jesus knew that somewhere the man's love for the world would come into conflict with his desire to follow the Lord. Hence, Jesus addressed the foundation of what it means to follow Him.

Morality and following a good code of conduct are not sufficient to gain eternal life; neither is just having a desire

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# WHAT THE BIBLE Teaches About...

## **Word of God**

2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matt. 24:35

## **Relationship of Love**

Matt. 22:37-40; John 14:21-23; 1 John 4:7-11

## **Repentance**

Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor. 7:10

## **New Birth**

John 3:3-7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:1-4;

Eph. 2:1, 5-6

## **Freedom From Sin**

1 John 5:18; Matt. 1:21; John 8:11

## **Infilling of the Holy Spirit**

Acts 19:2; Acts 15:8-9; Acts 1:8

## **Holiness**

Luke 1:73-75; Heb. 12:14; 1 Peter 1:15-16;

Titus 2:11-12; Rom. 6:22

## **Kingdom of God**

Luke 17:20-21; Romans 14:17; John 18:36

## **The Church**

Acts 2:47; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Col 1:18

## **Unity**

John 17:20-23; Gal 3:28; Rev. 18:2-4

## **Ordinances**

Matt. 28:19-20; Matt. 26:26-30;

1 Cor. 11:23-27; John 13:14-17

## **Divine Healing**

Luke 4:18; Isaiah 53:4-5; James 5:13-16

## **Sanctity of Marriage**

Matt. 19:5-6; Luke 16:18; Rom. 7:2-3;

1 Cor. 7:10-11

## **Outward Appearance**

1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Cor. 11:14-15; Deut. 22:5

## **End of Time**

2 Peter 3:7-12; John 5:28-29; 2 Cor. 5:10;

Matt 25:31-46

## **Pacifism**

Luke 6:27-29; Luke 18:20

## **Worship**

John 4:23-24; Eph. 5:19; 2 Cor. 3:17

## **Great Commission**

Mark 16:15

(Continued from page 1)

for the things of God adequate. It takes a total consecration in love to follow Jesus and to inherit Heaven. We may have desire for God, we may have a measure of love, we may be good spouses, good citizens, and good neighbors, but it will take more.

God desires first and foremost the very seat of our affections. "My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways" (Proverbs 23:26). This is still the cry from the heart of God to mankind --"Give me your heart." When we set our affections on God, we love Him with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength. When God has our heart, He has our affections, our time, our money, our dreams and plans. We put Him first in every area of life.

Many people today come inquiring for Heaven as did the young rich ruler. Some walk away unwilling to give God their total affections. Others become active members in the church--singing, praying, teaching, and sometimes even preaching; yet never giving to God that 'one thing' that may remain a hindrance in their love.

Where is your love today? Are you lacking one thing? Have you sold out for God? Give Him your heart. Whatever you have to give up to follow Jesus will be well rewarded in this life and in the life to come.

-mws

## THE GOSPEL TRUTH

The Gospel Truth periodical is published in the name of the Lord for all people of all lands in the interest of establishing and encouraging them in the truth of God's Word. This publication teaches and promotes the truths of the Bible that have been established since the time of Christ and the apostles.

The Word of God is the singular, acceptable rule of faith. It teaches salvation and deliverance from sin through the atonement of Jesus Christ; a subsequent infilling of the Holy Spirit to lead, direct and empower; practical holiness in every area of life; and the unity and oneness of God's people. Acceptable service to God is through a personal relationship of love founded in truth.

Editors: Michael & René Smith

## SUBSCRIPTION

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## CONTACT

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# Editorial



"I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live" (Psalm 116:1-2).

As a very young child, I gave my heart to God and surrendered myself into His care. I vividly remember crying because of the conviction of the Holy Spirit on my life. I prayed with my mother in a back Sunday school room for Jesus to come into my heart. While I never went deep into sin, I needed the same saving grace of God in my life as the drug addict and the drunkard. As I grew and matured, I had some 'spiritual growing pains' and failures along the way--as do many who get saved at a young age. I never lost my desire to serve God and yet I made many trips to an altar of prayer as a young person. I thank God today for the faithfulness of the Spirit. As the song says, "The Spirit led unerring to the land I hold today." I was and remain desperate for the daily presence of God in my life, for my way will lead me astray.

I am in love with the Lord and value His presence in my life more than life itself. God has been faithful to hear my voice and answer prayer. He has healed my body, drawn me back from the brink of death, given me a wonderful family, provided for my daily bread; but most of all He saved my soul from the bondage and grip of sin. He has given me His peace and the presence of His Spirit. Truly, I have much for which to thank Him. Regardless of trials and heartaches, if you love the Lord you have the most valuable treasure in the whole world. This edition of *The Gospel Truth* focuses on the most important commandment and doctrine in the Bible -- Love.

