

THE PRIORITY OF LOVE
by Carol Gordon

Our Heavenly Father created us to love and be loved by Him. He had companionship on His mind when He created Man. He created Woman as a companion for Man. Father loves to be in relationship, so He is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He kept reaching out to Earth to reinstate fellowship with Man after the Fall. It could be that He invited others we know nothing of because they did not respond to Him.

"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me (John 17:20-23).

The desire of Jesus' heart was for His followers to know His Father's love. This is only one of several times at the Last Supper that Jesus spoke of that love. He reiterated that the Father's love for Him extended to and included us in the same measure! It is hard for us to comprehend that Our Heavenly Father loves us as much as He loves Jesus, but that is exactly what He says here and repeats in verse 26.

Without knowing, deep in our hearts, that we are loved by our Creator, we will stumble around all our lives. All through the Word, Father lets us know that His heart is for all things in our lives to be good, right and just. He doesn't hint at it. He gives plain directions on how to live so that He can help us to have this. He even sent Jesus to the Cross so that our sins would be completely paid for. **Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life (John 5:24).** When we have accepted Jesus into our hearts, we are free from condemnation and death.

I have heard Christians say, "Don't pray for justice, pray for mercy, you don't want justice to come on you." But Jesus came for us to have justice, for things to be made right. In fact, in Hebrew, "justice" and "righteousness" are the very same word. The root means *to make right*. How our hearts cry out for someone to stand up for us and bring justice when we have been wronged! But because we are steeped in consciousness of our own sin, we are afraid to ask for vindication!

When we have taken our lives to the Cross, we have exchanged our filthiness for His righteousness! We are justified, and can freely ask for recompense for losses we have sustained! **I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me (John 5:30).** No matter how it stretches our minds, Jesus has bought and paid for justice for us. What infinite, selfless, love provided this for us!! Because of Jesus we never have to get what we deserve.

The Lord constantly asks us to see as He sees and to hear with the ear of our heart. He pleads with us to open our eyes to trust Him and take Him at His word. He wants us to hear the message of boundless love that He is promising, by choosing not to listen to the lies the enemy whispers.

If we believe what the Scripture tells us, it will wash from our souls all the residue of the sin nature that died at the Cross. We pick those patterns of thinking back up because they are familiar. The Word washes us as we embrace it. Ephesians 5:26,27 says that this is the process by which we are transformed into His likeness. Any area of our lives not filled with love is filled with

something else. If there is fear, pride, guilt, or shame, that is a red flag that we need more healing and freedom. As we continue to seek the Lord, He will walk us through the path of healing He has designed for us.

Every sin has its root in not loving the Father and in not loving others. We constantly must check our love walk since Matt. 22:40 says that everything else depends on this. It is vital that we have our priorities right. Love must be first. Without it being properly directed and activated, nothing else will work for us, not faith, not giving, not spiritual gifts, not anything. I Corinthians 13 affirms this.

Look at it from Father's perspective. If we are not totally trusting Him, having full confidence in His Word, we can not be truly loving Him! Would you want your children to mistrust you and not believe what you told them? This is the criteria: **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** (Prov. 3:5-8). The Lord's desire is to be ALL to us. What joy we give Him when we trust Him.

It gives Him great pleasure when we trust Him to provide a need. He once said to me, "I am your Needs-Meeter". He reproved me for trying to "humbly do without" or deny that I had needs. He said at that time that I was to regard myself as a bundle of needs only He could meet. How He delights for us to come to Him with everything!

We are not loving Him if we are not following His directive to love others. Father has even supplied to us His love for this purpose. Romans 5:5 assures us, **the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us**. He has given us all it takes to do what He says. He doesn't even leave that to our own resources. We have no excuse for offense, unforgiveness, bitterness, and resentment toward others.

He loves us so much that He brings any sin we try to keep right to the surface so that we can see it and be rid of it. His life is so holy that **the wages of sin is death** (Rom. 6:23). He makes a way for every healing, even if we get a bit uncomfortable working through the process. It is a wrong response to His love to stuff hurts and anxieties and not bring them to Father for His loving touch. He has provided for health for our bodies, wholeness for our souls, and holiness for our spirits. Let us trust Him to bring us through His plan for our development.

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith -- the salvation of your souls (1 Peter 1:6-9).

(All Scripture references are from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted)

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