

Our Love Godward

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[0 : 00] This is the word of the Lord. If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another counselor to be with you forever, the Spirit of Truth.

The world cannot accept him because it neither sees him nor knows him, but you know him for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you.

Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day, you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.

Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.

Then Judas, not Judas Iscariot, said, But Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world? Jesus replied, If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching.

[1 : 15] My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching.

These words you hear are not my own. They belong to the Father who sent me. All this I have spoken while still with you, but the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

Peace I leave with you. My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not be afraid.

You heard me say, I am going away, and I am coming back to you. If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.

I have told you now, before it happens, so that when it does happen, you will believe. I will not speak with you much longer, for the Prince of this world is coming.

[2 : 22] He has no hold on me, but the world must learn that I love the Father, and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me.

Come now, let us leave. Three of the sweetest words in any language must surely be, God is love.

God is love. It comes to us on the pages of Scripture, and it means that love is not only something that God does. It is, first of all, something that He is.

He is love. That's His nature. It's His nature to love. It is the most natural thing for God to love, because He is love. Now, we're studying four chief graces of the Christian life.

Four God-produced qualities that are essential for living. We need these four things, and God, by His grace, works them in to the hearts of each of His children.

[3 : 25] Humility, faith, love, and hope. And each one of those graces has a main activity. And so you tell me, what's the main activity of humility?

The great emptier. Faith, the great receiver. Love, the great giver.

And hope, the great motivator. Well, four graces. And we've come to love the great giver.

If we could show these four graces. And we come to love the great giver. Giving is the main activity of love. For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son.

The Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me. And this simply means that real love cannot be bottled up.

[4 : 26] It can't remain bottled up. It must out. It must give. It's outflowing to others in its very essence.

And we began our study of love by studying love in God Himself. Since God is love and is the only source of love in the whole universe, it sure seems right that we begin with God.

John tells us that this is how we even know what love is. Because of the way God loved. So as we looked at God's love, we noticed that it flows in two directions.

Godward and manward. We usually think of the manward love of God. But being a man, we need to be careful that we don't forget that there's more love to God than just His love for us.

There is God's love God word. By which we mean that in the eternal fellowship of the Trinity, there is this love circle in which the Father loves the Son and the Son loves the Father and the Father loves the Spirit and the Spirit loves the Son and the Son loves the Spirit.

[5 : 36] And the Father loves the Spirit. There's this love flowing within the Trinity and has been forever. And then when He created man, love flowed downward for that man that He created.

And there is a special love for those that the Father gave to His Son as a love gift. We find that throughout Scripture. And the Father's love for us is seen in giving His one and only Son for us.

Not sparing His own Son that He might spare us. That's love. That's even how we know what love is. And then there's the Son's love for us.

Demonstrated in giving Himself to save us. Not saving Himself. And then there's the Holy Spirit's love for us.

In opening our eyes to God's love. Convincing us of it. Making it real to us. Melting our rebel hearts. To where we respond to that love in faith and love in return.

[6 : 47] And so it's through this great Trinitarian salvation. That God has brought us. Rebel sinners. Into that eternal Trinitarian fellowship of love.

For our fellowship is with the Father now. And with His Son, Jesus Christ. We love. Because He first loved us.

So we looked at God's love last week. Today we begin to consider our love. That's the grace that God works in us. It's our love.

And the Bible makes clear that love in us flows in the same two-fold direction as God's love. Godward and manward. And we should expect this for at least three reasons.

Number one, our love is nothing less than God's love in us. When Jesus was praying to His Father in John chapter 17 about us, His children.

[7 : 48] He says in verse 25, I have made you, Father. I've made you known to them. And I will continue to make you known. In order that the love you have for me may be in them.

And that I myself may be in them. That your love, Father. The very love that you have for me might be in them. And that's why our love flows in both directions.

Godward and manward. Because it's God's love. And God's love flows both Godward and manward. It's not different love. It's His love. And so it has the same characteristics.

In us as in Him. We could even say our love is nothing less than Christ's own love. Since He is within us. And divine love flows in the sap that flows from the vine to every branch that is attached to the vine.

