

 ***“THE HEART OF LOVE!”***

 ***“Love God – Love One Another”* Series (Part 2)**

***But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?"***

***Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'\* This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."* (Matthew 22:34-40)**

***> Understanding the human HEART! -*** Your heart beats around 100,000 times a day, 36,500,000 times a year. The average heart pumps over 1,000 gallons a day, over 55 million gallons in a lifetime. This is enough to fill 13 super tankers. It never sleeps, beating 2.5 billion times in a lifetime

**> *“You shall LOVE the LORD your God with all your heart”* – What kind of LOVE is this?** - Two distinct Greek words for love appear in the Bible. **The word ‎*phileo* ‎means "to have ardent affection and feeling"-a type of impulsive love.**

**The other word ‎*agapao* ‎means *"to have esteem" or "high regard."*** In the memorable conversation between Jesus and Peter, there is a play upon these two words (John 21:15-17). Jesus asked, "Simon, do you love [esteem] me?" But Peter replied, "You know that I love [have ardent affection for] You." Then Jesus asked, "Simon, do you love [have ardent affection for] Me?" And Peter responded that his love was agape love - a love that held Jesus in high esteem and which was more than a fleeting feeling.

- **The warm word *agape* is the characteristic term of Christianity.** This word for love is used several different ways in the Bible.

1. ***Agape love*** indicates the nature of the love of God toward His beloved Son (John 17:26), toward the human race generally (John 3:16; Rom 5:8), and toward those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:21).

2. ***Agape love*** conveys God's will to His children about their attitude toward one another. Love for one another was a proof to the world of true discipleship (John 13:34-35).

3. ***Agape love*** also expresses the essential nature of God (1 John 4:8). Love can be known only from the actions it prompts, as seen in God's love in the gift of His Son (1 John 4:9-10). Love found its perfect expression in the Lord Jesus. Christian love is the fruit of the Spirit of Jesus in the believer (Gal 5:22).

**Love is like oil to the wheels of obedience. It enables us to run the way of God's commandments (Ps 119:32). Without such love, we are as nothing (1 Cor 13:3). Such Spirit-inspired love never fails (1 Cor 13:8) but always flourishes.**

**> What does the Bible say about the HEART?** – According to the Bible the HEART is the inner self that thinks, feels, and decides. In the Bible the word heart has a much broader meaning than it does to the modern mind. The heart is that which is central to man. Nearly all the references to the heart in the Bible refer to some aspect of human personality.

In the Bible all emotions are experienced by the heart: love and hate (Ps 105:25; 1 Peter 1:22); joy and sorrow (Eccl 2:10; John 16:6); peace and bitterness (Ezek 27:31; Col 3:15); courage and fear (Gen 42:28; Amos 2:16).

The thinking processes of man are said to be carried out by the heart. This intellectual activity corresponds to what would be called mind in English. Thus, the heart may think (Est 6:6), understand (Job 38:36), imagine (Jer 9:14), remember (Deut 4:9), be wise (Prov 2:10), and speak to itself (Deut 7:17). Decision-making is also carried out by the heart. Purpose (Acts 11:23), intention (Heb 4:12), and will (Eph 6:6) are all activities of the heart.

**Finally, heart often means someone's true character or personality. Purity or evil (Jer 3:17; Matt 5:8), sincerity or hardness (Ex 4:21; Col 3:22); and maturity or rebelliousness (Ps 101:2; Jer 5:23) - all these describe the heart or true character of individuals.**

God knows the heart of each person (1 Sam 16:7). Since a person speaks and acts from his heart, he is to guard it well (Prov 4:23; Matt 15:18-19). The most important duty of man is to love God with the whole heart (Matt 22:37). With the heart man believes in Christ and so experiences both love from God and the presence of Christ in his heart (Rom 5:5; 10:9-10; Eph 3:17). (from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

**The process of salvation begins in the heart by the believing reception of the testimony of God, while the rejection of that testimony hardens the heart (Ps 95:8; Prov 28:14; 2 Chron 36:13).**

(from Easton's Bible Dictionary)

**> The “HEART” is found 832 times throughout the Bible. Let’s discover how to *“love God with all our heart”* in 7 ways:**

**#1 – Our HEART determines our CHARACTER! – Jesus said in Luke 6:45 - *A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.*** **(rf. – Matthew 15:1-20)**

**#2 – Our HEART solidifies our FAITH! - Romans 10:8-13 - *But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."***

**#3 – The HEART must be carefully guarded through GOD’s WORD! - Proverbs 4:20-23** - ***My son, give attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; keep them in the midst of your heart; for they are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh. Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.***

**#4 – Beware of the HARDENED and IMPENITENT HEART! – Romans 1:18 – 2:10.**

**- Hardness of heart evidences itself by light views of sin; partial acknowledgment and confession of it; pride and conceit; ingratitude; unconcern about the word and ordinances of God; inattention to divine providences; stifling convictions of conscience; shunning reproof; presumption, and general ignorance of divine things.**

**#5 – God KNOWS our HEARTS! - Jeremiah 17:9-10 *- "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.”***

**Luke 16:14-15 - *Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided Him. And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.”***

**#6 – Let’s have a HEART of REPENTANCE and RENEWAL – Psalm 51**

**#7 – Let’s GIVE OUR WHOLE HEART TO GOD EVERYDAY!**

**- In OBEDIENCE – Psalm 119:34-48**

**- In TRUST - Proverbs 3:5-10 *- Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones. Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase; so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.***

**- In PRAYER - Jeremiah 29:11-14 - *For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.***