

Foundations of Love: The Knowledge of His Heart

- A. The Lord has emphasized the truth of **confidence in love**. [1 John 3:20–22]
However, I recognize many of us cannot be confident in love because we are not rooted and grounded in the truth of His love and heart toward us. This leads us to many false conclusions concerning God, many false views of what He is like, how He feels about us and His response toward us in our weakness.
- B. The Lord created us out of a desire for us to know Him and lovingly express/ display His glory. We will live a life that glorifies God best when we are most satisfied and in love with Him.
- C. **The foundation of our interaction with God is based upon relationship.** The Lord has designed everything to operate within the confines of relationship and intimacy with His heart. Even our love for Him has its origin in our understanding of His love for us. We cannot muster up love for God in our own strength; love for Him is awakened as we know His love for us. [1 John 4:10, 19]
 - a. Many of us have built our Christianity upon our own effort and discipline disconnected from an abiding love relationship with God. What happens when all of our efforts and discipline fail and we are face to face with our weakness and inability? We will either fall into passivity or rebellion
 - i. Passivity: we will justify our neutrality and apathy because it is “too hard” or “doesn’t work”. Many have ‘tried’ Christianity and say it doesn’t work, however the only thing that doesn’t work is religious efforts devoid of intimacy.
 - ii. Rebellion: we face the pain of our failure and weakness and we seek counterfeits to numb the pain of our hearts. We run to the world and illegitimate pleasures to numb our pain. This can be relationships, drugs, alcohol, pornography etc.

- b. There is a way out of these cycles of death and it is called repentance. Repentance is where we recognize our inability and weakness, we recognize our false perceptions of God and the gospel message and we blow up the entire structure and fall on His mercy and truth. This is the place of salvation– where we abandon our futile pursuit of being our own Savior and we trust in the only one who can save us from our sin and weakness and flawed heart.

- D. The revelation of His heart is the foundation of our interaction and intimacy with God. His heart, His desires, His love is the greatest motivator for the human heart. Love will motivate sacrificial living, surrender, evangelism, obedience, discipleship etc. The issue this generation has with surrender is due to the lack of the knowledge of God. Many think He is mostly angry, harsh, judgmental, distant etc. This foundation in their hearts causes them to live guarded and in fear rather than in loving surrender and obedience. For many of us our initial approach to God is from the place of God having displeasure in us rather than His pleasure in us.

The glory of God: His heart revealed

- A. Moses had a dynamic relationship with God. He saw Him judge the greatest nation on the earth, release divine provision, split seas etc. He spoke to Moses face to face and gave him the law, yet Moses desired more. In Exodus 33 and 34 we see the hunger of Moses’ heart. His prayer was “show me your glory”. [Ex 33:18] The Lord’s response was to show him all of His goodness and reveal His name to him. [vs. 19]

- B. What Moses was asking was to see the depths of His heart, the fullness of His nature and emotions. He wanted to unveiling of His person. What we see in chapter 34 is a great insight into solving our problem of not knowing God’s heart.

⁵ Now the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed **the name of the LORD**. ⁶ And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD,

the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, ⁷ keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation." **Exodus 34:5-7**

What is His heart like?

- A. **The LORD God:** First, God revealed His power and authority to direct the nations and our lives. Then He revealed His emotions as merciful, gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness.

- B. **The Lord is merciful:** He is tender in how He relates to us in our weaknesses and sin. This is the first aspect of His personality that He revealed to Moses because it is the one we need first and most. It is one of the primary issues that the Devil seeks to distort about God (Rev. 12:10). Some resist God's mercy because it violates their sense of justice knowing that they do not deserve it. At the cross, the Father satisfied the claims of justice. When we understand that God's wrath was poured out on Jesus, then we stand confident in receiving mercy since justice has been satisfied.
 - a. **The Lord delights in giving us mercy:** Micah 7:18, Matthew 9:13, 12:7
 - b. **The Lord gives us fresh mercy every day:** Lam 3:22-23
 - c. **God's mercy in giving us forgiveness is far beyond anything that we can compare with it:** Isaiah 55:7-9

- C. **The Lord is gracious:** He does not give us what we deserve. He is generous in how He evaluates our weak efforts to obey and serve Him. When we have confidence before God, we run to Him instead of from Him in our weakness. He remembers our frailty and does not reject us because of our weakness. We can be surprised and exasperated by our weakness, but God is not. [Psalm 103:10-14]
 - a. The Lord graciously remembers every movement of our heart and our acts of obedience [Matt 10:42, Heb 6:10]

- D. **The Lord is longsuffering:** He bears long with us instead of “writing us off.” God suffers long with our sinful responses to Him. He does not lose enthusiasm or passion for us when we fail. His love for us is greater than the sadness we cause Him in the times when we intentionally resist Him. [Romans 2:4]
- E. **The Lord is abounding in goodness:** He overflows with good plans for us. The song that is recorded most often in Scripture is “The Lord is good, His mercy endures forever” (1 Chr. 16:34, 41; 2 Chr. 5:13; 7:3, 6; 20:21; Ezra 3:11; Jer. 33:11; Ps. 100:5; 106:1; 107:1; 118:1; 138:8; 136). God will not withhold His best from us in relationships, ministry assignments, finances, etc.
- a. **This means that even in His correction and redirection of our lives, He does it with a gentle heart of goodness and kindness.** [Prov 3:11–12, Heb 12:5–6]

Jesus’ desire for us to know Him

- A. At the end of His life, Jesus prayed in John 17 and opened His heart like none other in the gospels. Recorded in this prayer is God the Son praying to God the Father before He died. This is an important prayer to know.
- B. Beginning in verse 24 we see Jesus had a 3 fold plan to win our hearts over in love

²⁴ “Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. ²⁵ O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. ²⁶ And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”

These three things are desires deeply in the heart of the Son of God for us.

1. They would be with Me where I am: Jesus desired intimate communion and nearness.

2. That they would behold My glory: Jesus wants us to know Him rightly and fully. He is not hiding from us but desiring for those who are hungry to pursue Him and find Him.
3. I have declared to them Your name, that love would be in their heart: Jesus came and revealed the Father to us and promised to continue to reveal the Father to us so that the same intensity of love the Father feels for the Son would be in our hearts for Jesus.

This is what Jesus wants from us– nearness, intimate communion, right knowledge of His Person, and love that is wholehearted. All other disciplines and Christian pursuits must be founded upon this.