Every branch savingly attached to Christ through faith receives the sap of divine love flowing in to it. And so it is Christ's love within His people.

[8 : 55] And that's the reason in the first place why that love flows both upward and outward to our fellow man. Secondly, God Himself is the pattern and example of our love.

Ephesians 5 and verses 1 and 2. Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children. And live a life of love just as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Our life is to be a life of love. A life characterized by, dominated by, known by, filled up by love.

So how do we know what this love life is to look like? Well, by observing and imitating God's love. And not from a distance, but up close as dearly loved children.

Who have been on the receiving end of God's love. And so we know that love that God has for us and now we imitate it. And so it flows Godward and manward.

[10 : 09] Since God is the pattern for our love. And then thirdly, loving God and loving man is the whole duty of man. Matthew chapter 22, 34 to 40.

One day a Pharisee who was an expert in the law came to test Jesus with a question. He was out to get him, to try to trip him up in something that he could say.

To diminish him in the eyes of the people. The Sadducees had failed to be able to accomplish this because of Jesus' wisdom. Now the Pharisees are having their go at it. And he says, well, which is the greatest commandment in the law?

You see, there were over 500 commandments in the Old Testament. And this man's wanting to test Jesus' mettle in front of the crowd. So which of the 500 is the greatest? Do you know that?

Said the expert. And without causing, Jesus replied, love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.

[11 : 15] And then Jesus gave him something that he didn't ask for. He asked for the greatest. The greatest commandment. And Jesus said, this is the first and greatest commandment.

And the second is like it. Love your neighbor as yourself. And there you have it. Two greatest commands.

And they're both love commands, aren't they? Love God and love your fellow man. And then Jesus gave an important insight into all of God's commands. Matthew 22, 40.

He says, all the law and the prophets. That's a phrase that describes the Old Testament. All the law and the prophets. Hang on these two commands.

So, so there's two great hooks that you can hang all the commands of God upon. One is loving God. And the other is loving man.

[12 : 17] And onto those hooks. You can hang every commandment that you find in the Bible. All 500 of the Old Testament commands. However many there are. They'll hang on these two hooks.

They're explanations of what it means to love God. What it means to love man. And so love is the greatest command because it's the heart and soul of all the other commands.

All the other commands are fulfilled by love in action. So, so take the Ten Commandments. Paul says that love is the fulfillment of the law and love does no harm for its neighbor.

So, we're talking about neighbor love, manward love. There's the hook. Love does not take his life, the Sixth Commandment.

Nor his wife, the Seventh Commandment. Nor his property, the Eighth Commandment. Nor his good name by lying about him, the Ninth Commandment. Nor does it even covet what he has, the Tenth Commandment.

[13 : 20] So, you see how these commandments all hang on that command to love your neighbor as yourself. And then the first commandments of the Ten have regard to God and what it means to love God.

Well, you shall have no other gods beside me. That's what loving God means. To not have anyone else in the category of God in your life. Hang that one on that command.

And that you not misuse his worship by introducing idols into your worship. Hang that one on there. Not misusing his name, the Third Commandment.

Not misusing his day, the Fourth Commandment. And even the Fifth Commandment. Not misusing his authorities that he's established in the home, in society, in the church, and so on. So, all the commandments hang on these two.

And they're both love commands. Love Godward, love manward. And that's why we say, when we come to study man's love and the grace of love that God works in our hearts, we need to realize that it goes Godward and manward.

[14 : 25] So today, as we begin our study of our love, we begin with our love Godward. About 30 years ago, Gary Chapman wrote a book called The Five Love Languages.

I've not read it, so I can't commend it to you. But, the basic principle, as I understand it, talking with others who have, is that lovers need to learn what he calls the love language of our loved one.

To learn to express our love to them in ways that they appreciate love being expressed to them. And not just to assume that their love language matches ours.

So, for instance, a husband wants to love on his wife, and so he blocks out Monday nights for date night. Good for him. And since he can't think of anything more enjoyable than Monday night football, he invites her to meet him on the sofa at 8.30, to enjoy four hours of football and snacks.

