

A person wearing a red helmet and a high-visibility vest is riding a motorcycle across a makeshift bridge made of logs over a stream. The background shows a rural landscape with hills and trees under a cloudy sky.

*The
Duty of Man
A life of Christian Service*

By Dr. Jimmy Nelson

A Series on the Duty of Man to God

Message one - The first duty of man is to glorify God.

Text: I Corinthians 6:20,

“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s. 31,
“Whether therefore you eat, or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

Introduction:

A. The apostle Paul asks the Corinthians church to take a look at everything that they were saying and doing – then **evaluate** it to see if it brings glory to God or dishonors Him.

1. The Christians in Corinth had damaged their testimony in their community because of the divisions and immorality in the church.
2. Throughout the entire letter, the apostle Paul encourages the Christians at Corinth to do one very important thing: **Stop thinking about pleasing yourselves and focus on pleasing God.**

B. The apostle Paul reminds the Christians at Corinth of a basic scriptural principle **God is to be Glorified in all that we do and say.**

1. We are to glorify God in everything that we do.

I Peter 4:11, "That God in all things may be glorified."

2. The glory of God is a silver thread which must run through all our actions.

I Corinthians 10:31, "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

C. There is a twofold glory:

1. The intrinsic glory – or the glory that God has within himself.
 - Glory is essential to the Godhead, as light is to the sun:
 - He is called the "God of glory" in Acts 7:2.
 - God cannot be God without it.
 - The creature's honor is not essential to His being.
 - He is God whether man glorifies him or not.
2. Secondly, the glory that is ascribed to God, **or** the glory that His creatures labor, or endeavor, to give him.

I Chronicles 16:29, "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name."

Our Text: I Corinthians 6:20, "Glorify God in your body, and in your spirit."

- In your Body.... This old tabernacle in which we live and function in.

Let us be careful how we live in our flesh.

- In your spirit.... That which comes from the heart or the inner man.
- The glory that we give God very simply put is – "Our lifting up His name in the world, and magnifying Him in the eyes of others.

Philippians 1:20, According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with

all boldness, as always, so now also **Christ shall be magnified** in my body, whether it be by life, or by death."

D. Glorifying God consists in four things:

1. **Appreciation** - To glorify God is to set God highest in our thoughts.

Psalm 92:8. "Thou, Lord, art most high for evermore."

2. **Adoration** - Glorifying God includes our adoration and worship.

Psalm 29:2. "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

3. **Affection** - This is part of the glory we give to God, who considers himself glorified when we demonstrate our love for Him.

Deuteronomy 6:5, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul."

4. **Subjection** – We place ourselves at His disposal.

- We dedicate ourselves to God, and stand ready to service as He directs.
- Thus the angels in heaven glorify him because they stand ready to receive His commands and fulfill His commands immediately.
- Thus we too glorify God when we do not to fulfill any command or service.
- God is glorified, in us, when we fight under the banner of His Gospel against an enemy.
- We are to be as David to King Saul,

"Thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine."

Psalm 34:3, "O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together."

Psalm 86:12, "I will praise thee, O Lord my God with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore."

Romans 15:6, "That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Romans 15:9, "And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name."

Illustration: When General Lee heard that Stonewall Jackson had been wounded at Chancellorsville, **he sent him a note which read:**

General; I have just received your note, informing me that you were wounded. I cannot express my regrets at the occurrence. Could I have directed events, I should have chosen for the good of the country to be disabled in your place.

I congratulate you upon the victory, which is due to your skill and energy. Very respectfully your obedient servant, R.E. Lee, General"

When the note was delivered and read to Jackson, he turned to the wall for a few minutes and then looked back at Lee's aide and said, "General Lee is very kind, **but he should give the praise to God.**"

I. Why are we to glorify God?

A. Because He **created** the universe.

1. Everything is created by Him.
2. Because of that we owe Him our worship and our praise. We can't create anything on our own. We can build but we cannot create anything out of nothing. While God can and has created everything out of nothing.

B. We are to glorify Him because He **is** our **God**.

1. He created us – Thus we are designed to worship and glorify God.
2. We give Him the glory because we love Him.
3. We give Him the glory because He saved us.

II. How are we to glorify Him?

A. "We can glorify God with our body and Spirit."

1. By presenting it as a living sacrifice - Romans 12:1-2.
 - Promise the Lord that you will not use your body for anything that will dishonor and degrade His Name.
2. Prostrate it in prayer - Jer. 33:3.
 - Take your body aside from the world and go to the Lord in prayer on a regular basis.
 - Nothing glorifies the Lord quiet like people who trust Him enough to call on Him in faith.
3. Practice His Presence - Hebrews 13:5; Matthew 28:20.
 - We must never forget that Jesus is all present – He is ways with us.
 - Therefore, we must remember to live in the knowledge of His abiding presence.
 - When we remember that the Lord Jesus Christ is always present and that He is watching, it may prevent (negative) you from engaging in dishonoring activity, or cause (positive) you to do that which glorifies Him.

4. Praise Him **Continually** - Hebrews 13:15; Psalm 47:1.
 - Determine in your heart that you will no circumstance of life stop you from having a thankful heart of praise before the Lord.
5. Give yourself to the Lord for His service – Romans 6:16
 - The scripture tells us that we cannot serve two masters.
 - Therefore, you will yield your body to one master or the other.
 - It will either be the gods of this world, or it will be the Almighty.
 - Yield yourself to the Lord and He will use you for His glory.
 - Can you honestly say that you are using your body as a "House of Worship" before the Lord?

B. Our actions are to glorify God.

1. Our actions, or our words, either lift up our testimony or tear it down.
2. If our actions tears down our testimony – it dishonors and does not glorify God.
3. We glorify God when we show concern for others.
 - When we help others.
 - When we support missions.
 - When we share the Gospel.

- When we love others as ourselves.

