CHAPTER SEVEN - OUR PURPOSE:

TO LOVE GOD AND OTHERS

“And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brothers also.”

1 John 4:21 KJV

Immeasurable is the effectiveness and attractiveness to others of a pure Christian love; and to the one who thus loves the joyous satisfaction is beyond expression. Little wonder that the Apostle contends that love is supreme and the gift to be desired above all others; nor is it other than proper that love should be named as the first among the elements which comprise the fruit of the Spirit. He who loves with divine compassion drinks the wine of heaven and enters actually by experience into the ecstasy which constitutes the felicity of God.

Lewis Sperry Chafer

To know what God’s purpose is in our lives enables us to know what our purpose should be. Because God loves me and wants to conform me to the image of His beloved Son, my life’s goal is to “cooperate” with Him, to allow Him to have His way. The highest response to anyone who lavishes redemptive, unconditional love on us is to return that love and please that person in every way possible. And so it is with God. Because of His love, sacrifice, and great care for me, I want to respond to Him and prove my love to Him.

Our Purpose: To Love God

1. How it must grieve God to have to command us to love Him. He is love and we should desire Him and Him alone. Yet because He alone knows our hearts, He must tell us what is best for us. Read these passages and record His instructions.

Matthew 10:37-39

Matthew 22:34-38

2. From the above Scriptures, write down your thoughts about the decisions we must make in order to truly love God.

Have I ever been carried away to do something for God not because it was my duty, nor because it was useful, nor because there was anything in it at all beyond the fact that I love Him?  

Oswald Chambers
3. In order to love God, we must know what He loves. For each of the following passages, record the qualities or actions that please God.

   Isaiah 66:1-2

   Micah 6:6-8

   Hebrews 11:6
   Hebrews 13:15-16

4. We know that God wants us to love Him. But God lovingly gives us the choice of demonstrating our love to Him. What do these Scriptures tell us about how God knows that we love Him?

   John 14:19-24

   1 John 5:1-5

5. Take time to evaluate how you express your love for God through obeying His commands. Write down your thoughts.

   Do beware of a legal obedience, striving after a life of true obedience under a sense of duty. Ask God to show you the “newness of life” which is needed for a new and full obedience. . . . Believe in the love of God and the grace of our Lord Jesus. Believe in the Spirit given in you, enabling you to love, and so causing you to walk in God's statutes. In the strength of this faith, in the assurance of sufficient grace, made perfect in weakness, enter into God love and the life of living obedience it works. For it is nothing but the continual presence of Jesus in His love that can fit you for continual obedience. . . . Daily obedience to all that God wills of me is possible, is possible to me. In His strength I yield myself to Him for it.

   Andrew Murray

Our Purpose: To Love Others

6. Almost in the same breath with which He asks us to love Him, God also commands us to love others. What can we learn about loving others from these passages?

   Matthew 22:39-40
John 13:34-35

1 John 4:7-21

7. Robert H. Benson said, “No man can be a friend of Jesus Christ who is not a friend to his neighbor.” Do you agree? Why, or why not?

Give me such love for God and men, as will blot out all hatred and bitterness.

_Dietrich Bonhoeffer_

AUTHOR’S REFLECTION – As I have gotten older and have been confronted with choosing to do something I know God wants me to do, I am often reduced to one simple prayer: “Lord, if I didn’t love you, I wouldn’t do this!” Once I was under a time restraint and due to previous scheduling in which I didn’t foresee a time problem, I very reluctantly went to speak to a women’s fellowship. The meeting was out of town, and I kept telling the Lord that I wished I’d had more discernment or that He had been a “little more” clear about His will for me, for I had prayed about this seminar. This was putting a lot of pressure on me and He certainly knew all I’d be facing at this particular time.

I’m thankful that God honors reluctant obedience. The women at that church blessed and refreshed my spirit. It was just what I needed for that time in my life – to get away, to rest, to be ministered to. (Sounds a lot like the way God works!)

I hate to admit it, but the reason it is hard for me to obey is because it usually means loving people just when it seems most difficult to do so! It involves setting aside my agenda and trusting God to provide the strength, sensitivity, and grace necessary to love. I don’t always initially “enjoy” obeying God, but afterward, because of His mercy, I am always blessed.

The psalmist said it beautifully: “Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart” (Psalm 119:2)

_Mould us, great God, into forms of beauty and usefulness by the wheel of Providence and by the touch of Your hand. Fulfill Thine ideal, and conform us to the image of Your Son. In Your great house may we stand as vessels meet for Your use. We are little better than common earthenware, but we may be cleansed, and purified, and filled with Your heavenly treasure. Dip us deep into the River of Life, and give refreshment by us to many parched and weary hearts._

_F.B. Meyer_
My Purpose (For Contemplation and Prayer)
8. Over the next few days, think about how you communicate your love to God and to others. To help your reflection and application, carefully consider the verse that follows.

“My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.” 1 John 3:18 KJV

Use these questions to guide your meditation.

9. How can my love for God be made more genuine?

10. How can my love for others be made more genuine?

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURE MEMORY: 1 John 3:18
Matthew 10:37-39

37. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. 39. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

Matthew 22:34-38

34. But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. 35. Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, 36. Master, which is the great commandment in the law? 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.

Isaiah 66:1-2

1. Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? And where is the place of my rest? 2. For all those things hath mine hand made, and those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

Micah 6:6-8

6. Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? 7. Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? 8. He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

Hebrews 11:6

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Hebrews 13:15-16

15. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. 16. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

John 14:19-24

19. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. 20. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. 21. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. 22. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? 23. Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. 24. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me.
1 John 5:1-5
  1. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. 2. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. 3. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. 4. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. 5. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

Matthew 22:39-40
  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.

John 13:34-35
  34. A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

1 John 4:7-21
  7. Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. 8. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. 9. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 10. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. 12. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. 13. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. 14. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. 15. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. 16. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. 17. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. 18. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. 19. We love him, because he first loved us. 20. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? 21. And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.