

WEEK 7: LOVING JESUS (Part 2)

INTRODUCTION

In a healthy marriage, would you say that it is *important* to serve and sacrifice for your spouse? Why or why not? Would you go so far as to say that it is *necessary*? (Why or why not?)

FORETHOUGHT

God uses pictures, symbols and metaphors that we are familiar with to teach us about things we are not as familiar with. Remember He used visible, physical metaphors and pictures to describe invisible, spiritual truths with Nicodemus (i.e. you cannot see the wind but you can see and feel the effects of the wind therefore you know the wind exists; it is the same with the Spirit). This is God's way of reaching out to us and meeting us where we are at. One of the most important pictures in the Bible that is repeated over and over is the picture of *marriage* to describe the relationship between God and His children (believers).

An example of this is: **Isaiah 62:5**

“as a young man marries a maiden, so your sons will marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you.”

As you read through the outline, think through and approach these spiritual issues as you would in a marriage because that is what our relationship with God is likened to.

OBSERVATION

Last week we learned from Mary and Martha that the focus of our spiritual relationship with Jesus must be primarily on Jesus and secondarily on serving Jesus. Just as in a marriage our focus must be primarily on our spouse and secondarily of serving our spouse. Our spouse did not marry us so that we can serve them; rather they married us so that we can be with them. Jesus did not die on the cross so that we can serve Him; rather He died on the cross so that we can be with Him.

This week we will fine tune our understanding of how love and service are related in fact one is the result of the other.

Service; the Result and Evidence of Love

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:4-9

Who is Paul focused on? (Who is he concerned with pleasing?)

(Refer to **verse 4**)

What is the *motivation* and *attitude* behind Paul's ministry (service) to the Thessalonians?

(Refer to **verses 6 and 8**)

What recurring theme do you hear in the following passages describing God?

(Refer to **Psalm 119:88; Psalm 136:12; Psalm 51:1**)

Obedience; the Result and Evidence of Love

What do you think Jesus is teaching us in **John 14:23-25**?

And how does this harmonize (integrate, support and add to) with what we learned last week from Mary and Martha- don't let the service cause you to lose sight of the one you serve?

(Refer also to **Matt 22:37-40**; focus on **verse 40**)

APPLICATION

Loving Jesus Requires Focus on Jesus

If a husband does not want to serve his wife, sacrifice for his wife or spend time with his wife because he prefers spending his time watching ESPN and hanging out with the guys instead; do you think that ESPN, and his relationship with the guys and available free time are the *primary* problem OR is it *likely* that these are merely *symptoms* of a deeper problem stemming from his relationship with his wife?

If we do not have any desire to serve Jesus, sacrifice for Jesus or spend time with Jesus because we prefer watching ESPN and hanging with the guys instead; do you think that ESPN sports, our relationship with the guys and available free time are the *primary* problem OR is it *likely* that these are merely *symptoms* of a deeper problem stemming from our relationship with Jesus?

Think back to the Samaritan woman's evangelical testimony "come see the one who told me everything I ever did." This is an act of obedience as well as an act of serving her neighbors. What do you think *most* motivated her to run out and make this announcement; the commandment to serve OR the awesome, real experience she had with God (Jesus) that she couldn't resist sharing?

Pretend you are a marriage counselor for the suffering married couple mentioned above. What do you think is the best way to repair/restore the relationship? (To focus on minimizing ESPN, minimizing the importance of friends and improving time management OR to focus on falling in love with his wife again?)

In order to fall in love again, where should the majority of the husband's time and energy go; into *serving* his wife OR into *being with* his wife, rediscovering her and falling in love with her?

Let's say he does fall madly in love with his wife again, do you think he will continue to spend all of his time watching ESPN OR do you think he will begin to spend a lot of his time with his wife? Do you think that he will naturally enjoy serving and sacrificing for his wife?

How can this logic be applied to repairing/restoring/building a relationship with Jesus? (How does someone build a passionate, loving relationship with Jesus?)

CONCLUSION

What do you think Jesus meant when He said "*all the law and prophets hang on these two commandments*"?

(Refer to: "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.*" **All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments**")

THOUGHTS FOR REFLECTION, RECONCILIATION AND PRAYER

Am I committed to loving Jesus, and investing into my relationship with Him?

What is overflowing from my heart; service and obedience to Jesus OR service and obedience to my worldly desires?