C. We are to glorify God in our personal life.

1. By reading the Bible every day.

II Timothy 2:15, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

2. By praying every day.

Ephesians 6:18, “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”

D. We are to glorify God in our family life.

1. By teaching our children.

Proverbs 22:6, “Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

2. We are also to teach our children and teach them to teach their children.

Deuteronomy 6:7, “And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”

E. Christians are to glorify God in their business life.

I Corinthians 1: 4, “I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you.”

Ephesians 6:9, “And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.”

Colossians 3:22, "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God."

Colossians 4:1, "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven."

F. Glorify the God by falling in love with him.

I John 3:1, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."

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

G. Glorify God by following Him.

John 14:21, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

H. Glorify God by letting your light shine.

Matthew 5:16, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your father in heaven."

1. Too many people are hiding their light under a bushel basket because they fear what others think.
2. We glorify the Lord when our lives reflect Christ as the moon reflects the sun!

I. Glorify God by talking to others about Him.

1. People know I love my wife, my children, and my grandchildren because I talk about them.
2. As Christian's we should love the Lord with all our heart! **Do you?**

3. Because we love Him we should also desire to tell others about him.
4. Yes, because He has told us to, but more because we love Him and want to tell others about Him because we love Him.

J. We are to Glory the Lord by glorifying Him.

Psalm 8:1, "O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens."

1. "Who hast set thy glory above the heavens?"
2. Glory and majesty belong to God.
 - We are not to bring glory, attention or majesty to ourselves.
 - We are to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.

K. We are to glorify God by serving Him obediently.

Luke 14:23, "**Go out** into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled."

1. God commands that we evangelize!
2. Those who do not evangelize, are not being obedient to God's command.
3. Therefore, they are not glorifying the Lord and will give an account when they stand before the Lord.

L. We glorify God by giving Him true worship.

John 4:23, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him."

Conclusion:

- A. Just as we cannot darken the sun we cannot decrease God's glory.
- B. But when Christians make poor choices, those of the world see it as casting a bad shadow on Christianity and the Lord, His glory, His greatness, and His reputation.
- C. To live for God's glory means that we live our lives so that God's reputation is enhanced and not diminished in any way.
- D. You cannot Glorify God if you Do Not know his SON by saving Grace.
 1. What do I do: Answer these questions from your heart:
 - Do you believe that you are a sinner?
 - Do you believe that you have sinned against God, not just done things wrong, but you haven't done what God wants you to do?
 - Do You want forgiveness for your sins?
 - Do you believe that Jesus died and was buried and then rose again?
 - Do you want to accept, right now, what Jesus has done for you on the cross?
 - Then believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior.

Honor the Lord your God

2nd message in the series - the duty of man to God

Text: Proverbs 3:1-10,

My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man. Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones. Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine."

Introduction:

A. Glorify means:

1. To praise; to magnify and honor in worship; to ascribe honor to, in thought or words.
2. To praise; to honor; to extol.

B. Love:

1. The love of God is the first duty of a saved person.
2. Love comes forth from correct views of his attributes, or the Excellencies of His character, and give the greatest delight to the sanctified heart.

3. Esteem and reverence are likewise elements of this affection, and give the believer a fear of offending him.

C. Honor:

1. The esteem due or paid to worth; high estimation.
2. “To reverence, to manifest the highest respect for, in words and actions; to entertain the most exalted thoughts of; to worship and adore”

Paul Harvey told of the woman a few years ago that had a butterball turkey she had had in her freezer for 23 years. She called Butterball Company to ask them about whether the turkey would be all right to eat. The company said we think it would be all right if the freezer was okay but the turkey may have lost a lot of its flavor. She said, I thought that might be the case so I will just give it to the church for Thanksgiving.

So many times Christians are like the woman, they give God the leftovers. God doesn't need our turkeys: We honor Him by giving Him our best

- D. So many times people think of stewardship only as giving money to the Lord's church.
 1. While the giving of tithes and offerings is an important aspect of stewardship, it is only a small portion.
 2. “Stewardship is the way I handle those things in my life that God has given me.”
 3. The Management of my God-given resources for His glory & for the good of others.”
 4. Stewardship is a direct reflection of my relationship to my Lord and my Savior.

5. Proverbs 3 teaches that “Stewardship is Lordship!”

I. My heart is His heart:

Trust in the LORD with all your heart

- A. At the center of every true act of stewardship, **every work of ministry**, every acceptable act of worship **is the heart - a heart close to God.**

John 14:23, "Jesus answered and said unto him, 'If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him'."

Proverbs 23:26, "My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways."

- B. Our Heart is the center of our affections.
1. That which we love we put in first place.
 2. When your heart beat echoes the beating of Christ's heart – There is a life of credible stewardship about to start."

II. My mind – is His mind:

Lean not unto your own understanding.

- A. Many seem unaware that the first great commandment according to our Lord is,

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God . . . with all thy mind."

Proverbs 23:7, "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee."

II Corinthians 10:5 "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God,

and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

B. Stewardship involves allowing God to work in us. If we would think God's thoughts, we must learn to think continually of God."

I Corinthians 2:16, "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."

Philippians 2:5, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:"

III. My ways – are to be His ways:

In all your ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct your paths.

A. Way – path or direction.

B. Is the direction of your life consistent with the direction that God wants for your life?

Isaiah 55:8, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD."

Haggai 1:5-7, "Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways."

IV. My cleanliness – is to be as His cleanliness:

A. Be not wise in your own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.

Ecclesiastes 12:13, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

Romans 12:1-2, " I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

B. Purity in the heart produces power in the life.

1. Power to properly live for and serve God.

II Timothy 2:19, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

2. God uses clean vessels.

"The essence of true holiness is conformity to the nature and will of God" Samuel Lucas (1818-1868).

V. My possessions – are His possessions:

Honor the LORD with your substance, and with the first fruits of all your increase.

A. Adolphe Monod (1800-1856)

"There is no portion of our time that is our time, and the rest God's; there is no portion of money that is our money, and the rest God's money. It is all his; he made it all, gives it all, and he has simply trusted it to us for his service. A servant has two purses, the master's and his own, but we have only one."

