

A Love above All Others

Bill Brinkworth

In Luke 14:25-35, Jesus discusses some important, life-changing, power-giving decisions that all Christians encounter, whether they realize it or not. These resolves will develop a strong Christian character if the right choices are made.

One of the most challenging and unusual life-changes one should make is found in verse 26: *“If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.”* However, the charge can be confusing. We are to hate those that are close to us?

Dr. John R. Rice, in Luke, The Son of Man¹, explains that verse well:

“... the meaning is that love for Christ and loyalty to Him should so far exceed all other loves and loyalties that they can hardly be expressed in the same terms. If you say that you love your father and mother and love God, that puts God and parents in about the same relationship, and that is not what Jesus requires. So here, to hate father and mother and wife and children and brothers and your own life also does not mean

malice. It does not mean one should dishonor his parents. This Scripture does not contradict the plain statement of Ephesians 5:25, that a husband is to love his wife, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it.

“As a car at sixty miles an hour passes a car at twenty miles an hour, as if it were standing still, so the love for Christ and loyalty for Christ so should supersede all other relationships of life, as to not even be labeled with the same terms ... If people are to have the love and loyalty that will let them burn at the stake for Christ, be torn by wild beasts, be tortured on the rack, or eaten by cannibals, as many have been, then they must have a drastic love and loyalty for Christ not measurable by human comparisons.”

The key to having a Spirit-empowered life is genuine love for the one that saved us from Hell! This real love will make a Christian what God intended: a vessel fit for the Master to use. *“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

¹ Luke, The Son of Man, Dr. John R. Rice, *Sword of the Lord Publishers*, 1971, Pg. 352.



Love The Lord Thy God

Bill Brinkworth

After my daughter grew up and left the house, I felt the need to have someone, or something, fill some of that void. It was not long before I thought a dog would be a good companion.

As in all things, my wife and I prayed for the right pet. God always provided the perfect companion when we waited for His selection. The years have gone by; two of the dogs have died and been replaced by the current animal. The Labrador mix we currently have is Buddi, and she certainly lives up to



her name. She is a good friend. All the previous animals met our needs at the time.

This one is no exception. Buddi is just what both my wife and I needed. Our Lord, as always, provided exactly what we required.

Buddi is close by my wife's side, especially when illness binds her to the bed. When I am outside, my canine friend is near me,

always watching what I am doing and where I am going. Her dedication and love are apparent.

At bedtime, she waits until we are all settled and comfortable and hops in with us. During the night, she cuddles at the bottom of Barb's feet. Later, she nestles behind the back of my knee. She always wants to be close to us.

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Why Should We Love God?

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“And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy , and with all thy might.” Deut. 6:5

One of the main desires of God is that we love Him with all our being. Throughout the Bible, God tells us to love Him with all our hearts because:

☞ Loving God is a commandment and expectation of our Creator.

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If only we would be as faithful and loyal to the Lord as Buddi is to us. Love is the binding emotion that makes her so loving and dedicated to us. The same sentiment should also be a driving and encouraging force that makes us faithful and loyal to our heavenly Father.

“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: Matthew 22:37, Mark 12:30.

God provides every need we have, and many of our “wants.” He makes sure we are fed, safe from so many dangers that we do not even know our lurking nearby, and meets emotional and physical needs.

Not only does our heavenly Father sustain us daily, but He has allowed His only Son, Jesus, to pay for the penalty due to us because of our sins. By accepting Jesus’ loving sacrifice for our transgressions, we can have a wonderful, eternal future with our Lord. What a loving Father we have.

We have so much for which to be thankful. The least we can do is to be faithful, trusting, and obedient to our God. He loves us so much, no matter what we have

“If God loved you as much as you love him, where would you be?” — Author Unknown

done or who we are. We should not only adore Him for what He is doing and has done for us but because of who He is.

A loyal pet is not loving to his master just for the warm bed, treats, or playtime. It is the creature’s love for his family that makes him faithful and obedient. We need to have and show the same loyalty and devotion to our wonderful, heavenly Father.

Get close to God with consistent, daily conversations. You can cozy up to Him and share your burdens and your blessings. He will never laugh, mock, or be too busy to hear from you. He will always love you. Be faithful, loyal, obedient, and serve Him with all your heart.

“We love him, because he first loved us.” I John 4:19

Why Should We Love...

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“But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the LORD charged you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.” Joshua 22:5 Also: Jos. 23:11. *“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” Mt. 22:37*

☞ **He is our strength, preserver, protector, and deliverer.** Those are certainly reasons to love Him.

“I will love thee, O LORD, my strength.” Ps. 18:1
“O love the LORD, all ye his saints: for the LORD preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.” Ps. 31:23 Also: Ps. 97:10, Ps. 145:20.

☞ **He loves us so, and He hears our pleas.**

“I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.” Ps. 116:1

☞ **He is faithful and merciful to keep His promises.**

“Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;”

“The difference between God and man is God gives, gives, gives, and forgives, while man gets, gets, gets, but still forgets.”

— Author Unknown

Deut. 7:9

☞ **Loving God has many blessings, including a fruitful, longer life.**

“In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall

bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.” Deut. 30:16 Also: Deut. 30:20.

☞ **God cannot be deceived.** He knows who loves Him and who wants to serve Him. *“Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.” Deut. 13:3* Also: Ps. 119:159, Gal. 6:7.

“So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.” Joh 21:15 Also: John 21:16-17, Isa. 56:6.

It should be easy to love God because He first loved us (I John 4:19). He created us and makes sure we have all we need to live and prosper. He is the only God there is, and we need to love Him for all He has done for us and will do. None of us deserves anything, yet God has blessed us so. We should, without difficulty, readily love Him back. *“Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” Jude 1:21*