

LOVE GIVES ALL

ENTIRETY- DANA CANDLER

I. ENTIRETY TODAY

Jesus said to him, " 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment." (Mt. 22:37-38)

- A. Loving God with all of our heart is the great commandment because it is ***the one that encompasses all else***. It is the one that steadily takes over every area of our lives, from our thought life, our words, relationships, to the way we spend time and money. If we truly give ourselves to loving Him entirely, we will in time love our neighbor as ourselves and be given to extravagant service, yet with a heart burning in the sustaining fire of intimacy.
- B. The only way to fulfill the Great Commandment is to *fall in love*. Love is the only way into such extravagance. ***The command demands a holy lovesickness***, a fierce passion for God. And we know that *with every command God gives is the inherent promise of His grace to fulfill it*. He was not only commanding, but prophesying: "You shall love the Lord your God..."
- C. Bernard of Clairvaux stated, "If we love with our whole being, nothing is lacking where everything is given."
- D. God has loved us with all that He is, emptying Himself in love to the uttermost, and though I am yet weak and broken, when I love Him in this *same* way, giving Him *all* that I am in the here and now, *nothing* is lacking where everything is given.

II. THE UTTER GIVENNESS OF LOVE'S NATURE

- A. ***The Father gave everything to us in His only Son:*** The Father gave of His *only*, the Son of His love, the only begotten. He drew out of the bowels of His eternal being and spared not that which He held most precious, most costly, most beloved. In the giving of His only Son, He gave *all* without reserve (Rom. 8:32; Jn. 3:16).
- B. ***The Son gave everything to us in His own life, death and resurrection:*** Christ, the Son, poured Himself out in love unto me, giving Himself up for me utterly, not just in the giving of His physical life unto death, but in the free offering of all of His excellencies, His beauties, His preciousness and His own righteousness, indeed the essence of all that He is, He has entrusted to me, giving me His Holy Spirit (Gal. 1:4, 2:20; Eph. 5:25; Tit. 2:14).
- C. The nature of the God of love from everlasting—both in the love shared within the Godhead and the love poured forth unto mankind—is found in its utter emptying of itself for another. It is not just that He has loved us in everlasting duration. It is not only that the quality of His affections is immeasurable, but that the *amount* of His love is *entire*.
Greater love has no one than in the laying down of the whole of his life for another. Jn. 15:13
- D. This God who has pursued me from the eternal ages is also the One who chases me down in the present-day, reaching for me in the beauties of creation and in the smallest events of my circumstances, wanting to be found by me in the currency of the here and now.

III. JESUS INVITES ME TO GIVE ALL

- A. When the piercing eyes of Jesus address me and beseech me to love Him with all of my mind, heart, soul and strength, He asks of me only what He Himself has already given (Matt. 22:37). He wants *my everything* for *His everything*, *my all* for *His all*, *my entirety* for *His entirety*.
- B. God bids us to love Him wholly, yes. But this bidding is laden with a love that has from all eternity poured out its *everything* for us.
- C. For those of us that might have heard this beckoning of God in the first commandment with any tinge or tenor of harshness; if this command has approached our hearts with a feeling of being too difficult, too hard or too extreme, we have yet to understand the Person behind the plea, the heart behind the appeal.

IV. WE LOVE HIM ENTIRELY IN OUR DAY TO DAY LIVES

“For this commandment which I command you today is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off...the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.” Deut. 30:11, 14

- A. Loving God with all of the heart, soul, mind and strength can only ever be done in the context of the moments we have been given right now, however ordinary or weak.
- B. The future that we think of so often may or may not happen—we cannot be certain. We cannot plan with sureness on what we will do tomorrow, always planning as if we could guarantee that we even *have* tomorrow. (Jas. 4:13–15).
- C. We have but *one window* that we are sure of in which we might offer the Lord the whole of our hearts, all that we are, and that window is *now*. The problem with right now is that it seems so ordinary, so non-mysterious, and so commonplace.
- D. Commonness is the nature of human life in the age of time. It is the only sort of context we are given to love God within. According to the divine brilliance of everlasting wisdom, this is the environment in which love for God and man is cultivated, maintained, and offered.
- E. The well-known Brother Lawrence, lived a life that captured this truth profoundly.
“ It is a grave error to believe that fixed prayer times are different from any other time, for we are as strictly obliged to be united to God through our duties in their appropriate time as by prayer in its time... We ought not weary of doing little things for the love of God, who regards not the greatness of the work, but the love with which it is performed. ”¹