Malachi 3:7-10, "Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return? Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say,

Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”

B. Matthew 6:19-6:24 according to Jesus, money is a spiritual issue.

1. Since it's a spiritual issue, we need to address it for at least three reasons:

- The Bible has more to say about money than almost any other subject.
- Giving will help us get to where we're going as a church.
- There are incredible benefits to giving.
- We give to God because he is Lord of the universe and he is worthy of our praise.
- We worship him with our lips, with our gifts and with our lives.

C. Let's examine the O T Teaching.

Leviticus 27:30, “And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S: it is holy unto the LORD.”

1. The O. T. standard of giving was the tithe, and this principle is found many places in O.T.

- It was among the earliest laws of the Israelites.
- The idea was that 10% of what they owned belonged to God, therefore it was holy.

- It was to be set aside for him and not used for common purposes. It was sacred.
- The faithfulness of the tithe results in Gods blessing.

Malachi 3:10, “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it..”

D. The N.T. teaching about giving.

1. The New Testament standard for giving goes beyond the tithe.
2. The New Testament has a totally different pattern for stewardship than the Old Testament.
3. To understand the New Testament concept of giving we have to look at the story of the Rich Young Ruler.
 - This young man came to Jesus in search of heaven, and asked Jesus what he had to do to inherit eternal life.
 - The young man told the Lord that he had kept all of the commandments from his youth.
 - Then Jesus completely astounded him by saying,

Matthew 19:21, “If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.”

- The Bible sadly reports, “When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.”

- What was Jesus Saying? He was giving the N.T. principle of stewardship.
 - The Old Testament taught us that 10% of everything we own belongs to God, the New Testament, and in particular Jesus, is teaching us that all we have belongs to God.
 - The Old Testament was a partial picture of a greater truth.
 - The Old Testament showed us that God had certain claims on our lives.
 - The New Testament shows us the full extent of those claims.
 - God does not just own a part of me; he owns all of me.
 - To acknowledge this and live this way is an act of worship.
4. Let's look at another N.T. example of this principle.
5. The Bible tells the story of the widow's mite.

Mark 12:41-44, "And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living."

6. When people read this story is read, many emphasize the smallness of her gift (it was only a fraction of a penny).

- The point of the story is not the smallness of her gift, but how large it was.
- The gifts of the wealthy were smaller in comparison.
- Why? Because she gave all that she had, and they gave very little in comparison.
- In Matthew 10:8 our Lord says, “freely ye have received, freely give.”
- The point is not whether you will literally give away all you have, but whether or not you recognize God’s complete and unconditional ownership of all you possess.
- In all reality, when we learn this truth it gives us an entirely new attitude toward life.
- This is true worship.

7. Giving tells me where my heart is:

- The Lord Jesus made it very clear what He demanded from His followers, and there were many who were not willing to pay the price.
- There were some that said that they were willing to follow Jesus wherever he would go.
- He said,

“Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.”

When they heard this they no longer followed him.

- In Luke 18:28-30 we have a conversation between Peter and the Lord about this subject.

“Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee.

And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.

8. Unreserved commitment results in unrestrained blessing.
9. Giving is an indicator of how much I trust God.
 - If you or I think we have to do it all ourself, and that God is not a rewarder of those who trust him, then you or I am not living as God wants us to live.

Hebrews 11:6, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Matthew 6:30-33, "Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

- E. No one ever ruined their character by being too generous, but many people have ruined their character because of the love of money.

VI. Giving indicates how much I honor God.

- A. It shows where my treasure is laid up:

Matt 6:19-21, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth

corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

B. When we give to God, it reminds us from where the things we have come.

1. Where you spend your money is an accurate gauge of what you value in life and where the things of real importance are to you.

Are you investing in the material or the spiritual?

C. With a right attitude you see giving as “honor to God!”

1. A Priority Not a Problem.
2. A matter of honoring God not hoarding for self.
3. A matter of willingness not wealth.
4. A matter of opportunity not obligation

I Timothy 1:17, “Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God

3rd message in the series - the duty of man to God

Text: Matthew 22:37-40:

“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. Mark 12:30 and Luke 10:27 both add, “and with all thy strength.” This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

Introduction:

A. Victor Knowles said,

“The biggest test we will ever face is loving a God whose letters we have read, whose heart we have come to know, but whose face we have never seen.”

B. Matthew 22, the chapter of our text, describes the final week of the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ.

1. In this chapter we see Him steadily moving toward the cross.
2. We will also see the confrontations that He had with the religious leaders of Israel.
3. We also see the love that we are to have for our Savior and Lord.

C. What we treasure reflects our passion and we have a passion for what we consider to be our treasure.

1. Our problem is that we don't treasure God.
2. He's our Savior and our friend. We'll visit Him from time to time, but He's not our treasure.

Passion: “A strong or extravagant fondness, enthusiasm, or desire for something.”

- D. In the passage before us this morning we are told to have an “all-consuming love for God... to love Him with All our heart.”

2 Chronicles 15:15, “And all Judah rejoiced at the oath: for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire; and he was found of them: and the LORD gave them rest round about.”

Psalm 42:1, “As the deer panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.”

1. When Jesus commands us to love God with all our heart, He is telling us to have the same strong, extravagant fondness, enthusiasm, and desire as expressed in these Scriptures.
2. Sadly to say the majority of Christians today don't have this passion!
3. We fit into one of two categories:
 - Those who need a new heart.
 - Those who have a new heart, but have poor circulation.

E. Some people cannot have a passion for God because they need a new heart.

1. Listen to what the Bible says about man's heart and passions apart from God:

Genesis 8:21, “The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.”

II Chronicles 12:14, “And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD.”

Jeremiah 7:24, “But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward.”

Jeremiah 17:9, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”

2. If the Holy Spirit has not drawn you to Christ:

- Your heart is beyond your cure... there's nothing you can do.
- It's impossible for you to have a passion for God because you need a new heart.
- You can have an interest in God.
- You can have a desire for spiritual things.
- But you can't have a true passion for God until God gives you a new heart.

3. God describes what happens to our heart at the moment of salvation:

Ezekiel 36: 26-27, “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.”

