

THE BIBLE VIEW

In This Issue:

[Where Has the Love Gone?](#)

[Service of Love](#)

[Love for Christ](#)

[Love Like Christ's](#)

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Where Has the Love Gone?

Bill Brinkworth

When a couple falls in love, there is a lot of romance. They go out to dinner. He gives her flowers. She brags about him to her friends. He cannot wait to see her after work.

The romance continues. The two got married. The dates are even better. They go everywhere together, and then a transformation slowly unfolds. He had to stay at work a little longer and missed the planned Friday night date. Money was spent before it was received, so the flowers are out of the question for one week, and then the next week.

Marriage can be difficult, and instead of bragging about her husband to her friends, she finds herself complaining about his faults to them. Slowly, over time, the relationship is no longer what it once was. Is the love still there? Many times, there still is love, it just got crowded out by things that have been given a higher priority than they should have.

Often a relationship between people and the Lord deteriorates similarly. At first, they are so excited about being saved and forgiven for all their sins. They attend

church every time the doors are opened: Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night. Every day they start with a prayer time with the Lord and read their Bibles faithfully. They try to tell others about the Lord every time the opportunity arises.

However, sometimes a transformation in their love life with the Lord slowly occurs. At the time, their reason for not having time in the morning for prayer and Bible reading seemed legitimate. Perhaps, it was also a legitimate reason that they could not attend church on Sunday. Maybe even sickness caused them to stay home from church. Perhaps the reason for stopping spiritual things was too much familiarity — when doing things repetitively, sometimes a person loses interest in doing them.

Soon, however, the reasons change to, “I have too many things to do today to go to church.” Sometimes, to cover up for their backsliding away from the Lord, other reasons surface, like, “I don’t get anything out of reading my Bible every time, so why do it?”, or “No one talks to me at church, so why go?”

No matter how it happens, too many find themselves further away from God than they ever would have imagined they would be. They find themselves without the fervor, excitement, and love for the Lord and the things of God they had once had. Are they out love with their Saviour? Many times they are not out of love with their Saviour, it is just because too many things got a higher priority than they deserved. They find themselves in the same position that

the early church of Ephesus found itself when John had to write to them and tell them, “Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.” (Revelation 2:4)

Their love for God had not moved at all; it was where they had left it. They just needed to go back where they had left it and pick up where they were.

Here are some things that can be done to help one get back the love for Christ they once had:

- Admit to God what you have done wrong and ask Him to forgive you. He knows where you went amiss. He just wants you to humble yourself and admit what you did wrong. A humbled heart often keeps one from returning to his old mistakes. The principle of II Chronicles 7:14, although promised to Israel, can be applied to one’s own spiritual relationship with the Lord, *“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”*
- Go back to doing what God has already convicted you about. If He has tugged at your heartstrings to restart your daily prayer life, then that would be a good place to start. If you are convicted about not going to church, drop everything to be there the next time its doors are open.
- Try to go back spiritually to the place you were when God was important to you. Do now what you did then.

If you were closest to Him when you lived by faith, do the same now. “Well, it’s not that easy to do that now. I have responsibilities. I have bills,” some justify.

“Are you happy with where you are spiritually now?”

“Well, no.”

“Well, maybe you need to pay the price to get back to the place you once were. God may never have wanted you to get in the place you are now, anyway. It was your decision, and look where it got you! It would be well worth it to pay the price, whatever it is, to get back to where you need to be!”

- Obey what He shows you to do now. If a message from the pulpit stirs you to do change something, change it! If a scripture convicts you of a sin, confess it and forsake it. If a heart-tugging compels you to do something for the Lord, do it!

Do all you did before, and more, when you had “your first love” with the Lord. He has not gone anywhere. He is still in the same place you left Him. Revitalize your relationship with the Lord. He certainly will forgive you, and you can start all over again — this time better!

“And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.” Deuteronomy 6:5 Also: Mark 12:30, I John 4:19

“Self-love seeks to use God. True love seeks to please God!”

Service of Love

C. H. Spurgeon

It is said that the soldiers of Persia were driven into battle and that the sound of the whips of the generals could be heard even while the battle was raging, lashing on the unwilling ranks to fulfill their part in the fray.

Not so went the Greeks to battle. They rushed like lions amidst a flock of sheep to tear their prey. They fought for their country, for their lives, and for all that they held dear.

The difference between the Greeks and the Persians is just the difference I want to describe among the professed followers of our Lord. The genuine Christian serves God because he loves him, not that he fears Hell for he knows that he has been delivered from condemnation, being washed in Jesus' blood, not that he expects to earn heaven, he scorns the idea. Heaven is not to be merited by our poor, paltry works. Heaven is his inheritance since Christ has given it to him. A Christian serves God because he loves Him. He is drawn by a sense of the love of God towards him to love God in return.

“Love indeed is love indeed.”

Love for Christ

J. M. McCulloch

Love for Christ, wherever it exists, has signs following it to certify its presence. It is not a mere glow of feeling which warms the heart for a moment and then vanishes and

leaves no trace behind. It is an affection, a settled mood of mind, and an active sentiment which cannot but tell on the person that there is a difference in their life. Where it is present, it must make its presence felt. Like Mary's box of fragrant ointment, it must fill the house with its odor.

We may know whether we love the unseen Saviour:

- By general tenor of our thoughts.
- By our treatment of His Word.
- By our feelings and conduct toward His people.

“Service for the Lord is love in overalls.”

Love Like Christ's

C. Stanford

God asks not that our love should equal to His, but resemble His, not that it should be of the same strength, but of the same kind. A pearl of dew will not hold the sun, but it may reflect a spark of its light. A child by the sea, trying to catch the waves as they dash in clouds of crystal spray upon the sand, cannot hold the ocean in a tiny shell but he can hold a portion of the ocean water in it.

“Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.” *1 Corinthians 13:4-8*