

What God Wants To Do With You #2

He Wants To Love You And For You To Love Him
By Bill Denton

INTRODUCTION

A. In the current sermon series, we're considering the idea, "what God wants to do with you"

1. Last week we started with the most basic idea – God wants you to know him
2. Knowing God is the basis for a relationship between God and ourselves
 - a. you cannot believe in a God you don't know
 - b. you cannot obey a God you don't know
 - c. lack of knowledge about God is not just a disadvantage, it makes any kind of connection with, or service to God, an impossible task
3. Isaiah 5:11-13

11 Woe to those who rise early in the morning that they may pursue strong drink, Who stay up late in the evening that wine may inflame them!
12 Their banquets are accompanied by lyre and harp, by tambourine and flute, and by wine; But they do not pay attention to the deeds of the LORD, Nor do they consider the work of His hands. 13 Therefore My people go into exile for their lack of knowledge; And their honorable men are famished, And their multitude is parched with thirst. NASU
4. Hosea 4:6

6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children. NASU

B. But, getting you to know Him is not all that God wants to do with you – he also wants to love You and to get you to love Him

1. In fact, knowing God and loving God go hand in hand
2. Let us give our thoughts completely to knowing God. The more one knows him, the more one wants to know him, and since love is measured commonly by knowledge, then, the deeper and more extensive knowledge shall be, so love will be the greater . . .
– Brother Lawrence in *The Practice of the Presence of God*.
3. There is a great truth in that statement: the more we know God, the more we can and will love God
4. The amazing thing is that we are so ignorant of this great truth, and ignorance of the power of knowledge and love of God leaves us in a sad state

C. Today, I want us to think together for a little while about love

1. I want us to think about God and I want us to think about our love for him
2. You will discover that love for God is far more important than we presently know

I. DO YOU KNOW THAT GOD LOVES YOU?

A. A lot of people may be tempted to answer, "Well, sure I know God loves me."

1. But I'm not so sure they know it at all –they're just repeating something they have heard at church, something from a sermon or even a book they read
2. They are not answering out of a firm conviction of mind, nor from a calm, secure heart
 - a. the truth is that a lot of people are constantly on edge when it comes to their relationship with God
 - b. they are not altogether convinced that God loves them even in the least
3. Some of the greatest philosophical and religious questions come right back to this issue of God's love for people
 - a. one of the strongest arguments that atheists offer, isn't really an argument at all – it's just a question
 - b. "If there is an all-loving, all-powerful God, how can he allow such terrible things to happen to people?"
 - 1) one implication is that God is unable to do anything about the human condition
 - 2) another implication is that God could do something, he just really doesn't love us enough to help us
 - 3) there are a lot of people who never manage to settle those issues in their minds, and it becomes an obstacle to belief
 - c. but there is a dark secret among many believers and it has to do with this same question
 - 1) can God really help us?
 - 2) does God really love us?
4. You need to know that this essential question must be resolved before you will ever truly understand or appreciate what God has done for you, is doing for you today, and will do for you in the future

B. All sorts of things get in the way of understanding God's love for us

1. There is the distance between us – after all, God is God, and we're definitely not, so how could God, who is so far above us, so righteous and holy, how could he love us?
2. There is the problem of sin – after all, it's not hard to understand sin, and how unlike God sin is – so how could God love a person who has participated in such evil?
3. There is the problem of life's unpleasant realities – after all, bad things happen to people all the time, so if they happen, how could it be true that God loves us?
4. We need to acknowledge the fact that understanding God's love is not easy – we need some input from outside ourselves and different from our own biased opinions

