

## **Lover of God**

My prayer for anyone reading this as I write is that you will understand what God is trying to do in your life.

If you pay attention to the Bible and the contents, you are likely to notice that a love relationship is often emphasized between God and His people. The book Songs of Solomon is all about romance; so vivid sometimes are the descriptions that it will be rated close to X if movie censor boards are to rate it. In the prophets, God would often describe Israel as His bride and her actions in iniquity as that of an unfaithful and adulterous wife (see Jer 3:8, Ez 6:9). Down in the New Testament we see that the relationship between Jesus and the Church is described as that of the groom and His bride.

It is all about a love relationship. This is actually the mystery behind sex. Sex is a physical representation of the relationship between Man and God. Sexual immorality and perversion always abound when a society departs from the knowledge of the true God. These things become for them a sign of apostasy. No matter how much we try to discipline people, the force of sexual incontinence is too much for them to control under this spiritual condition. True sexual continence can only be produced in a society by a prevailing relational knowledge of God. This is why people raised in the midst of godlessness do not believe that abstinence is practical. They are not being simply deceptive; they are living out their own reality. Meanwhile, those who are brought up in the environment of godliness (that is true godliness and not hypocritical religionizing), such people are consciously aware that though there may be temptations, abstinence is easily possible; for this reason they do not understand why we are not focusing our energy on teaching abstinence as the way of controlling HIV/AIDS rather than handing out condoms to young people. They have the knowledge and experience that sexual continence is possible. It is a spiritual enablement that results from the right relationship with God in a society.

Back to my message.

Our relationship with God is all about a love relationship, and this is often missing in teachings common in today's Christianity. What is common is that we are taught that a relationship with God is the means to our own ends. We are taught to serve God so we can prosper. We are taught to tithe because we are afraid of the devourer and of poverty. God is the 'protection boss.' Girls are told to hold on to their virginity so they can get a good husband. Morality is taught as good for business, so one can get a good name with which to make more money. Many only do those things for the success accruable from practising them. When they do not get what they want, they are discouraged. And they should be, as it is written,

*Hope deferred makes the heart sick... Prov 13:12*

Most of our messages focus on what we will get as a reward for godliness. I dare to say this is very unfortunate. It does not portray love for God at all.

I am married to a woman I love so much and who loves me that much. It will break my heart if I were to find out that all she does for me is because she is trying to gain something. How do you think she would feel if she were to discover that I only enjoy her company when I want something. I recall the joke about a 70-year old multi-millionaire man who married a dashing beauty, she being in her mid-20's. When his friends at the club asked how he managed to pull it off, he said he lied about his age. 'You told her you are only 50?' 'No,' he said, 'I told her I am 90.' She didn't marry him for love, and he knew it.

Let us talk about romantic love for a moment (there are different types of love).

Love actually manifests as pleasure. The person you love is that person who you derive pleasure from being in his or her company; someone who you feel good taking care of and seeking his/her welfare. Jacob loved Rachel so much that the Bible testifies that serving Laban for seven years to marry her was just like nothing (Gen 29:20). David's men so loved him that they put their lives in jeopardy to get him a drink of water (2 Sam 23:16). Love thus manifests in devotion. This devotion is not forced but something one gets satisfaction from doing.

You know you love someone if his or her success makes you rejoice and if the person's problems cause you agony. Romantic love takes this to physical touch and stuff in that category. You desire to feel the person.

Again I dare to say many Christians today do not love God; they are simply God-users. They do not derive pleasure from doing the things that please God; it is all to them a duty to be endured for the purpose of being blessed. Unfortunately for them, God cannot be mocked. He sees their hearts, and He knows what they are up to. My message today is that you examine yourself.

Many do not even realize that God can be loved, and that He expects to be loved in the literal sense of the word. Yes, God can be loved in the literal sense of it.

Who is a lover of God?

A lover of God simply has pleasure in certain things. Just like a spouse, there are things that God wants; a lover of God takes pleasure in getting those things for Him. He does those things because he knows they give God pleasure, and the pleasure of God is his or her primary concern.

For example, a lover of God loves righteousness. Whether it 'pays' him or not what he delights in is in *doing* righteousness. He does not want to do iniquity, no. It isn't about what he will get or not get. His pleasure comes from doing right because God is righteous. He lives a godly life and that is all he wants. Many think that godliness is for all kinds of gain. No, it is beyond that. The lover of God is not even trying to get to heaven, as must Christians are trying to do; he is just content with being godly, because that is what God wants. That is what Paul called godliness with contentment (1 Tm 6:6).

A person who loves God derives satisfaction from keeping the word of God.

*If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word... John 14:23*

If you can, read the book "The five love languages" by Gary Chapman; in it you will learn that every person has a way by which love for him (or her) is communicated so that he gets it. God's primary love language is obedience. Obedience to His word is the sign of love for God.

If we truly love God we will obey His word, and that will be our source of joy. We are not obeying because of what we will get; rather we do so because it is the expression of our love for Him

In today's Christianity, people are taught to give, and then expect a miracle of supplies, debt cancellation or such things. That is what I call *godliness without contentment*. I am not at this point talking about whether giving to get works or not, but it is a fact that when we give so we can get, that act of godliness was done without contentment. Contentment is that I am okay with the giving act alone. If God wishes let Him multiply the seed or leave me broke. The truth about receiving from God is that our needs are met because Jesus paid the price; anything we ask the Father for He gives to us because He loves us. This was what Jesus taught and so we expect our miracles based upon those words (Jn 16:24,26). God loves us and gives to us directly when we come to Him, not in the power of our good works, but in the power of the sacrifice of Jesus. We are to claim that sacrifice as being on our behalf by praying in the name, that wonderful all-powerful name of Jesus. That is background of godliness *with* contentment.

The question is simple: do you love God enough to just love to do the godly things? Do you desire to live your life so as to bring Him satisfaction because you love Him so?

A lover of God loves righteousness; he hates doing evil, and this is not just because of the judgment that may come for it. He or she loves to do right and hates to do evil.

The interesting part is that this is the person God loves and blesses.

*Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated wickedness;  
Therefore God, Thy God, has anointed Thee  
With the oil of joy above Thy fellows. Ps 45:7 NASB*

In our walk with God, those who are looking for things will get nothing, but those who do not care primarily about what they will get but are eagerly seeking to know God and to obey His will for their lives, these are the ones that will get everything (John 12:25). Let us not forget the story of Solomon; when he sought what was more noble, he got everything.

Those who love God, they love righteousness; their delight is in the law of the Lord, and they are the ones that will eventually be blessed above all else.

Will you fall in love with Him today?

**Pastor Bankie** (Mar 2013)