Never crossing his mind that she might have something more exciting in her heart as to the kind of love she wants from him. Maybe eating out.

[15 : 42] Just lots of talk. Walking and talking. Maybe it's to do a few projects around the house that have never made it on his top ten to-do list that she's been waiting for months and months to see accomplished.

And she may even say in tense conversations between you, well, if you loved me, you... And that's where you want to hit record, man.

She's about to tell you her love language. She's about to tell you the way she accepts love, the way she most resonates with love. The point is, he needs to learn her love language.

Now, that basically is what Peter said 2,000 years ago in 1 Peter 3, 7. Husbands, live with your wives according to knowledge. Dwell with them in an understanding way.

Get to know them and understand what makes them tick, what they love, what they enjoy, what they delight in, what they desire, how they want to be loved.

[16 : 45] And then live with her according to such knowledge. Don't just assume she has the same love language as you. It might not be Friday night at the drag strip.

If it is, go for it. Blessings on you. Where did you find such a gal? But the main thing is, know her love language and learn to speak it fluently.

Enough of that. That's the principle, the basic principle I want us to think about now. And reverently ask, what is God's love language?

How does God want to be loved? What does he say, this is the response I'm looking for out of those who love me? We can't lean upon our own understanding.

Well, you know what I think God wants in the way of. No, no, none of that. Because his ways are so much higher than our ways. So let's find out what pleases the Lord by letting him tell us.

[17 : 51] What love language is his. And that's what he does for us. The son of God does for us in the passage read.

John chapter 14. I invite you to turn there and verse 15 to begin with. The very first verse of the section that was read. Jesus says to his disciples, if you love me, you will what?

You will obey what I command. He is telling us that. His love language is keeping his commands.

A little later down in verse 21. Whoever has my commands and obeys them. He's the one that loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my father.

And I too will love him and and will show myself to him. Show him more of my heart of love. And get caught up in this love cycle of his love for me and my love for him.

[18 : 54] And then a little breath or two later in verse 23. If anyone loves me and obeys my teaching, my father will love him.

And we will come to him and will make our home with him. But he who does not love me will not obey my teaching.

These words you hear are not my own. They belong to the father who sent me. Can you hear the love language? Jesus is telling us about God.

According to him, law keeping is the way real love for God acts. He says it three times for emphasis and again negatively to make the point the fourth time.

What is loving God look like? How are we to love him? And if we let God speak, he says, love me by keeping my commandments.

[19 : 55] Now, there is a sad misunderstanding within Christendom about the relationship between law and love. Some would drive a wedge between love and law.

As if the Christian thing to do is to reject law and to choose love. As if what Christ has come to do is to replace law with love.

And nothing could be further from the truth. Love and law are not enemies. They're close friends. After all, Jesus said that the whole law is a law of love.

Every command is telling you how to love God. And how to love man. Law and love belong together. If you love me.

You will keep my commandments. Paul got it in Romans 13 10. He says love is the fulfillment of the law. Love fills up the law.

[21 : 07] What is the law demand? Love will fulfill that commandment. Love is the fulfillment of the law. Not the enemy of law.

Not the replacement of law. It is the way to fulfill it. To keep it. So they belong together. Love and law belong together.

In Christ's heart. In God's heart. And in his people's heart. This is the kind of love. This is the kind of love he produces. This is the grace of love that he produces in his people.

And so what God has joined together. Let not man separate. Don't let anyone drive a wedge between love and law. Tell you. Well, if you got love, you don't need law. It's not what Jesus says.

The two need each other. If we could have the second screen, please. I don't know who said it. But it's worth repeating. That love is law's heart.

[22 : 05] And without it, law is dead. And law is love's eyes. And without it, love is blind. Let's examine each of these one at a time.

First of all, love is law's heart. And without it, law is dead. Loveless obedience to the law has never, ever been what God is after.

He's after love that willingly obeys the law. He's after a love. Don't brush over that. A love.