4. Sinners need a new heart because they have a “sin sick heart” and are “dead in trespass and sin.”
5. The sinner's unbelieving hearts condemns him to death and eternal separation from God.
6. The sinner's only hope is that the Great Physician will give them a new heart and forgive their sins.

7. The Lord Jesus Christ is our only hope!

Hebrews 10:16, “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.”

8. Salvation is of the Lord!

John 14:6, “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

I. Understanding our obligation:

- A. In order to understand what it means to love God with heart, soul, mind, and strength, we need to know what those things meant to the ancient Hebrews.
- B. To the Hebrew these three places in the body meant something:
1. The heart was the place:
 - Where decisions were made,
 - Where emotions were felt,
 - Where thinking was done,
 - Where secrets were hidden,
 - And where desires came from.
 - You could decide with your heart, feel with your heart, think with your heart, hide things in it, and desire from within it.
 2. The soul was the place:
 - Where decisions were made,

- Where emotions were felt,
 - Where thinking was done,
 - Where secrets were hidden,
 - And where desires came from.
- Therefore, you could decide with your soul, feel with your soul, think with your soul, hide things in your soul, and have desires in your soul.
3. The mind is where we: decide, think, feel, hide, and desire.
 - Heart, soul, and mind are used interchangeably in the Bible.
 - All three of these parts referred to the same thing.
 - So what's the point of the passage then?
 4. When the Bible says that we are to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength, it doesn't mean that there are three or four different aspects of our being, all of which must love God.
 5. It means that we are to love God with all the powers and faculties our entire being.
 - Adam and Eve, in their state of innocence, were capable of doing this.
 - But fallen man is unable in himself to accomplish this.
 - Without the grace of God, man has no true love for God, in his heart, soul and mind.

- In fact just the opposite is true, his carnal mind is enmity against God, and everything that is divine and good.
- Yet, according to the Law, his obligation to love the Lord in this manner is still the same.
- So, how can man do what is required of him?
- When the Spirit of God works a work of grace in the heart of man and produces the the fruit of love in his soul man then loves the Lord because of the blessings of grace bestowed.

1John 4:19, "For we love him, because he first loved us."

- Mark 12:30 and Luke 10:27 both add the phrase, "and with all thy strength."
- This Hebrew phrase seems to denote the vehemency of affections, with which God is to be beloved.
- It means total commitment and obedience to God.
- This is our obligation!

II. Understanding the motivation to love God.

A. God is the first cause of all things!

1. Everything that we do should be motivated by our passion (Our love, and desire to please) our Lord.
2. So what can you do if you've lost your passion for God?

B. You can renew your passion by:

1. Worshiping and serving God out of love, not obligation.
2. When was the last time you truly sang out of your heart in worship?
3. Or when you did something simply because you love God?
4. The church needs people who earnestly desire to worship God in spirit and in truth... people who come and pour out all their heart in the worship of God.
5. Making time to pursue God in Bible study and prayer.
 - James 4:8 says that when we draw near to God, He'll draw near to us.
 - If you want to renew your passion... draw near to God.
6. Taking or finding time to share, pray, and talking about God with your family or friends.

2 Timothy 2:22, "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

- Pursue God with your family... or if your single... with your friends
7. Pursue God right now.
 - If God is dealing with you right now concerning your need for a new heart and a passion for God this morning.
 - If He is "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," then come and share that with us as we sing the verse of invitation later in the service.

- If you're looking for a church home - we would love to have you as part of our family.

C. A great truth: God calls people to love Him.

1. Is the Lord worthy of our love? Of course He is.
2. Then why doesn't all mankind love Him.
 - How can they resist loving one who is perfect?
 - How can they resist loving one who is gracious and loves with a perfect love.
 - Not loving God is an absolute insult, yet that is the distinguishing characteristic of the world.
3. The answer is very simple:
 - As previously state: Man is spiritually dead in trespass and sin.
 - Therefore, he cannot love God until he is a recipient of regeneration, wrought in man by the Holy Spirit.
 - The simple fact is - We love God because He first loved us – and calls us to Himself.

III. Understanding this kind of love:

What kind of love is this?

- A. The Scripture says that it is a love that meditates on God's glory.
 1. Psalm 18 says that it is a love that trusts in God's great power.

2. Psalm 31:23 & Psalm 63:1-8 tell us that it is a love that seeks fellowship with God.
3. Psalm 119:165 says that it is a love that secures the peace of the soul.
4. Again Psalm 69:9 tells us that this love is sensitive to God feelings.
5. It is also a love that loves what God loves according to Psalm 119:72, 97, 103 and several other Scriptures.
6. I John 5:1 reminds us that this love is a love that loves those whom the Lord loves.
7. It also hates what God hates.

Psalm 97:10, "Ye that love the LORD, hate evil."

8. It is a love that grieves over sin - Matthew 26:75
9. I John 2:15 tells us that this love rejects the world and longs to be with Christ (II Timothy 4:8).
10. But most of all this love is a love that obeys the will of God.

IV. Understanding the command to love:

- A. The basic command is very simple - Love God and love other people.
 1. Christianity isn't that complicated.
 - Our text says there are only two laws, not 613 as the Jews claimed.
 - The first - love God, the second - love others.
 2. So, if you love God you will do what He says.

3. And because you love God you will also love others as yourself.
 - We are to love them in the manner that people should love their neighbors.
 - We are to do good toward them in temporal things.
 - Not causing injury to their person, their reputation, or their property.
 - We are to be concerned for their souls, and the everlasting happiness.
 - We are to pray for them, instruct and advise them concerning the condition of their souls.
4. Verse 40 sums it up.

"On these two commandments, hang all the law and the prophets."

- These commands are like two nails, two pegs.
- Everything else God said in the Old Testament hangs on those two things.
- If you just love God with all your being and love everybody as you love yourself, you don't need any more rules.
- Every thing else is just an explanation of that.

B. It is a personal command:

1. Every good Jew knew the primary command by heart and quoted it, at least twice each day, as part of the Shema.

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."