As you face this new year, be assured that God will continue to be faithful to you. As He has met your needs in the past and seen you through the valleys and the fire, so shall He be with you this year. Stay faithful, pilgrim of Jesus, and keep your eyes on the Master. New victories await you and if you hold on to Jesus, one day shall walk with Him into Heaven.

The last two months I have suffered in my body and have been unable to be very active due to headaches, seizures, and physical weakness. I am thankful for every touch from God and I look for better things ahead. I am encouraged in the Lord and desire to have more years to labor in His service if He sees fit to bless me with life and strength.

My prayer remains that *The Gospel Truth* will be an encouragement and help to every reader at home and abroad. If this paper has been a blessing to you, it would be an encouragement for the future of the work to hear back from you. Please feel free to email me personally at: michael.w.smith@sbcglobal.net

May God bless you with a wonderful year because of His presence. May we all walk in the light and holiness of His Word and be at peace.

-Michael W Smith  
January 2013



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## HOW TO REKINDLE YOUR LOVE FOR GOD

### REPENT

Acknowledge that you have become complacent and lost your fervor. Repent and ask God for forgiveness and restoration. Psalm 51:12

### SEEK GOD

Return to a diligent study of the scripture. Ask God to restore a hunger for truth and righteousness.

### OBEDIENCE

Cut off those things which draw you away from God and distract you from your purpose in life. Obedience is an active choice to love God above all other things.

### FORSAKE NOT FELLOWSHIP

Do not neglect to attend worship services. Prepare your heart and lay aside all the cares of life when you come to the house of God.

### SERVE OTHERS

Do not allow selfishness to cause you to become lazy spiritually. Ask the Lord how you can serve Him by serving those around you.

### PRACTICE THE JOY OF SALVATION

Live with a heart of thankfulness for God's blessings. Daily express your love for God in everything you do.

# BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

## SUBJECT: RELATIONSHIP OF LOVE

### Scripture Reading:

1 John 4:16-17 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

**Definition of Love:** *Affection, benevolence, charity, attachment. A choice.*

### I. God's Thoughts Toward Man

- A. Jeremiah 31:3 Drawn with lovingkindness.
- B. Jeremiah 29:11-13 Thoughts of peace.

### II. God's Desire For Relationship

- A. Genesis 3:8-9 God desired to commune .
- B. Revelation 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door.
- C. 2 Corinthians 5:17-18 Reconciled to God.

### III. Whom God Loveth

- A. John 3:16 The world.
- B. Romans 5:8 Sinners.
- C. Ephesians 5:25 The church.

### IV. Demonstration of God's Love

- A. 1 John 4:9-10 God sent his only Son.
- B. 1 John 3:1,16 Behold what manner of love.

### V. Love is the Greatest Commandment

- A. Deuteronomy 10:12 Love is required.
- B. Matthew 22:36-38 Thou shalt love the Lord.
- C. 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 Without love.

### VI. Love is a Divine Gift

- A. 1 John 4:7-8 Love is of God.
- B. Romans 5:5 Love is given by the Holy Ghost.

### VII. Love is In Deed

- A. 1 John 3:18 Let us love in deed and in truth.
- B. Matthew 15:8 Some honor with their lips.

### VIII. Manifestation of Our Love

- A. John 14:15, 23-24 He will keep my words.
- B. 1 John 5:3 We keep his commandments.
- C. 1 John 4:20-21 We love the brethren.

### IX. Impossible to Love God and the World

- A. Matthew 6:24 Cannot serve two masters.
- B. 1 John 2:15-17 Love not the world.
- C. Deuteronomy 13:3 The Lord proves our love.

### X. Characteristics of Genuine Love

- A. 2 Corinthians 6:6 Unfeigned.
- B. 2 Corinthians 8:8 Sincere.
- C. 1 Timothy 1:5 Out of a pure heart.

### XI. Fulfillment in Love

- A. Ephesians 3:17-19 The fulness of God.
- B. John 15:10-11 That your joy might be full.

### XII. The Power of Love

- A. 1 John 4:18 Perfect love casteth out fear.
- B. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 Constrained by love.

### XIII. What Separates Man From God's Love?

- A. Romans 8:35 Who shall separate us?
- B. John 14:23-24 Disobedience.

### XIV. Loss of Love

- A. Matthew 24:12 Love shall wax cold.
- B. Revelation 2:4 Left thy first love.
- C. Revelation 3:15-17 Lukewarm.

