

Searching the Scriptures / 29 / Love For Oneself / Part 4

Today we want to take a brief look at what the Bible says about love for oneself. Let me hasten to add that I am not talking about the naturally sinful state of man as stated in 2 Tim 3:2, “... *men shall be lovers of their own selves...*” Instead, what I wish to address is that type of love which concerns the salvation of one’s own soul, which includes both loving God and loving your neighbor. Let’s then explore the following biblical concepts:

1. **Love for Oneself is the Second Greatest Commandment**
2. **Love is the Fulfillment of the Law**
3. **Love is More Than All Whole Burnt Offerings and Sacrifices**

Love for Oneself is the Second Greatest Commandment

We read in Mark 12:30-31, “*And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these*”.

How do I love myself and my neighbor in the same manner? The Bible explains that this really means that to love oneself is to desire the greatest good or blessing possible. The greatest blessing that could benefit any person is to have his sins forgiven and, as a result, to be qualified to enter the kingdom of Heaven. The reason for this is because the Bible teaches that every one of us are born spiritually “*dead in trespasses and sins*” (as Eph 2:1 indicates), are under God’s wrath, and are headed for Hell.

Our sin problem is so pervasive that Isa 1:5-6 describes it in this manner: “... *the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.*” Wonderfully, God has solved our spiritual catastrophe as He declares in Eph 1:3-7, “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.*”

Love is the Fulfillment of the Law

In Rom 13:10 we find another aspect of love for oneself: “*Love worketh no ill to his neighbour therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.*” How does love fulfill the law of God? Nobody except the Lord Jesus Christ can fulfill all the demands of the Law of God, the Bible, as we learn from Jam 2:10, which says, “*For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.*” There is only One Person who is qualified to fulfill the Law of God, since He never sinned in thought, word, or deed – the Lord Jesus Himself. We read in Mat 5:17, “*Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*” Luke 24:44 further states, “*And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were*

written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.” What does this signify? Simply put, God orchestrated a great exchange for every Christian – 2 Cor 5:21 explains, “For he [God the Father] hath made him [God the Son] to be sin for us, who [God the Son] knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him [God the Son].”

Love is More Than All Whole Burnt Offerings and Sacrifices

In Mark 12:33 we find this very interesting statement, “*And to love him [speaking of God] with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.*” What were whole burnt offerings and sacrifices used for in the Old Testament? In Heb 5:1 we learn the purpose of such activities, “*For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins...*” Nonetheless, all of those sacrifices commanded by God in the Old Testament merely served as sign posts to illustrate a deeper spiritual reality which was yet to appear, as we find stated in Gal 4:4: “*But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*” Heb 10:8-10 gives us the full story: “*Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*”