2. The *personal* focus of the command cannot be missed with the repetitive 'you' and 'your.'
3. Each person has similar responsibility to the Creator and Sovereign of the universe:

You are to love the Lord your God.

4. You are no freeloader in this world.
 - You are here for a divine purpose.
 - You exist by and for His pleasure.
 - Every breath inhaled and exhaled is contingent upon the Lord's purpose and pleasure for you.
 - You see the evidence of God's existence every time you open your eyes and gaze upon the intricacies of the world.
5. You feel the existence of God every time your conscience is distressed by an action and you hear.

"You shall love the Lord your God."

6. The Lord God commands His creatures to love Him totally and without reservation.

C. It is a particular command:

"You shall love *the Lord your God*."

1. There was no question to Whom the Lord Jesus Christ was referring since He was quoting Deuteronomy 6:5.
2. You are to love the Lord God for Who He is.

3. Because He is the Sovereign Creator, all of my love and affection rightly belongs to Him.
4. In this passage of Scripture we see the Lord Jesus Christ, who was God in the flesh, fulfilling this commandment perfectly.

We value, honor, and serve what we love.

D. It is a pointed command:

Let us look further - "You shall love the *Lord* your *God*."

1. Who is the Lord Jesus Christ commanding us to worship?
2. "The Lord your God" expresses His sovereignty or governance over the universe.
 - He is revealed as the One who is the Sovereign Creator.
3. The title emphasizes supreme authority or supreme rule, not just over willing subjects, but also over everything that exists.
4. That is made clearer in this context by the title "God."

Acts 17:24-28, "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring."

E. It is a pervasive command

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."

1. So, what is involved in loving God with *all* of our heart, soul, and mind?
2. Note the repetition of "all" modifying the extent of our love for God.
3. To use the adverb "all" with heart, soul, and mind implies that we are to love to the fullest extent of each faculty God has given us.

F. It is also the primary command:

"This is the first and great command."

1. Out of the 613 commandments in the Old Testament, and all of those added in the New Testament, this one commandment stands as primary above all others.
2. Or literally, "This the great, or primary, commandment to "love God" is to take precedence over everything in our lives.
3. So, in every plan, in every career move, in your marriage, your family, your finances, and every decision, your love for God must be imminent.

G. It is a proof command:

John 14:15, "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

John 14:21, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

John 14:23, "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words."

1. Our Lord GOD has given to us some basic commands, words that we are to keep:
 - Believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ for Salvation.
 - When saved then follow him in Scriptural Baptism.
 - Lay by in store on first day of week – We are to tithe and give free will offerings from that which God gives us.
 - Witness of the Grace of God in salvation in you.
 - And lastly, Love Him enough to keep His commandments.

H. It is a partnered command:

1. How do we love the God that doesn't need anything?

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

2. The hypocrisy of Christ's adversaries showed up at this point.
 - They bragged about how much they loved God, but had very narrow view about loving their neighbor.
 - Many of the 613 laws previously mentioned were negative laws that the religious leaders came with to create loop holes so they did not have to care for handicapped family members, much the less a neighbor.
 - They claimed to love God but they despised God's Son.

- At another time, the Lord Jesus Christ rebuked them for their lack of love.

John 8:42, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God."

➤ Loving God is never in isolation from loving others.

I. It is the pivotal command:

"On these two commandments depend ["hang"] the whole Law and the Prophets."

Conclusions:

A. From this passage of Scripture we quickly see:

1. That God is the first cause of all things, and loving him is the source, or cause of love to a neighbor.
2. A noted Jewish writer wrote,

"The root of "all the commandments" is, when a man loves God with all his soul, and cleaves unto him."

B. Is God you're most valued treasure?

C. Do you have the "all-consuming love for God that we spoke of in the beginning of this message?

D. Do you love Him with All your heart.

E. Are you being obedient to the first and second commands?

Seek Ye the Lord

4th message in the series - the duty of man to God

Text: Acts 17:22-31:

“Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars’ hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”

Deuteronomy 4:29, “But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.”

Introduction:

- A. Man is to Glorify God – To praise, magnify, honor in worship; to ascribe honor to, in thought or words.

Psalm 86:9, "All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name."

Psalm 86:12, "I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore."

1. God is glorified:

- By celebrating the perfections of his nature,
- By giving him the glory for the works of his hands,
- By praising him for all favors,
- By devoting ourselves to him,
- And by doing everything for his glory, for all the time that we live, both here and in eternity.

B. Man is to Honor God:

1. To honor is to have a high estimation of, and give the esteem due to the One worth of it.
2. To reverence, to manifest the highest respect for, in words and actions.
3. To entertain the most exalted thoughts of; to worship and adore God the Supreme Being.

C. Man is To Love God:

1. The Bible tells us that we are to have an "all-consuming love for God."
2. We are to love Him with All our heart.
3. The Christian loves God because of Who He is, and because He first loved us, then out of gratitude for His favors bestowed upon us.

D. And lastly, the subject of our message, Man is to Seek God:

1. Seek means to go in search, or quest of, to look for.
2. It means to search for by going from place to place.
3. To inquire of, to ask for, to solicit; to endeavor to find or gain by any means.
4. The primary sense is to advance, to press on, to drive forward.
 - Some form of the Word “SEEK” is used 376 times in the word of God.
 - The idea is to go out and to diligently look for and to find that which is worthwhile.
5. Two passages of Scripture come to mind:

Psalms 10:4, “The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.”

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

6. **The great question is:**

- Have you sought the LORD?
- Has He been the center of your seeking?

I. The Declaration of focus – Verses 22, 23:

“Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars’ hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.”

- A. Paul begins by observing that the Athenians - are very religious in all respects.
1. It was obvious from the thousands of statues all over the city.
 2. But ALL their religious philosophies only instilled fear.
 3. That is why they had created an extensive sacrificial system - to pacify and flatter their gods.
 4. Paul observes that these religious Greeks even had an altar with the inscription, " TO THE UNKNOWN GOD."
 5. Six hundred years earlier, a plague had struck Athens.
 - In order to appease the gods, the Cretan poet, Epimenides, suggested that a flock of black and white sheep be released at Mars Hill.
 - Each time a sheep stopped in front of an idol, that sheep was to be slain and the god worshiped.
 - However, if there was no idol at the place where a sheep sat down, the people were to erect an altar to an unknown god, then slay that sheep.
- B. Next we see that Paul identifies who the "Unknown God" in the end of verse 23.

" Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you."

1. Or He whom you worship in ignorance, Him I proclaim to you.

2. He identified for them the Lord Jesus Christ as the God who would deliver them from captivity and spiritual death and make them new creatures.

II. Four attributes of this "Unknown God" that we are to seek – Verses 24-28:

“God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.”

A. Verses 24, 25 say that God is the Creator:

1. First, Paul declares that God is above His creation.
2. Secondly, He is outside of heaven and earth.
3. Thirdly, that this God is Lord over all, and everything is under his authority.
4. Fourthly, that the true and living God cannot be contained in any man made shrine or temple.
5. God requires nothing from those He has created.

Psalm 50:9-12, “I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goats out of thy folds. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are

mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.

B. In verse 26 the Apostle tells them that God is sovereign:

“And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation.”

1. The Greeks took pride in what they considered their natural superiority to all other races.
2. The Athenians considered themselves a cut above the rest of the Greek nation.
3. God began the human race with one man, Adam.
4. From him came all the nations of earth- the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans.
5. And each nation was given a boundary by the sovereign God of the heavens and the earth.

C. Thirdly, in verse 27, the Apostle tells them that this is the God of true redemption.

“That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us.”

1. In this verse, the apostle tells his audience why they were given time on earth.
2. In Adam, all mankind sinned, but God made it possible for some men of every generation to come into fellowship with him.
3. It is our responsibility to seek Him.

D. God is our Father:

Verse 28, "For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring."

1. Here Paul quotes another Greek poet, Aratus, who taught that all mankind were the offspring of Zeus.
2. Paul directs his hearers back to Jehovah, the Creator of all men.
3. In the natural life men live, are supported, and have a measure of comfort and the blessing of God in it.
4. And while man is created in the image of God, he fell in Adam, and is therefore incomplete until God quickens him and gives him spiritual life.
5. Man's personality, intelligence, desire for companionship, and desire to relate to God all come from God himself.

E. Paul concludes his remarks by giving an invitation.

Verses 30, 31, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

1. Up until this point, God had allowed all the nations to follow their own ways.
2. Or He had not given them any revelation or direction. Nor had He sent any prophets to instruct them, but had left them in ignorance.

3. But that time had now ended because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
4. The Apostle Paul says I am here as God's messenger, "to tell you that God wants you to repent of your sins.
5. He appointed a Man, his Son Jesus Christ, not a god of silver or stone, but the God-Man to die on the Cross of Calvary for your sins.
6. And has "now commandeth all men every where to repent."
7. The Scripture says that men are to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ that they may be saved.
8. Furthermore, this same Man will one day come and judge all who have not repented of their sin and come in faith to this God.

III. The Blessing of Seeking God

Psalms 2:12, "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

Psalms 65:4, "Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple."

Luke 14:15, "And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God."

Psalms 105:4, "Seek the LORD, and his strength: seek his face evermore."

Hosea 10:12 Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.

IV. The consequences of not seeking the Lord:

- A. Rebellion results in punishment.
- B. What is rebellion?

An unknown source gave said that rebellion is “Reserving for myself the right to make the final decision.”

- C. Obeying God only when it’s agreeable to one’s own way of thinking isn’t really obedience at all; it’s rebellion.
- D. Rebellion results in judgment.

Verse 31, “Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

V. The result of seeking the Lord:

- A. Verse 31 assures us that “he hath raised him from the dead.”
- B. Thus we see the results of His resurrection:

Romans 5:10, “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”

- C. Ephesians 2:5 speaks of our spiritual birth.

“Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved).”

Conclusions:

- A. For those who seek the Lord there is a response,
- B. There is rejoicing
- C. And there is rest.

Serving God

5th message in the series - the duty of man to God

Text: Joshua 24:14-16,

“Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD. And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods.”

Introduction:

A. The first duty of man is to “glorify God.”

I Corinthians 4:20, “For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

B. Secondly, man is to “honor God.”

C. Thirdly, man is to “love God.”

D. Fourthly, man is to seek God.

1. The world’s philosophy – get all you can, as fast as you can, any way you can.

2. The Lord said in Matthew 16:26,

“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

E. Fifthly, man is to serve God.

Matthew 6:24, “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”

I. Serving God is not an easy task:

A. The world does not see the value in serving God, and sometimes neither does our flesh.

B. Does it really pay to serve the Lord?

C. Asaph said in Psalms 73:2,

“But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.”

1. He almost slipped in envy until he went to the house of God – Verses 17.

“Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.”

2. Verses 18,19 tell the end spoken of in verse 17:

“Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.”

D. Elijah questioned if it pays to serve the Lord in I Kings 19.

1. The prophet went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and then he asked God to let him die, because he feared that Jezebel would kill him.
2. But when he slept God sent an angel to him and woke him with a cake of bread to eat and water to drink.

3. In the midst of his pity party God showed him that there were seven thousand others that had not bowed to Baal.
 4. He showed him that we are to serve the Lord, and yes there is great benefit to serving him.
- E. Solomon sought the answer throughout the book of Ecclesiastes, and he came to the conclusion that without God all of life is but vanity and vexation of spirit.
- F. David asked his brethren this question in I Samuel 17:29.
1. They were gathered to war against the Philistines in the valley of Elah.
 2. When David saw that they were frightened by Goliath, he asked them Is there not a cause?

We must understand that God put us on this earth for a purpose, to serve Him.

We are to be contributors not simply consumers.

II. Serving God requires a commitment:

- A. Joshua told the people that if they truly loved the Lord they were to serve Him.
1. The same is true today, if you truly love God you will serve Him.
 2. When we love God we desire to return the love that God has shown to us.
 3. That love is returned to God through worship and service.
 4. The choice to serve is rooted in a word called commitment.