### XV. Reward to Those Who Love God

- A. James 2:5 Heirs of the kingdom.
- B. 2 Timothy 4:7-8 A crown of righteousness.

# GOD'S GREATEST DESIRE

*Companion article for Bible Study*

## **GOD'S PURSUIT OF MANKIND**

From the dawn of creation, God has desired to have a relationship with mankind. We read of God walking in the Garden of Eden in the cool of the day desiring to fellowship and be in communion with Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:8-9). While the Bible is a history book and a book of theology, it is chiefly a record of God's desire and pursuit of a relationship of love with humanity.

## **SIN BREAKS THE CONNECTION WITH GOD**

God created the human race and His greatest desire is to be connected with His creation – not by force or coercion, but by love. Adam and Eve disobeyed God and their sin separated them from the close communion that they had previously experienced. Sin always breaks the connection between man and God. However, God was not content to leave us separated by sin and unrighteousness, sentenced to death.



## **GOD SENT HIS SON TO RECONCILE US**

God loved us so much that He sent His only Son to earth to die for us that we might be saved (John 3:16). He was motivated by love and God's love is still a reality for us today. "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee" (Jeremiah 31:3).

## **GOD'S DEALINGS ARE ALWAYS MOTIVATED BY LOVE**

"God is love" (1 John 4:8) and that is the basis of all His dealings with mankind. Some may see God as a hard taskmaster – demanding and difficult to please. This picture of God is from Satan. God is a God of love who cares about everything that touches our lives. He is reaching out in love to every individual no matter what his or her condition. We are unworthy of God's great love and have done nothing to earn or deserve it. "But God commendeth his love toward

us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

## **LOVE RETURNED IS LOVE COMPLETE**

Love is incomplete when it is not returned. God loves us, but that relationship is not complete until we love Him unreservedly with all of our heart. A lawyer asked Jesus, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law? 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" (Matthew 22:36-38). All other doctrines are in vain unless based on this first and

greatest commandment. Many people serve God out of fear or devotion to a church or theology. There is a deeper, richer experience to be found in a relationship of love. An experience of love brings true fulfillment because the relationship is complete. This is the source of true peace and joy in serving God.

## **TRUE LOVE IS NEVER ACHIEVED BY FORCE**

Once there was a man who would chain his wife in the kitchen every day when he would leave for work. He was afraid she would leave him and not come back. Their relationship was one of fear and bondage. How much better for a husband to leave for work with the knowledge that his wife would be there when he returned because she loved him. That is the relationship that God desires--a relationship where someone is not forced to live righteously but where one lives righteously because of a heart of love. It is the power of love of that constrains true children of God to live righteously (2 Cor. 5:14).

## **OUR LOVE IS SHOWN THROUGH OBEDIENCE**

Many people draw nigh to God with their mouth and honor Him with their lips, but their hearts are far from Him (Matthew 15:8). True love is not demonstrated by the

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words that we speak but by the conduct of our life. Jesus said, "If a man love me, he will keep my words" (John 14:23). This is the true manifestation of love in a world where many profess Christ but few are obedient to the Word of God. Where there is a lack of obedience, there is a lack of love. There is nothing that can separate us from the love of God (Rom. 8:35) except for our own disobedience (John 14:23-24).

#### **THERE IS ONLY ROOM FOR ONE "FIRST LOVE"**

"No man can serve two masters" (Matthew 6:24). There is no room in a relationship with God to follow the sinful way of the world and God Himself. If someone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him (1 John 2:15-17).



#### **LOVE BRINGS SACRIFICE**

When two people truly love each other, they are willing to sacrifice time and energy to be together. Their desire is to please the other. This is true of a heart relationship with God. Love brings voluntary worship and service to God. Obedience is no longer a chore but an expression of our love. Love brings happiness, satisfaction, and strength in service to the Lord.

#### **HE THAT LOVES GOD ALSO LOVES HIS BROTHER**

When people enter into an experience of God's love, His love is shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost (Romans 5:5). That relationship is shown not only in obedience to God but in

the love that is shown to the brethren. For if a man love not his brother, the love of God is not in Him (1 John 4:20-21).

#### **PERFECT LOVE ASSURES US OF ETERNAL LIFE**

Not only does a love relationship with God bring peace and joy in this life, it assures us of eternal life. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:8).

#### **GOD'S GREATEST DESIRE IS A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOU**

God's greatest desire is for you to enter into a close relationship and friendship with Him. God wants to be an integral part of your life. He desires for you to spend time with Him and to communicate with Him. There is wonderful, personal fellowship to be found in this kind of relationship. A relationship with God, where love is the foundation, will give your life real meaning and purpose.