¹ Brother Lawrence, *The Practice of the Presence of God*, (Paraclete Press, 1985) , p 75, 76

V. JESUS CROWNED THE COMMON

- A. Perhaps the greatest testament of the nobility of the smallest parts of common life is the commonness that Jesus embraced in the incarnation, the everyday duties and tasks that He did not see as unfitting or too insignificant.
- B. Jesus knew human experience. He knew monotony. He knew the mundane. He was acquainted with the common and not a stranger to the trivial. In all ways, He is our Brother.
- C. When we are cleaning our house, mowing our lawn, playing with our children, driving in our car, He is deeply and intimately near and familiar.
- D. By Jesus' embracing of the human plight, He has made way for each moment of monotony to be a doorway of fellowship. There is nothing too small, no circumstance too trivial to not bring our hearts to Him in love, hold converse with Him in the midst of and consecrate unto Him as something done unto the Lord.
- E. He reaches to us in our boredom, in our ordinary and routine aspects of life and invites us to love Him in all parts of our day, all through the ordinary activities and obscure tasks of necessity. If we seek for Him here, He is present to be found by us.
- F. Unless He is the One most meek and most humble, I've not a chance at knowing Him. For I am steeped in poverty and my life filled with all that is mundane and ordinary and common.

VI. WE LOVE HIM ENTIRELY AS WE LOVE OTHERS

- A. Loving others is the great theater of *real life drama* that our love for God is enacted and played out, thus the Lord referred to this second commandment as "like the first" (Matt. 22:37).
- B. I am beginning to see that great relationship between the first and second command of God, that great mystery of overlap and intersection between the two.
- C. When we lay down our lives, from small ways to substantial, we are pouring out our offering of love unto God, loving Him by loving another, turning every act of service, every dying to self, every lowering of ourselves for the lifting of another, into an act of love.
- D. We were made to be abandoned and we were made to live, truly live, in the context of genuinely giving ourselves on behalf of another. It's in the faithfulness to full abandonment that the ease of love sets in—the commands become no longer burdensome (1 Jn. 5:3).

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- E. In the dying to me, the laying down of my rights, my desires, my wants, and the offering of my life to another, be it God or people, a certain freedom enters that was never there before. That life is ascertained and that freedom is found only when we cease the frenzied fight of self-promotion, self-absorption and self-gain.
- F. We would often like to separate our love for God from our love for others, finding comfort in our seeming abandonment to God while our love for others might be on the neglected side. Yet these divisions are not accurate measurements.
1. Within the heart, we do not reach for one river to love God with and another to love people with. It is all the same river.
 2. My love for God is no higher and no greater than the love displayed in the weak and at-times tense moments of relating to those I love.
 3. These *windows of weakness* are revealers of the degree in which love has truly conquered and taken leadership in my life. I cannot hang curtains over them and then go sit alone in my room with God and imagine myself to love Him greatly. Rather, I must peer through them and allow them to be my revealers into the furtherance of love in my life.
 4. At each hasty word, each swelling of frustration, the window opens and the test of love begins. When in the frictions of these times of tension, I reach out of my poverty for that Love that is greater than all of my lovelessness, the God of Love hears and answers.
- G. Highest Love, Greatest Joy

The One with joy and gladness above all His companions knows the secret of greatest freedom and highest joy (Ps. 45:7). He gave all for love and invites us to so great an abandonment. He did not consider any commonness *too low* to offer unto the Father in love and He did not consider Himself *too high* to lay down His life for the person most rejected, the person most rebellious, the one most undeserved. His joy so surpassing is not separate from His sacrifice so exceeding. As we love with our *everything*, we will find joy immeasurable. The two realities go hand in hand and cannot be separated.