If you love me, keep my commands. He's after a love that gladly obeys. He wants more than outward, heartless conformity to his laws.

He wants you to obey him because you love him. My son, give me your heart. That's what he's after in your obedience, you see. He's after our affectionate love in return for his.

[23 : 13] A love that gladly obeys his laws. But law without love is dead. How many times in the Old Testament our Lord complains of this very thing.

Israel's lack of love for him. Even while they're keeping up all the temple sacrifices and ceremonial laws. Yeah, they're not missing a gig. They're there.

They're doing it. But Isaiah 29, 13. And Jesus takes up those words of Isaiah. That Isaiah spoke to his own contemporaries.

And Jesus speaks them to his contemporaries. And he says, you know, these people come near to me with their mouths. And they honor me with their lips. But their hearts are far from me.

Their hearts are far from me. Jesus knows when love is missing from our obedience to his commandments. And he's the first to complain about it. He's not satisfied at all with it.

[24 : 15] Give me your heart. How much heart is in your obedience to me? That's what he's after. And without that heart of love, law is dead.

Listen to his letter to the church in Ephesus. In the New Testament, Revelation chapter 2. I know your deeds. I know your hard work, your perseverance. I know you cannot tolerate wicked men.

That you've tested those who claim to be apostles but are not. And have found them false. And I know you've persevered. And I know you've endured hardships for my name. And have not grown weary. I know all of that.

Yet, I hold this against you. You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen.

Repent and do the things you did at first. If you don't repent, I'll come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. I'll wipe the church off of its foundation.

[25 : 13] It's no small thing to withhold our hearts from the lover of our souls. And he tells us so. No small thing to hold back our hearts.

Even while going through the motions of outward conformity to his laws. He remembers the height from which you've fallen. He says in Jeremiah 2.2. I remember the devotion of your youth.

And how as a bride you loved me. And followed me through the desert. Through a land not sown. Remember that initial love. When we first got married.

You and I Israel. And you followed me wherever I went. So devoted was your heart. But now they had forsaken that first love. Perhaps just little by little.

Until now they were doing lots of things right outwardly. But it was hollow. It was cold. It was legal obedience. And no amount of such deeds.

[26 : 08] Can ever make up for the lack of love. Nothing can substitute. For the heart's first love for Christ. He wants love for him.

Filling up all that we do. All of the commands. And without that. Nothing counts. That's 1 Corinthians 13.

That's how it starts. Doesn't it? Without love. You might do all sorts of things. But they profit you nothing. And you are nothing. So love is law's heart.

And without it. Love is dead. We've got to have love. Filling our obedience. To each of his commands. But secondly. Law is love's eyes.

And without it. Love is blind. So love needs law. Love needs the law to direct it. To point out the way in which love is to walk.

[27 : 05] And without that. Without the law. Love is blind. And easily wanders off the path. Or think of a train. Think of love as the engine.

The locomotive. To empower our obedience. Love compels us to obey. And think of the law as the tracks. On which love runs.

Now will anyone say that. We need to take our pick. Which do we want? Do we want the engine? Or do we want the tracks? Do we want love? Or do we want law? No.

We want both. Don't we? We want that engine of love. And we want it running. Straight on those tracks of the law. They're meant to be together.

We don't choose one for the other. Replace one for the other. The law needs love. To make it more than a dead heartless religion. It's love that empowers the new obedience.

[28 : 03] The gospel obedience. But then. Love needs law. To keep it on track. To inform love. To keep it from running off.

The rails into sin. And destruction. And we don't have to look far. Do we? To see how easy it is. For. A love without law.

To run amok. So we're being told. That doctor assisted suicide. Is the loving thing to do. How do we know otherwise?

The feeling of love will not tell us that. That's what they're claiming. My love feels like. Ending the life of my partner. Is the best thing to do for her.

In her condition. We need an objective standard. Outside of ourselves. And that's what God's law is. And this doesn't budge.

[29 : 05] Whether our feelings are up or down. In or out. This stays the same. God's moral law never changes. It's a reflection of his own moral character. And the law of God says. You shall not murder. That's how love acts.

