

LOVE IN THE RIGHT ORDER

Loving God, loving yourself rightly, and loving others

THE CENTRAL TRUTH

God's love is the source. When we receive His love, it changes how we respond to God, how we see ourselves, and how we treat others. **"We love because he first loved us."** - 1 John 4:19

1. THE GREATEST COMMANDMENTS

Jesus said: *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."* He then added: *"Love your neighbor as yourself."* All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments (Matthew 22:37-40).

RECEIVE	LOVE GOD	SEE YOURSELF	LOVE OTHERS
God first loved us	with heart, soul and mind	through God's truth and grace	with truth, mercy and action

2. LOVING GOD IS MORE THAN WORDS

God warned that people could honor Him with their lips while their hearts remained far away (Isaiah 29:13; Matthew 15:8-9). Biblical love for God includes:

- **Obedience:** "If you love me, keep my commands" (John 14:15).
- **Loyalty:** choosing God when temptation, culture, or personal desire pulls elsewhere.
- **Relationship:** seeking God Himself, not only the things we want Him to provide.
- **Surrender:** trusting His will when it conflicts with our own.
- **Love for people:** our treatment of people reveals something about our profession of love for God (1 John 4:20).

Our actions do not earn God's love, but they reveal whether our words about loving Him are genuine.

3. LOVING YOURSELF THE RIGHT WAY

The Bible does not teach self-worship, selfishness, or self-hatred. Loving yourself rightly means agreeing with God about yourself:

- You were created in God's image, yet you are a sinner who needs His grace.
- In Christ, you are forgiven, accepted, and being transformed.
- Your body, mind, soul, time, and calling belong to God and must be cared for responsibly.

Humility is not believing you are worthless. It is seeing yourself truthfully - no higher and no lower than God sees you. Appropriate rest, boundaries, repentance, forgiveness, and stewardship are not selfish; they help us love from spiritual health rather than exhaustion, shame, or resentment.

4. LOVING OTHERS THE RIGHT WAY

First Corinthians 13 teaches that love is patient and kind, rejoices with the truth, protects, hopes, and perseveres. Biblical love is not merely being pleasant. It seeks another person's genuine good.

- Love speaks truth, but speaks it with compassion.
- Love forgives, but does not pretend destructive sin is acceptable.
- Love gives without using generosity to control people.
- Love sometimes comforts, sometimes corrects, and sometimes must say no.

WHEN THE HEART IS DIVIDED

Covenant love, spiritual adultery, and the choice of first loyalty

5. WHAT IS SPIRITUAL ADULTERY?

Scripture describes God's relationship with His people in covenant terms. Spiritual adultery occurs when we claim to belong to God while giving our deepest affection, trust, obedience, or loyalty to something else (Jeremiah 3:1; James 4:4).

A DIRECT DEFINITION

Spiritual adultery is wanting God's name, protection, and blessings while giving our heart's ruling loyalty to another master.

We become adulterous toward God when we:

- Worship on Sunday but live by the world's values during the week.
- Want His blessings without surrender, or obey only when His will agrees with ours.
- Run first to money, approval, pleasure, substances, relationships, or entertainment instead of God.
- Protect a habit, desire, or relationship that God has told us to surrender.

A good thing becomes an idol when it receives the devotion, dependence, identity, or obedience that belongs to God alone.

6. CAN A PERSON TRULY LOVE TWO PEOPLE?

A person may experience genuine feelings, affection, attachment, or attraction toward two people. But feelings are not the whole meaning of biblical love. Covenant love includes loyalty, choice, sacrifice, and faithfulness.

We do not always choose which feelings appear, but we do choose which feelings we feed, which relationship we protect, and where we place our loyalty.

In marriage, the decisive question is not whether both feelings seem real, but where covenant faithfulness belongs. Pursuing a competing relationship turns divided affection into betrayal.

7. CAN WE LOVE GOD AND THE WORLD?

First John 2:15-17 tells us not to love the world. Here, "the world" does not mean people, creation, family, work, or the good gifts God provides. It means the rebellious system of desires and values that operates independently of God - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

We may enjoy God's gifts gratefully and love people sacrificially, but we cannot faithfully love God while embracing values that reject His rule. No one can serve two masters (Matthew 6:24); our choices reveal which love rules the heart.

STRUGGLING WITH THE WORLD	LOVING THE WORLD
Feels temptation but fights it; confesses failure; returns to God; desires freedom.	Makes peace with sin; protects and justifies it; refuses surrender; chooses it over God's authority.

8. QUESTIONS FOR THE HEART

1. When God and my desires disagree, which one usually wins?
2. Where do I run first for comfort, identity, security, or satisfaction?
3. Is there anything I am protecting that God has told me to surrender?
4. Does the way I treat people reflect the love of Christ?
5. Do I love God Himself, or mainly what I hope He will do for me?

THE CALL

God is not asking for lip service or shared loyalty. He calls us to return, repent, and love Him with an undivided heart. "Teach me your way, LORD... give me an undivided heart." - Psalm 86:11