

Abiding In Him – Part 6

Welcome to Abiding in Him, Part 6, April 25, 2007. You remember we came through into the Kingdom through the doorway of salvation, looked at faith, the fuel of the spirit realm, then came into abiding in Him. We looked at principles that we are to use by which we access the position called abiding in Him to come to the place of abiding, to magnify our view of Jesus Christ, to see then a principal revelation of abiding in Him, namely the abiding love of God. And last week, we got half way through that and today I hope to finish that. Last week we asked ourselves the question, how much does the Father love the Son and within the Trinity the Father and I are one according to John 17:22. And since the Father and Son are part of the Trinity, namely part of our one God manifested in three persons, then God the Father cannot love the Son less than He loves Himself since they are both in the Godhead. So the greatest revelation in Scripture to me is not only that God is love and that God loves me, but that He loves me as much as He loves Himself.

Now putting all of these revelations about love allows us to understand the sequence of Biblical love. I John 4:8 – God is love. John 17:23 – The Father loves us as He loves the Son. John 15:9 – Just as the Father loves the Son, the Son loves us. That's the same love that is expressed in the Trinity is directed toward us. That is to say God loves us as much as He loves Himself. What a stunning revelation that is. And I John 3:16 – We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us. That's why without understanding the cross, you will not understand the love of God. You will not understand the cross except you understand the Holiness of God, the sin of man, the justice of God to be poured out upon that discrepancy, namely the horror of Hell. Lying embedded within all of that is the expansive revelation of the love of God. I John 4:16 – We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. It's one thing to quote the Scriptures out of memory; it's another to believe the Scriptures about what they say of the love which God has for us. I John 4:19 – We love God because He first loved us. Romans 5:5 – The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, or poured out in our hearts in another translation. That is to be smitten by the love of God. So we now know that God is love and that God loves us, that God loves me and loves my neighbor as much as He loves Himself. If you receive that revelation, then you quit establishing your own self determined standard as a threshold by which you will know the love God. If God would only behave this way, or do this for me, then I would know that He loves me. But that's to go by your word instead of the Word of God. That is to remain in self worship.

Now relishing these revelations of the love of God is what causes you to love God. Then you begin to love like God loves. And that includes loving what God loves; and that includes yourself and your neighbor. You'd have to think, well surely, to know all these things is to know the love of God; but God's love or the revelation of it doesn't stop there. Ephesians 3:19 – to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge. No matter how much you know of the love of God, the love of God will surpass your knowledge. You can always know more of the love of God; but you can never know all of the love of God. That's because His love is a Holy love, an other than love, a transcendent love. And that's part of the transcendent majesty of God. And that's why we started with the Holiness of God; because except you be awakened to the Holiness of God, you will not regard the love of God in the New Testament as a Holy, other than, transcendent kind of love. And it's only that kind of love that you stand in awe and reverence of.

And it's only that kind of love that will control you as described in II Corinthians 5:14 – the love of Christ controls us. Any revelation of love less than I'm describing will never control you. I John 3:1 – How great a love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called His children and such we are. Imagine that! That we passed from being a creation of God, like the rest of existence, to being a child of God, in the family of God for all eternity. And did we earn that? No. The Father bestowed that love upon us.

So imagine all that, that God has a passion to be one with us, an absolute passion that no part of ourselves remain outside of Himself. Imagine that as the love of God and then know you child of God, that the love of God exceeds whatever you imagined. That is the love of God for you. Did we earn it? No. Well, how do we know? One primary way is by looking at our condition when He bestowed His love upon us; and by looking at what He did when we were yet in that condition. Ephesians 2:1-8 (basically summarized) – when we were children of wrath, sons of disobedience, dead in our sins, trespasses, and transgressions, basically functioning in self worship, in self determination, accomplishing the purposes of Satan to oppose the Kingdom of God; when we were in that condition, but God being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead, He made us alive, raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the Heavenly places, not as some tangential creatures barely accessing the love of God, but we became children of God, alive to God and in the way that God views reality we're seated with Him in the spirit realm so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us. Because, you see, that kind of love is expressed as grace; and that kind of grace is an other than kind of grace; and except we'd been in this condition, and God did what He did through nothing that we accomplished, the grace of God would have been limited in its revelation to the created order. Recall, Jesus on the cross, effectively said I would rather pay for your sins for you than to spend eternity without you. I would rather go through Hell for you than to spend eternity without you. I would rather have an eternal relationship with you than to hold your sins against you. And I would rather satisfy My own justice and receive My own wrath than to have you receive My just wrath, but spend eternity without you. That is the love of God. So does God's love abide, since I call this the abiding love of God? I think it does. Well, how do we know? Abide means to constantly dwell; so let's look at what can separate you from the love of God.