B. Who are you committed too?"

1. People today say they just do not commit to anything but in reality they do:
 - I see people commit to playing sports
 - I see people commit to watching sports
 - I see people commit to their jobs
 - I see people commit to their houses
 - I see people commit to the pursuit of money
 - I see people commit to watching their favorite TV shows
 - I see people commit to themselves- to live their life their way
 - I see people commit to political parties
 - I see people commit to the pursuit of pleasure
 - I see people commit to education
 - I see people committed to everything but serving the Jesus Christ through the Local Church.
2. But the real tragedy is that wWe do not see people committing to eternal things – things that matter to the Lord!
3. What are you committed to?????

III. Serving God requires choices:

- A. Life is full of choices:
 1. We choose what channels we will watch,
 2. We choose our who will provide our cellular service,
 3. We choose what we will eat.
 4. We choose what job we work at.
 5. We choose our friends

6. And we choose how we will invest our time and our lives.
7. Choices are a necessary part of life:
 - When people do not make choices about where they will invest their time they find themselves running to and fro and feeling torn about which direction to go.
 - Or they become overwhelmed, and do nothing.
 - Those who do not have a passionate about certain things in life, tend to stand for nothing and fall for anything.
 - What is your choice???
 - Joshua said, “Choose ye this day whom you will serve.”

IV. What the decision to serve God means:

- A. If I choose to serve God and not the world what is required of me?
 1. The choice must be made:
 - Joshua recognized that everyone serves someone.
 - Who do you serve??

“Choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

- Joshua didn't give “serve no one” as one of the options.

- The people were told that there were many gods they could serve and they had to choose who it was that they were going to serve.
- When all is said and done we will either serve the world or the Lord.
- We will either serve God or Satan.

B. Why we should choose to serve the Lord?

1. The word translated “serve” in Joshua 24 has the obvious sense of “being devoted to.”

“Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth:”

2. Joshua is calling the people to something greater than the half-hearted devotion that sadly characterizes the lives of many Christians today.
3. Joshua is calling the people, and us, to a service for the Lord that involves the Lord having authority and ownership of our life.
4. He is calling for the people to stop playing games and become serious about their discipleship.
5. The people seemed willing to serve the Lord but Joshua said in verse 19,

“And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.”

6. I believe Joshua is saying that we are so dependent on the Lord, that we can’t even serve Him without His help!

C. What does it mean to choose to serve the Lord?

1. First, it means we must be willing to quit straddling the fence.
 - So many people are masters at finding ways to hold on to the idols of the world, while claiming to follow the Lord.
2. Secondly, we must be willing to root out everything that hinders our commitment.
 - If we are going to truly become a follower of Christ we must be honest about our sin.
 - We must stop making excuses for, and do battle with our sinful tendencies.
 - That means that we must eliminate the things in our lives that draw us away from Him no matter how painful it might be.
3. Thirdly, we must seek to be a positive influence in the world rather than being influenced by it.
 - Those who follow Christ must be willing to stand up and confront sinful behavior.
 - We must resist worldly thinking.
 - We must resist a political correctness that demands that we lower our standard of holiness.
 - Our job is to show the love of God even in a society filled with hate, especially toward our Lord.
4. Fourthly, we must pursue our discipleship as a serious commitment.
 - Joshua warned the people that if they professed faith yet continued to play with the

idols of the world, they would face God's judgment.

- The Lord Jesus Christ reserved some of His fiercest comments for the hypocrites.
 - Matthew 23 is full of "Woes" that the Lord Jesus Christ pronounced on those who made great boasts about their allegiance to the Lord but served self and the world.
5. Fifthly, we must be willing to make a lifetime commitment to the Lord.
- We have all met people who have gone through a "discipleship fad".
 - They "were religious" for awhile.
 - They were enthusiastic, they were at every meeting, they were outspoken, and then all of a sudden they seemed to lose interest.
 - They moved on to their next fad.
 - The Lord requires a life time commitment from those who would be His true disciples and love and follow Him.
 - The kind of discipleship God desires and requires is one of total commitment.
 - Jesus gives us instruction concerning this in Luke 9:62.

"No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

- Make no mistake. If you truly decide to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, there is no turning back.

- It means you are “giving your life over to Him.”
- It means you will stand or fall with Him.

V. The marks and evidences of serving the Lord:

A. A love for the Lord:

Deuteronomy 10:12, 13, “And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?”

B. Obedience to the Lord:

I Samuel 12:24, “Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you.”

C. A Committed Heart:

“Choose you this day whom ye will serve - but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

D. A Love for the Word of God:

Psalm 119:11, “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”

Psalm 119:50, “This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.”

Psalm 119:67, “Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.”

Psalm 119:74, “They that fear thee will be glad when they see me; because I have hoped in thy word.

Psalm 119:162, "I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil (wealth)."

Conclusions:

- A. D.L. Moody said that his life was transformed when a preacher said,

"The world has yet to see what God can do through one person who is completely committed to Him."

- B. Moody set out to be that one person who was totally committed to God. God used him greatly!
- C. What would happen if you were that one person who was totally committed to the Lord?
- D. What could God do in and through you?

Give to God

6th message in the series - the duty of man to God

Text: Deuteronomy 16:17 & II Corinthians 8:1-15

Deuteronomy 16:17, "Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee."

II Corinthians 8:1-15, "Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also. Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also. I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love. For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago. Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have. For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality: As it

is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack.”

Introduction:

A. The first duty of man is to Glorify God.

I Corinthians 4:20, “For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

B. The second duty of man is to Honor God.

Proverbs 3:9, “Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

C. The third duty of man is to Love God.

Matthew 22: 37, “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.”

D. The fourth duty of man is to Seek God.

Deuteronomy 4:29, “But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.”

E. The fifth duty of man is to Serve God.

Matthew 6:24, “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”

F. Man’s sixth duty is to Give to God.

Romans 12:1, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”

Deuteronomy 16:17, “Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee.”

II Corinthians 8:1-15, “Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also (grace: or, gift). Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, that ye abound in this grace also. I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and **to prove the sincerity of your love.**”

I. Giving is a privilege bestowed upon God’s own people:

- A. Notice II Corinthians 8:1, “Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia.
- B. Verse 4, “Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.”
- C. Thus we find that giving is not a punishment.
 - 1. God requiring His people to give is not a judgment that God has placed upon them.
 - 2. Instead we see that it is a grace (a blessing or gift).
 - 3. God has given opportunity for His blessing.

Acts 20:35, "I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

II. Giving is a Privilege:

A. First, it is a privilege to have God work through us.

"Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed."

B. Secondly, we give out of a heart of Liberality.

Verse 2, "Unto the riches of their liberality."

1. The word "liberality" means openhearted generosity.
2. The described generosity here is of the sacrificial kind.
3. Our giving should not be determined by our bank accounts, but by God's riches in glory. He has far more than we have.

C. The Barna Group:

1. An article entitled, "Tithing Is Uncommon."
2. For a number of years, The Barna Group has also been following the practice of "tithing," which is donating at least ten percent of one's income.
 - While Christians dispute whether tithing refers to giving the entire ten percent to churches or whether that sum may include money donated to churches and other non-profit entities, the survey data reveal that no matter how it is defined, very few Americans tithed in 2004.

- Only 4% gave such an amount to churches alone; just 6% gave to either churches or to a combination of churches and parachurch ministries.
- Although generosity, stewardship and tithing are higher profile issues among born again Christians than to other people, relatively few born again adults - only 9% - tithed to churches in 2004.
- That behavior was most common among evangelicals (23%), and much smaller among non-evangelical born again Christians (7%), nominal Christians (less than 1%), people of other faiths (1%) and atheists and agnostics (none).
- Overall, 7% of Protestants tithed to churches - divided into 5% among people associated with mainline churches and 8% of those affiliated with other Protestant congregations.
- Tracking data show that tithing among all born again adults (i.e., evangelical and non-evangelical, combined) has stayed within a range of 6% to 14% throughout the past decade, varying by a few percentage points since 1999.
- Several people groups stood out as particularly tightfisted when it comes to financially supporting churches.
- Less than 2% of adults under the age of 40, Catholics and Asians tithed in 2004.

D. Giving is a privilege that helps meet the needs of the others (Verses 3).

“For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves. Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

1. They gave beyond their ability.
2. This was not careless giving, it was faith giving.

III. Giving is not an obstacle it is an opportunity.

A. It is an opportunity for worship:

Verses 5, 6, “And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also.”

1. The Macedonians "First gave their own selves to the Lord."
 - First things first - God wants you first.
 - True stewardship doesn't begin when I give in the offering plate on Sunday.
 - It begins when we give ourselves totally over to God.

B. It is an opportunity for growth:

Verse 7, “Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.”

1. Concerning “Abound in the grace of giving, J.D. Rockefeller said,

"I never would have been able to tithe the first million dollars I ever made if I had not tithed my first salary, which was \$1.50 per week."

2. J.L. Kraft, head of the Kraft Cheese Corp, who had given approximately 25% of his enormous income to Christian causes for many years, said,

"The only investment I ever made which has paid consistently increasing dividends is the money I have given to the Lord."

C. It is an opportunity to express our love.

Verse 8, "I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love.

1. The Apostle Paul told the church at Corinth that they could prove their love by their giving.
2. Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it.
3. He expressed this love as He gave Himself on the cross.
4. We prove the sincerity of our Love to the LORD by our giving.
 - Those that give sparingly reap sparingly.
 - Those that give abundantly reap abundantly.
 - When we consistently give at least 10% we show our faith and dependency on the Lord.
 - Our love for the Lord and His commands also constrain us to give to missions.
 - Cheerful givers also love to give to needs of others.

D. It is an opportunity serve as our Lord did.

Verse 9, “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”

1. Our giving to the church proves our love for Christ and His church.
2. Our love for the Lord’s command to “Go into all the world” is proven as we support missions on a regular basis.

IV. Giving is not a burden it is a blessing (vv.8-15)

A. It is a blessing to be like Jesus.(Verses 8, 9)

1. In requiring us to give, the Lord is not laying another “command” upon us.
2. Instead He is allowing us to prove the sincerity of our love, and have the blessing of being more like the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. Because in all reality we love Him because he first loved us.

B. Verses 10-12 tell us that it is a blessing to have the grace to give of what you have.

“And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago. Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have. For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.”

1. The Scripture tells us that we are to give with joy – Verse 10.

II Corinthians 9:7, “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

2. We must follow through on our willingness (or as he purposeth in his heart).
3. Giving does not come accidental it comes from what you have – according to Verse 11.
4. Joyful, cheerful, willing giving comes **not** from what you don’t have, but what you do have.
5. How often preachers hear if I ever win the lottery the church will never have a need.
6. The truth of the matter is that if a person doesn’t give consistently out of what they do have; what would make me think that they would give from the proceeds of a lottery ticket.

C. Giving is a blessing that brings about equality.

Verses 13-15, “For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: **But by an equality**, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality: As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack.”

Conclusion:

- A. Ten reasons why we should consider giving to be a blessing and a good thing:
 1. It shows your **trust** in God to take **care** of you.
 2. It is a recognition of the fact that God **owns** us.
 3. It provides help that no one in the church **goes without**.

4. It is an **investment** with **guaranteed** returns.
5. It makes our Lord **happy**.
6. It provokes us to be **thankful** for God's blessing and provision.
7. It gives evidence that you have truly **submitted** yourself to God in **all** things.

One preacher of the past has said that the checkbook is the last part of a person to get saved.

8. Giving is an act of **obedience** to God according to Malachi 3:8 -12.
9. It helps the church carry on the **work** of God around the **world**.
10. It puts us in good **company** - other believers

B. In life there are **givers** and there are **takers**!

1. There are those in whose nature it is to **give** and those who by nature **take**!
2. Givers never seem to struggle for friends and takers don't seem to have friends for very long.