

Introduction:

- A disciple is a person who has put their faith in Jesus, governs their life by Jesus teaching and passionately follows Jesus mandate of making disciples.
- People grow best when they know who they are, when they have a plan to grow, when they are in accountable relationships and with the help of the Holy Spirit.
- Dt 6:4,5 Last week we studied the Shema and saw that it was the starting point of God in discipling a nation. Shema is Hebrew for hear, listen, do. Two things we do: Realize there is one God, Love Him!
 - God is One--and our lives are to revolve around this One True God.
 - Love Him--Since He is so great in love and mercy, we are to love Him whole heartedly.
- When a person gets saved they make Jesus Lord of their life. Lord means to make Him the center of your life.
 - As God's people, discipling then is done for the purpose of us loving Him more fully.
- Let's go to Mt 22:37-38 and see what God has to say in the NT. Jesus said to him, *'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'*³⁸ *This is the first and great commandment.*³⁹ *And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'*⁴⁰ *On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."* This is wholehearted love!

I. The Movement of God's Love in the Human Heart

A. The movement of love

1. We receive His love. God is love, but to receive that love is the first response of the human heart.
 - i. 1 Jn 4:8 *...God is love.* NKJV
 - ii. God reveals to us His love. He takes the initiative. (before the foundations of the earth) He demonstrates. (Romans 5:8) He gives mercy. (love covers a multitude of sin/mercy triumphs over judgment.) Peter 4:8; James 2:13.
2. We give back to Him love
 - a. 1Jn 4:19 *We love Him because He first loved us.*
3. We love ourselves
 - a. Mk 12:31 *And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."*
4. We love others
 - a. Again Mk 12:31 the second commandment
 - b. And when we have done the unto the 'least of these' we have done it unto him. Mt 25:40-45.
 - c. Jn 15:17 Jesus commands his disciples to love one another.

B. Jesus-love and the human heart. Jesus is a picture of the perfect human heart responding and moving in God's love. Jn 17:26 has the movement of all four in it.

The love of the Father goes to Jesus, back to the Father and Jesus' heart is that it be in those the Father gave Him.

1. He receives God's love.
 2. He loves the Father back
 3. He loves himself.
 4. The whole reason He came as man was because He loved us.
- C. The movement of love in the heart of humanity. We are eternally separated from God until we respond to His love
1. When we say "yes" to God's love, we receive Jesus as Lord.
 2. Our hearts are so filled with gratitude and awe, we love Him back.
 3. He then pours more revelation of who we are now to Him and in His eyes that we now love ourselves.
 4. When we love ourselves we can now love others around us.

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II. The Depth of Love in the Human Heart

- A. The depth of God's love in a human being affects the entire man—body, soul and spirit.
1. We must see ourselves as one man and not three parts. It is the spirit that gets born again or made new.
 2. The truth must reach our outer man or maybe we did not get the truth or maybe we have believed a lie of false grace and assumed that is was o.k. not to grow more like Him spiritually.
 3. 1 Jn 2:4 *He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*
 4. *"so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."* (Ephesians 3:17-19, ESV)
 - a. vs 17. "The ministry of the Spirit is devoted to making the presence and power of the risen Christ real to those whom he indwells: hence the experience of the indwelling Spirit and of the indwelling Christ is the same experience. The prayer that Christ may dwell in their hearts through faith is parallel to the prayer that they may be inwardly strengthened by the Spirit of God." Bruce, F. F. (1984). The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians (pp. 326-327). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
 - b. "To know¹⁰⁴ the love of Christ is to know Christ himself, in ever widening experience, and to have his outgoing and self-denying love reproduced in oneself. Bruce, F. F. (1984). The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians (p. 329). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

- i. Breadth - width. There is no end to the love of God no matter which direction you look.
 - ii. length -
 - iii. height -
 - iv. depth -
- B. The Shema (Hebrew for hear—Dt 6:4) and Jesus' commentary on the Shema in Mt., Mk 12, Luke 10:27 both reflect the depth of which we are to express God's love.
1. The expectation is, if we know that God is One, then our lives will revolve around him. But, just because you can quote it does not mean that you are living it. That takes honest evaluation and assessment of how well your life is revolving around Him.
- C. Both the Shema (Dt 6:4) and Jesus teaching on the great command state that we are to love God with all our heart, soul and strength. [Mk 12 and Lk 10 both add the word mind to the list. But the Hebrew understanding is that the mind and the soul are one and the same.] So when we speak of the depth of love—**heart, soul, strength** we are speaking about the whole man, the whole of our being—wholehearted love. It is loving with everything we have got.
1. You cannot love someone you do not know. This is why God is starting this intense discipleship process with the children of Israel in Dt 6:4. He wants us to love Him and be loved by Him.
 2. You can like someone's appearance, you can read about them, you can admire them but until you know them you cannot love them. The Hebrew word for feelings is the action that results from them. In other words, love is connected to actions or commands; said another way, because God is love it stirs me to love and in turn keep commands not out of an order given but a heart expression.
 3. **Heart- לֵבָב (lēbāb). Heart, understanding, mind** (also used in idioms such as "to set the heart upon" meaning "to think about" or "to want"). In its abstract meanings, "heart" became the richest biblical term for the totality of man's inner or immaterial nature.¹ Ex 34:14 *You must worship no other gods, for the Lord, whose very name is Jealous, is a God who is jealous about his relationship with you.* NLT
 4. **Soul-nepes**-- appetites, desire, life or in the living of life. Connected with actions taken in life. It includes your thoughts, emotions, will, appetites and desires.
 5. **Strength - meod- מְעֹד (mē'ōd) exceedingly, much, force, abundance.**² With intensity, vitality, the whole self not in a half hearted way. Includes your time, money, influence, strength etc.

¹ Harris, R. L., Harris, R. L., Archer, G. L., & Waltke, B. K. (1999). *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed.) (466). Chicago: Moody Press.

² Harris, R. L., Harris, R. L., Archer, G. L., & Waltke, B. K. (1999). *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed.) (487). Chicago: Moody Press.

6. These three words: heart, soul and strength were chosen to reinforce the absolute singularity of personal devotion to God. Thus *lēbāb* denotes the intention or will of the whole man; *nepeš* means the whole self, a unity of flesh, will, and vitality; and *mē'ōd* accents the superlative degree of total commitment to Yahweh."³

III. The Heart of a Radical Disciple

- A. To live with heart, soul and strength all going for God at once is a radical disciple of Christ, a radical follower of Christ, a radical Christian!
- B. Two main objectives of a believers life:
1. Love God with perfect obedience, to do so is an expression of perfect love. (This is our goal!) 1 Jn 4:12- *If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us... 16 God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God... 17 Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we.* NKJV
 2. Love others well. If how we do to others is how we do unto Him that our every action counts!
 - i. Mt 5:48 *You shall be perfect just as your Father is perfect.* NKJV
 - ii. 1 Jn 2:28 *Little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence (boldness) and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.* NKJV
- C. This lifestyle is radical! The pursuit of "complete or comprehensive" obedience includes **bridling our speech** (Eph. 4:29-5:4; James 3:2), **disciplining our physical appetites** (1 Cor. 9:27), **managing our time** (for service and prayer with the Word) **and money** (to increase the kingdom beyond our comfort and honor), as we engage in communing prayer with the indwelling Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14).
- D. Being radical as a disciple is about going after God with everything we have and working out our salvation in sanctification. Being radical is not just settling for being justified before God. We rejoice in that and because of we 'go after God' with all our heart, soul and strength.
- E. We want to sustain this fire for God through the years not just a short burst of this life. We want to finish the race and obtain the prize as Paul spoke of.

Conclusion:

- A disciple must be one who lives at the depth of God's love and expresses that love.
- We are all in process. In fact discipleship is the process of growth and transformation that takes place in the disciple.

³ Harris, R. L., Harris, R. L., Archer, G. L., & Waltke, B. K. (1999). *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed.) (487). Chicago: Moody Press.