John 15:13 is where we'll begin. Greater love has no man than this than that one lay down his life for his friends. It is true that greater love has no man than this; but greater love has God than this. Because God laid down His life for you when you were yet His enemy, not His friend. I John 3:16 – we know love by this, that He laid down His life for us. That's how we know His love. But we get an even greater revelation of His love by reminding ourselves of our attitude toward Him when He laid down His life for us, when we were His enemies, hostile to God, contrary to the purposes of God. No one seeks God; no one is good, but God. You see that's the abiding love of God. He wouldn't allow anything, including your hostility and your enmity toward Him, to separate you from His love for eternity future. That's the love of God. He loves you that much. And that love abides, constantly dwells upon you, not something that is withdrawn based on a mood. So if your enmity, your hostility cannot separate you from the abiding love of God, what can? Romans 8:35-39 – Nothing (now nothing means no thing, it means null set, it means what it says—nothing) can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Not tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, the sword,

death, life, angels, principalities, powers, things present, things to come, height, depth, nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. If that's not an abiding love, I don't know what is. No created thing—see there are only two categories: created and uncreated; no created thing can separate you from the only uncreated thing—namely God. He loves you that much.

Exodus 20:5 – For I the Lord your God am a jealous God. See, that jealousy flows out of His love; that's a passion for oneness. Exodus 34:14 – His name is jealous; His name encompasses all that He is. This God is jealous. Now we need to distinguish godly and ungodly jealousy lest we take our common usage of the terms today and misunderstand. Jealousy that is godly is possessive; but to the absolute best outcome for the object of the jealousy. But jealousy that is ungodly, coming from the flesh of man is possessive, but is self centered and it works to the detriment of the object of the jealousy. So this is jealousy in a godly sense. He will not allow anything to separate you from His love. He has that kind of passion to be one with you. He loves you that much. Oh, so child of God, you may not always understand His ways; you may not always understand His timing, but don't ever doubt that the love of God abides upon you.

Next poster. Now in the light of the revelation of the abiding love of God, let us go back now and explore the great commandment because it leads to a stupendous revelation. Matthew 22:36-40 – Teacher, what is the greatest commandment in the law? And He said to them you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment; the second is like unto it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend the whole law and the prophets. So we're told the two greatest commandments, each one being like the other, love God and love your neighbor as yourself. Now recall that God is love and love is a passion for oneness. And recall that we love because He first loved us. You see, we cannot love God except we know His love for us. We cannot have a passion to be one with a God who we do not believe has a passion to be one with us. In other words, you cannot conjure up love. You receive love. I Corinthians 4:7 – What do you have that you did not receive? So love is not something that you can conjure up.

We're then told to love our neighbor as ourselves. Now we are not told specifically what it means to love ourselves. And we're not told specifically what it means to love our neighbor. We'll have to look at the sum of the Word of God to understand that. In fact we will not understand what it means to love ourselves unless we first understand and can define what it means to love our neighbor. We hear people attempt to define loving your neighbor in different ways. Some say it's wanting the best for them. Some say it's wanting the greater good for them. The problem with such definitions is they've taken a vague understanding, loving your neighbor, and defined it by vague definitions; because they never define what the best is or never define what the greater good is. We need to receive the revelation that nothing is better than God. And Luke 18:19, Jesus says – No one is good except God alone. Thus, wanting the best for someone is to want God for someone. Wanting the greater good for someone is to want God for someone because God alone is good. So when you say you want the greater good or you want the best for someone, what you're really saying is you want God for them. How much of God? All of Him! That's simply another way of saying that you ultimately want them to become one with God. Thus, to love your neighbor is to have a passion for your neighbor to become one with God.

Understanding that now allows you to back up and understand what it means to love yourself. Loving myself means that I have a passion that I become one with God. Now here is a connecting revelation. Love of God and love of self are the same thing. They are synonyms in a Biblical sense. When I say I love God, what I'm saying is that I have a passion that I become one with God. When I love myself, what I'm saying is that I have a passion that I become one with God. Thus, love of God and love of self are synonyms. When I come back to looking at loving my neighbor, I love my neighbor as myself.

So let's look at this. What appears at first glance to be three loves: love of God, love of self, and love of neighbor is really easily condensed into two loves—namely love of God which equals love of self and number two, love of my neighbor. That's true, remember, because to say I love God is to also say I love myself, because that's to want the greater good and the best for myself which is God. Then ultimately all three become the same. They are one because I love God which is to love self and I love my neighbor as I love myself. So all three are identical. That is to say when you understand these relationships in the great commandment, you view "C," love my neighbor as myself, define "C" to want God for my neighbor, to understand "B", love of myself which is to want myself to become one with God. When you receive that revelation, you can see that "A," I love God equals "B," I love myself; and now we see that loving my neighbor as myself so that "C" equals "B." So anyone with any basic mathematical inclination can see now that "A" equals "B" equals "C." If we understand these concepts in the great commandment, we'll have no trouble defining the gold standard of all spiritual pursuit. The ultimate standard becomes whatever brings me and others closer, faster into oneness with God. That's why love is the gold standard; because love is a passion for oneness.