C. That's where the scriptures come in, for in them we find a declaration and an explanation
Of God's love for us

1. 1 Jn 4:8
8 " . . . God is love"
2. John 3:16
16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. NASU
3. 1 John 3:1
1 See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. NASU
4. Romans 5:6-8
6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.
7 For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. NASU
5. We might talk of the many and varied ways that God shows his love for us, but the greatest demonstration of his love is in the gift of his Son, Jesus
 - a. in Jesus we see God loving those who are completely unlike him
 - b. in Jesus we see God loving those who do not love him first
 - c. in Jesus we see God loving those who despise him, rebel against him, and even hate him
 - d. in Jesus we see the length, the depth, the breadth – the whole extent of God's love for us
 - e. in Jesus we see God loving us in a way that will not be deterred
 - f. in Jesus we see God's love – period – and it is the greatest of all loves
6. This is why we can be confident when we say things about God's love
 - a. did you know that there is not a person on earth that God does not love
 - 1) I didn't say that God loves everything that people do or say
 - 2) I said there is not a person that God doesn't love
 - b. did you know that statement includes you – despite the tragic and terrible nature of your sins, it is a fact – God loves you
 - c. did you know that he gave his Son for you, that Jesus died for your sins, that God yearns to save you so that he can love you up close

D. You really must begin here, with God's love – it's the only sensible explanation for all that
God has done for us

1. Though it may be hard to understand, it's the place to start
2. Once you begin to understand that God loves you, then deeper truths make sense

II. WHAT GOD REALLY WANTS IS FOR YOU TO LOVE HIM

A. You cannot love someone you do not know – that's one reason God wants you to know him

1. The problem with a lot of people is that they really don't know God at all
2. They operate out of opinion and hearsay – basing their understanding of God on what they hear about him, but without the advantage of information directly from God himself
3. This is one reason why it is important to know that God loves you

B. If we can summarize all God's thought, emotion and action on behalf of us human beings in the concept of love, then we need to know that it works the other way around, too

1. What I mean is this: our love for God is, in a nutshell, what God wants from us
2. Love is just that powerful – let me show you what I mean

C. Note the following verses:

1. Matthew 22:36-40

36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" 37 And He said to him, " 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' 38 "This is the great and foremost commandment. 39 "The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' 40 " On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets." NASU

2. Mark 12:28-31

28 One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, "What commandment is the foremost of all?" 29 Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; 30 AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.' 31 "The second is this, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other commandment greater than these." NASU

3. I want to focus just on these "greatest" commandments for a moment

a. Matthew's record says, "on these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets"

b. Mark's record says, "There is no other commandment greater than these"

c. the whole of pleasing God is wrapped up in loving Him

D. Look at how loving God affects our relationship with him

1. Deuteronomy 30:19-20

19 " I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, 20 by loving the LORD your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them." NASU

2. Love has such practical results

a. love motivates us to want to be near the one we love

- 1) if you love God, you will want to be close to him, not far away
- 2) we will do everything we can do to minimize the distance between God and ourselves

b. love motivates us to know the one love even more deeply

- 1) we won't be satisfied sharing the relationship someone else has with God, we will want one for ourselves
- 2) we will want that relationship to grow, to deepen, to become even closer, and more real as each day passes

c. love motivates us to serve the one we love

- 1) real love isn't selfish or self-centered – it's not about what we can get the other person to do for us
- 2) real love yearns to serve, to demonstrate our love in kindnesses done for the other person

d. love affects the very atmosphere of the relationship

- 1) love does not produce a burden, where we only act out of duty or only in frustrated slavery
- 2) love produces an atmosphere in which serving God becomes the very best thing we could ever do, it's what we want to do

CONCLUSION

A. What does God want to do with you?

1. He wants you to know he loves you
2. He wants you to love him back

B. The entire relationship between God and us is based on mutual love

1. You must come to know that before you can truly understand and appreciate what God has done, is doing, and will do in the future
2. When you begin to grasp the love of God, you will find the motivation to love him, and that love affects every fiber of the relationship you have with him

C. Today, those are the two questions worth pondering – Do you know the love of God, and do You love God in return? That's really what he wants to do with you

D. Invitation