Toward your neighbor. Hang that one on. The way love acts toward man. That's what real love does. It does no harm to its neighbor.

And so rather than taking life. Love seeks to preserve and protect life. Abortion. A woman's choice we're told. And to terminate an unwanted pregnancy.

Is surely the loving thing to do. Why we wouldn't want a child growing up. Unwanted. And unloved. Couples living together.

Before marriage. Why? Just to be sure they really love one another. Oh. But if they truly loved one another. They would not. Cohabit together.

[30 : 07] Outside of the. Commitment. Of vows. Of marriage. And in that. Committed relationship.

To give themselves to each other. Divorce. Without biblical grounds. We just don't love each other anymore. I. I now love someone else. And surely the loving thing to do. Is to end this marriage.

So that we might both find our. Our real. Soulmates. And have two marriages. Where love. Exists. Homosexual marriage.

How can it ever be wrong to marry the one you love? Gender issues. Is if. It's only the loving thing to do. To let your children choose. Which gender they want to be. You don't want to force.

Them into a gender they don't like. That's not loving. There's no end. To the sins that are justified. When.

[31 : 05] Love. And law. Are divorced. So we don't have law anymore telling us. We just have this fuzzy feeling in our hearts. And that'll go amok. Quick. As we see.

In our. Culture. The engine of love needs the tracks of the law to direct it. And Christian. Your love. Needs law. Consistently. Informing you.

On how love. Acts. And that's why Jesus says to his disciples. Not once. Not twice. Not three times. But four times. If you love me. You will keep my commands.

Love needs the law's eyes. And without the law. Love is blind. And will go astray. We must never think that the grace of God. The love of God.

Makes the law of God. Unnecessary. It's a dangerous misunderstanding of grace. A dangerous misunderstanding. Understanding of law. Don't drive a wedge between the two.

[32 : 04] For in fact. We love God by keeping his commandments. All law keeping is not legalism. Jesus says it's love. That's the way you love me. And so. That's not the way we get saved.

It's not the way we. We come to be right with God by keeping his law. Someone has said. No. The law sends us to Christ. For justification.

We naturally drift to the law. I want to get saved. I see I'm a sinner. I'm guilty under God. What do I do to get right with God? And we naturally drift. Okay. I'll try to clean my life up.

What does the law do? Sorry. My standard is perfect obedience. Or hell. That's the law. And that's why it only speaks condemnation to us.

Because we all sin. And so the law says. You can't get in. By keeping me. What does it do? The law sends us to Christ. Who did keep the law perfectly. And has a perfect righteousness.

[33 : 01] To give freely to all who trust in him. And so the law sends us to Christ. For justification. To be counted right with God.

And then. This is the important part. That's often forgotten. Or left unsaid. And then. Christ. Takes that same law. And teaches us.

How to love him. And how to please him. Because law keeping is what love does. So I want to ask you.

Do you think of God's moral laws. As your love manual. For how to love God. That's how Jesus saw it. Oh how he loved his father.

And that's why he loved his law. And delighted to do his will. I want you to look there at the end of chapter 14.

[33 : 56] Of John. Jesus is in the upper room with his disciples. On the night of his arrest. And he's been teaching them. He's emphatically said.

If you love me. You'll keep my commandments. And then he says. Come now. Let's leave. Where's he going? Well we know where he's going.

He's going to Gethsemane. And to the cross. On Golgotha. And why is he going? Verse 31 tells us. For the world must learn that I love the father.

And that I do exactly what my father has commanded me. Come now. Let's leave. Do you see it? How is the world to learn that Jesus loves the father?

By seeing him do exactly what the father has commanded him. You see love for God acts the same in Jesus as it does in us. It.

[35 : 00] It. It not only loves man. Where did he loves God work? And Jesus loves the father. And shows it by keeping his commandments.

And where will the world learn best of the. The Lord Jesus love for the father. Where will they see it. Most clearly that. Jesus loves the father.

The cross. At the cross. That's where they see it. This was the hardest commandment ever. Ever given. When the father said to his son.

Son. You go and save your bride. The church. You go and become man for them. And then become sin for them. And then become a curse for them.

And be damned for them on the cross. That they might be saved. And so Jesus came. And he showed his love. To the father. By doing exactly what his father had commanded him.

[36 : 00] And that's what he's in the midst of doing. Right here in John 14 31. Come now. Let's go. I'm going to show the world. I'm going to show the world.

How much I love the father. By doing exactly what he's commanded. In the words of Philippians chapter 2. 6 through 8. Though Jesus the son was in the. In very nature God.

Equal with the father. Yet. He became man. And being found in human form. He humbled himself. And here it is. Became obedient.

Unto death. Even. Death on a cross. The cross was obedience folks. The cross was the greatest act of obedience.

Ever. In which the son. Showed the world. His love for. The father. By obeying. His commandment.

[36 : 58] Exactly. And therefore God. The father is. Highly. Insulted. Giving him a name. That's above everything. Why? Because the son. Was perfectly obedient.

To the father's command. So you see. Jesus love on the cross. Was flowing in two directions. No. No. Again. We usually think of the crosses.

As being the demonstration of. God's love man word. And indeed. I think more verses than not. Tell us that's the case. On the cross. We see. Jesus.

God's love. For man. This is how God. Demonstrates his love for us. In that. While we were yet sinners. Christ died for us. Many other verses like that. But. But. But folks.

All I'm saying is. That's not the only direction. Love was flowing. At Calvary. Here. John. 14. 31. Jesus says. There on the cross. Yes. I'm.

[37 : 51] I'm loving my father. And how are you loving your father. Jesus. Oh. I'm doing exactly what he said to me. Exactly what he commanded me to do. Oh.

What wondrous love is this. That drove our savior. To go to that cross. In glad. Humble. Obedience to the father. What love is this.

That he obeys him. Exactly. And so. Willingly. And so now. We're to follow his steps. We're to imitate him.

Showing our love. By our obedience. To all that the father has commanded. You see this tight relationship. Between love and law. Should send us to our Bibles. And specifically. To God's commands.

Like a lover. Finding a beloved's diary. He somehow gets in. Gets a hold of her diary.

- [38 : 48] And in it. He's reading. Of how she likes to be loved. Of the ways that. She appreciates. Love being shown to her. Well how does he read. Those words in the diary.
- Well he devours them. He's wanting to love her that way. Why? And even so. We love the law of God. Because we love the God of the law. And in here.
- He's telling us. How. He wants to be loved. And so. We not only love. The promises. Well we love the promises.
- But we not only love the promises. And we not only love the prophecies. And we not only love the gospel. We also love the law.
- We love the commandments. Read Psalm 119. And see a believer. Who loves the commandments of God. Why? Because he loves the God of the commandments. And wants to please him.
- [39 : 45] And so we love his commandments. Because here we find out what pleases him. And we want to live that way. Because loving God is keeping his commandments. And love for God is what makes law keeping a delight.
- The young man Jacob was in love with a beautiful woman named Rachel. And so Jacob went to her father Laban. And he says I'll tell you what. I'll work seven years as a shepherd for you.
- If you'll give me your daughter Rachel in marriage. And Laban says sure. Go for it. And then we read this. So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel. But they seem like only a few days to him.
- Because of his love for her. Genesis 29 20. Now being a shepherd was no easy job. You didn't ride a four-wheeler around and herd up your sheep.
- No it was all foot. And you spent your life out there on the hills with the sheep. Living outdoors. And Jacob tells us later in Genesis. That the heat consumed him by day.
- [40 : 52] And the cold stole his sleep at night. Now what could make such self-denying hard labor. For seven years seem like a few days.
- Well love. Love. That's what love does to a man. In the same way love makes law keeping a delight.
- Love for God sends us running to his commands. And what we find is his commands are not burdensome. No not at all. His yoke is easy. His burden is light.
- It's the way we find rest for our souls. It's the very best way to live. It's no burdensome bondage this law. To which we're enslaved. But it's the very law of liberty.
- James says. It's the law that gives freedom. And that's why Psalm 119. The believer says that. I run in the path of your commands. For you've made my heart free. Well where does a free heart love to run?
- [41 : 57] Right in the straight tracks of God's commands. That's the law of freedom. For the precepts of the Lord are right.
- Giving joy to the heart. And the commands of the Lord are radiant. Giving light to the eyes. And in keeping them there's great reward. Love makes obedience sweet.
- Just as it did for Jacob. Making his work sweet. Because of his love for Rachel. So how's your love life? How's your love life Godward?
- Are you living a life of love towards God. That is seen in glad keeping of his commandments. Be imitators of God. As his dearly loved children.
- And live a life of love. Remember what we saw last week. That it's God's prior love for us. That is the cause. Of our love for him.

- [42 : 56] We love him. Because he first loved us. And when the Ephesians love for him. Was growing cold. The Lord Jesus called on them to repent. For having forsaken their first love.
- And there's a hymn of repentance. That we sometimes sing here. That says. We have not loved thee as we ought. But it's the second line. That gets me every time.
- Nor cared. That we. Are loved by thee. I find that hymn is helpful to me. In getting to the bottom of things. You know what it tells me?
- It tells me that this relationship. Between God's prior love. Causing love in me. Is so true. That often. When I have not loved him. As I ought.
- That is simply symptomatic. And the result. Of another sin. Of not caring. That I am loved. Again. I've taken it for granted.
- [43 : 59] I've overlooked it. I've forgotten it. I've. I've belittled it. I've doubted it. But I've not basked in it.
- I've not treasured it. I've not daydreamed about it. And meditated on it. And sang about it. Amazing love. How can it be.
- That thou my God. Should die for me. No. I've. I have forsaken. Forgotten. Lost my first love. And that's why my love for him. Is not what it ought to be.
- And the hymn writer. Is frank enough to tell us. Because we've not cared. About his love. For us. You see.
- Love is a supernatural power. And. And where it's grasped. It will create love. In response. Francis Scott Key. Wrote our national anthem.
- [44 : 57] Star spangled banner. But he wrote an even better song. That's in our hymnal. And. In that hymn. He longs to have the flame of God's love.
- Light the fire of love in his heart. Listen. Listen. To his words. Lord. With glowing heart. I'd praise thee. For the bliss. That your love.
- Imparts. For the pardoning grace. That saves me. The peace. That from it flows. Oh. Help my God. My weak endeavor. This dull soul. To rapture. Raise. Thou must light the flame.
- Or never. Can my heart. Can my love. Be warmed. To praise. So. So let thy love. My soul's chief treasure.
- Love's pure flame within me raise. And since words can never measure. Let my life. Show forth thy praise. A life of. Gladly.
- [45 : 52] Willingly. Obeying. Your commandments. So let's make much of. His love for us this week. Let's make it. Our soul's chief treasure. Let me give you an assignment.
- What would it look like. In your life. If. God's love for you. Is your soul's. Chief. Treasure. Let's make much of that.
- Let's treasure it. I dare say. We'd be daydreaming about it. We'd be meditating upon it. We'd be singing about it. We'd be sharing about it.
- We'd be praising. And thanking. God for it. Would you stand with me. We're going to. Respond to God's. Word this morning. That says that.
- Love begins. God word then for us. That's our greatest commandment. Is to love him. And we'll learn about. Love for our neighbor next week. But. A song.
- [46 : 53] That we sing directly to Jesus. The son of God. My Jesus. I love thee. It was written by a 16 year old Canadian boy. Shortly after he was converted. And as we sing.
- I want you focusing on Jesus. It's a song where we sing directly to him. But. I want you to learn that this lad. Had already known what it is. To love God.

And. He had learned. How his love. Was inflamed to this God. Notice. Where his love caught fire. I love thee. Because thou.

Has first. Loved me. Let's sing it to the Lord. May the Lord direct.

All of our hearts. Into God's love. And into Christ's perseverance. Amen. Amen.