So let me demonstrate that with just a simple practical example. John 1:14 – And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, glory as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Thus the two words that the apostle John uses to understand the glory of God applying to Jesus and the Father are grace and truth. Both are required. But if you don't understand the gold standard of all spiritual pursuit, you will accentuate one to the detriment of the other and not lead someone or yourself closer, faster into oneness with God, because grace without truth enables and excuses unrighteousness. It does not bring someone closer, faster into oneness with God because it ignores how God views the reality of His Holiness and His purity and that God cannot approve evil and cannot look on wickedness with favor. But truth without grace can lead one easily into self righteousness, into legalism, into cold heartedness, and into judgmentalism. And that also does not bring anyone closer, faster into oneness with God. But love brings truth with grace and that combination is what brings others closer, faster into oneness with God by revealing the totality of His glory which encompasses both.

Next poster. Now I'm going to rehash some of these basic concepts and I call this the summary poster. If you can understand the concepts on this poster, then you will understand the love of God; you'll understand the great commandment. Start with number one: God's love. Does God love Himself? God loves Himself totally. God has a passion to remain one with Himself. That's why God cannot lie because He is truth and He will never do anything contrary to His truth. He cannot lie. Such is the passion to remain one with truth that He cannot lie. He is totally righteous; that's when He cannot approve evil and cannot look on wickedness with favor;

because He has a passion to remain one with righteousness because that's what He is. So God has total love of Himself.

Now consider God's love in the Trinity. No member of the Trinity can love any other member of the Trinity less than He loves Himself. That's because there's oneness in the Trinity because the Lord, our God, is one God. So if the Father loved the Son less than Himself, it would mean that the Father was allowing a cleavage point to occur between the Son and Himself. And the Father cannot do that such is His love. His Son is His other self, so to speak. That is to say the Father loves the Son as much as He loves Himself; the Son loves the Father as much as He loves Himself; the Spirit loves the Son as much as He loves Himself; the Spirit loves the Father as much as He loves Himself, and so on. So when you understand God's love for Himself and God's love within the Trinity, you can see that "A," God's love for Himself and "B," God's love in the Trinity are equal. "A" equals "B." Now consider God's love for me. We learn from Scripture that the Father loves us as He loves the Son. We learn from Scripture that the Son loves us as the Father loves the Son. That is to say God loves me as much as He loves Himself. So, the love that God has for me equals the love expressed among the members of the Trinity which equals the love that God has for Himself. So you can see that number one, when you drop to the bottom of the poster, "A" equals "B" equals "C." That is the agape, unconditional love of a Holy God and that agape, holy love of God cannot be stratified and cannot be expressed in varying dimensions because He is love.

Now look at the bottom part of the poster. Roman numeral II – My love. I love God. My love for God means that I have a passion that I become one with God. I love myself. That means that I have a passion that I become one with God. And as we already expressed; thus, love of God and love of myself are equals. So on my poster, "D" equals "F." And then I'm told to love my neighbor as myself. When you do that, then "F," my love for others equals "E," my love for myself equals "D," my love for God. So God's love, "A" equals "B" equals "C." My love "D," equals "E," equals "F." Those are the revelations and our whole life as Christians on planet Earth is to have Roman numeral II, my love, move progressively toward Roman numeral I, the love of God. And we do that when, II, my love beholds I. We do not have II become I just through the exercise of will power and self determination. We do it by fixing our gaze upon Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith and receive the revelation of the love of God as revealed and expressed through Jesus Christ, particularly at the cross; and then we become what we behold. Because except we receive the revelation of the agape love of God for ourselves, we will always walk under our own will power trying to conjure up love and defining love in the process. So our whole goal since "A" equals "B" equals "C," God's love and "D" equals "E" equals "F," which is my love, is to have my love grow closer to the love of God. That is what the progress toward Christlikeness is, the progress toward summing all things up in Jesus Christ is. That's to be controlled by the love of Jesus Christ, you see. So ultimately the goal is to have all loves become equality in the agape love of God.

So if you can understand those mathematical relationships, then you can understand the agape love of God. You can understand the great commandment and you can understand how it all is to become one over the longer term only to be totally accomplished when we pass in our glorified bodies, into Heaven, and we shall be like Him. Why? Because we shall see Him as He is, not through our will power. So we've taken the journey to the cross; we went through the

cross into the Kingdom, the doorway of salvation to explore faith as the fuel, to walk by faith coming into this position called abiding in Him; and while abiding, we behold the beauty of the Lord and the major aspect of the beauty of the Lord is the abiding love of God. And that's where we abide from now on; because John 15:9, Jesus says – Abide in My love. And that initiates the process then of fulfilling Galatians 5:6 – which tells us, that faith works through love. When your faith brings you into Christ and you abide in Christ, and you see the abiding love of Christ and you abide in the abiding love of Christ, you will then love Christ, love yourself, love your neighbor as yourself and be controlled by the love of Jesus Christ. And that is when you function in truth and grace to reveal the glory of God upon planet Earth. That is Christlikeness. And our faith will work through love as the next time we come together we begin to explore the fruit of abiding in His love.

So my time is up and I thank you for yours.