-mws

*"For the LORD your God  
proveth you,  
to know whether  
ye love the LORD your God  
with all your heart  
and with all your soul.*

*Ye shall walk after the LORD  
your God, and fear him,  
and keep his commandments,  
and obey his voice,  
and ye shall serve him,  
and cleave unto him."*

*Deuteronomy 13:3-4*



**Question: What does it mean to lose your first love?**

**Answer:** The question references the scripture in Revelation 2:4 which reads: "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." The Spirit of God was speaking to the congregation in Ephesus.


Take note that this congregation had taken a stand against evil and was doing much that was good and right. While obedient in theology and in much doctrine, the Ephesians had lost the strong affection and connection with God that they had one time experienced. The JFB commentary says it thus: "Their warmth of love had given place to a lifeless orthodoxy."

The scripture often compares the relationship between man and Christ to the relationship between a husband and wife. Consider a newly married couple who is in love and experiences that spark of devotion. They want to spend time together and make many sacrifices for each other. Their marriage is dynamic and full of life.

As so often is the case in our sinful world, many couples lose the passion and fervency. They begin co-existing, living in the same house, but the warmth of love has been lost. Similarly, this has hap-

pened to many a person in their relationship with God. Someone newly saved experiences a wonderful time in their guilt-free state of peace and grace. Over time, if the relationship is not maintained, the person can either go back to sin or continue doing the 'right' things without the zeal of their first love.

*“Many have lost their first love...*



*Their time, energy, attention and affections are centered on other things... God becomes their 'second love'— or worse.”*

Those who have lost their first love are commanded to repent. There are many individuals and congregations who have taken a stand against evil but have lost the fire of love that once burned. They have lost the essence of what God desired from them in the first place—a

relationship of love.

It is the passionate love of God that brings the fire in service to God. Let us not fall prey to the dullness of being doctrinally correct without the love to give it life. A relationship takes time. It must be guarded from things that could encroach upon it.

"And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Matthew 24:12). Many have lost their first love because they have given their love to the things of this world while maintaining a stand that is fundamentally 'doctrinally' correct. God becomes their "second love" or worse. Their time, energy, attention, and affections are centered on other things.

This brings a lethargy in living for God and there isn't a lot of zeal to spread the gospel. There is a form of godliness. It is important to reevaluate our lives and fervency to be sure we are not losing our first love.

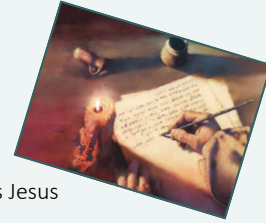
As a husband and wife need to communicate and spend time together to keep the love strong, so it is necessary with God. It is vital to nurture our 'first love' by reading the Word of God, praying, keeping connected, and putting God first in every decision. Most importantly, let love be the motivation for service and for doing right.

It is in this first love experience that you will find the passion of sharing the gospel and the anointing in daily living. It brings doctrine alive and gives reason and joy for being. -mws



### DID YOU KNOW?

- ◆ **JEHOVAH (YAHWEH)** –Hebrew) is the personal name of God in the Scriptures--the living, self-existent, unchanging, eternal, creator and Lord of all things.
- ◆ **JESUS** means 'Savior.'
- ◆ **EMMANUEL** means 'God with us.'
- ◆ **MESSIAH** is from the Hebrew meaning 'anointed.'
- ◆ **CHRIST** is a Greek word meaning 'the anointed one.' Synonymous with Messiah.
- ◆ **ALPHA AND OMEGA** are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. It represents Jesus as 'the beginning and the end, the first and the last.'



### A Word In Season

## Not With Excellency of Speech

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1 Corinthians 2:1-5 *And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. (2) For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. (3) And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. (4) And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: (5) That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.*

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, known as "the prince of preachers," felt he delivered his sermon so poorly one Sunday that he was ashamed of himself. As he walked away from his church, the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, he wondered how any good could come from that message. When he arrived home, he dropped to his knees and prayed, "Lord God, You can do something with nothing. Bless that poor sermon."



In the months that followed, 41 people said that they had decided to trust Christ as Saviour because of that "weak" message. The following Sunday, to make up for his previous "failure," Spurgeon had prepared a "great" sermon -- but no one responded.

Spurgeon's experience underscores two important lessons for all who serve the Lord. First, we need the blessing of God on our efforts. Solomon said in Psalm 127:1, "Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it." And second, our weakness is an occasion for the working of God's power. The apostle Paul said, "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:10).

*Our Daily Bread, May 18, 1992.*

HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD