

Scriptures and Doctrine :: suggestions for discussions

suggestions for discussions - posted by Julian (), on: 2004/5/25 21:10

Hi Doug,

As a suggestion, I would be interested in a discussion based on the two commandments of Jesus in Matt. 22: 37/38/39 regarding Loving God and loving our neighbour as ourself...from Julianne

Re: suggestions for discussions - posted by KeithLaMothe, on: 2004/5/26 0:48

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.

38 This is the first and great commandment.

39 And the second is like unto it: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.'

40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

A big deal (rightly so) is made of the Great Commandment. I'm truly curious, though, what does it actually require?

Calvin's definition (from his commentary on 1 Thess. 5:23):

"The precept of the law is - 'Thou shalt love the Lord your God with all your heart'. That this command may be fulfilled, we must previously be divest of every other perception and thought, our heart must be free from all desires; and our might must be collected and contracted on this one point"

Frankly, I don't agree, and not simply because it's not practicable.

1 John 5:3

For this is the love of God: that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous.

2 John 1:6

And this is love: that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.

Is it possible, then, that the Great Commandment means to obey God in one's heart, soul, and mind? Is it Biblical to assert that God requires our constant focus upon Him to the degree that we are divested of all other perceptions or thoughts? More practically, did even Jesus live like that?

Re: - posted by TheophilusMD (), on: 2004/5/26 8:48

Nobody is capable of loving God were it not for the fact that He first loved us. It is Him who works in us (in our heart, soul and mind) to will and to do for His good pleasure. He makes us more like Him as we RESPOND in obedience to His drawing and inworking so that we feel, think and act as Jesus would have. That is why Jesus said that the second commandment is the same as the first because the measure of our love for God is manifested by our love for others. Only Christians are capable of loving unconditionally as explained by Paul in 1 Cor 13 but it is with the consciousness that that love is the work of God alone. (Rom. 5:5) This explains why the Lord brings many hard-to-love people along our way so that they may experience God's love through us while we experience and understand the deeper dimensions of His love.

I believe also that it is not by emptying our mind or heart that we fulfill God's commands. It is rather by allowing God to make our hearts like His. Our hearts are one with Him. How? By a lifestyle of obedience. This is not legalism. As we seek His face and obey His word His grace and mercy will become more and more real. We can all say with David, "surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." We taste and see that the Lord is good.

Re: love - posted by inwardman, on: 2004/5/26 10:05

I agree with Keith, the love that is spoken of in the bible as pertaining to God is always agape. Agape means walking in God's commandments, and bowing to God's will. It's not phileo or friendship. God isn't our buddy, He is our Lord. And He is only our Lord if we are actively bowing to His will, no matter what He says. It's the kind of relationship that a King has with His subjects. It is not a simple reverence or friendship, as too many churches are preaching. The problem is that we don't really understand God's love. So we make things up, about what we think or believe God should be like. To say that God loves everyone is not right, it's presumption because He didn't love Esau, he didn't love the pharisees, He doesn't love the proud, the unrepentant, or the idle. But people sure love to quote John 3:16, and camp out on that one scripture.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/5/26 10:50

Just a few instances where phileo is used of loving the Lord or the brethren or being loved by Him.

For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.
(Joh 5:20 KJV)

Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest (phileo) is sick. When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. Now Jesus loved (agape) Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.
(Joh 11:3-5 KJV)

For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.
(Joh 16:27 KJV)

Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.
(Joh 20:2 KJV)

If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.
(1Co 16:22 KJV)

All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.
(Tit 3:15 KJV)

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.
(Rev 3:19 KJV)