

7. Motive of Love

By John Thiel, *Seeking to Please God Series*, [mp3](#)

Scripture reading: Revelation 2:2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: 3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. 4 Nevertheless I have [somewhat] against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

We are seeking to please God in this time of the hour of God's judgment, the day of atonement. And we continue to pursue the understanding of the following quote in searching our hearts:

We are now living in the great day of atonement. In the typical service, while the high priest was making the atonement for Israel, all were required to afflict their souls by repentance of sin and humiliation before the Lord, lest they be cut off from among the people. In like manner, all who would have their names retained in the book of life should now, in the few remaining days of their probation, afflict their souls before God by sorrow for sin and true repentance. There must be deep, faithful searching of heart. {GC 489.3}

This is the serious time in which we are living. The probation is soon to close, and then Jesus will cease His mediation which He is currently engaged in in the heavenly sanctuary in this day of atonement, as all the lives of God's people are coming up in examination in the judgment. So in this solemn time in which we are living, we are called upon to afflict our souls, to search deeply to know what is in us.

Deep Searching of Heart

The most profitable meetings for spiritual advancement are those which are characterized with solemnity and deep searching of heart; each seeking to know himself, and earnestly, and in deep humility, seeking to learn of Christ. {1T 412.1}

This is the purpose of our regular meetings over this series—we are to be profited through these meetings that *are characterized with solemnity and deep searching of heart*. May God help us to engage in this meditation to be doing just that. This

is not just a time of worship; this is a time of deep closeness to God to come to know ourselves as we examine God's word, to know my communication of affection and love to God. What is pleasing Him? Is there anything that is displeasing Him in my life? This is what we are called to: *Deep searching of heart; each seeking to know himself, and earnestly, and in deep humility, seeking to learn of Christ.*

Faith That Pleases God

Today we want to seek to please God according to the following words of Hebrews 11. This is speaking of Enoch, who lived just before the time of the flood; and we also are living just before the close of human probation.

Hebrews 11:5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. 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.

Aren't these words resplendent with a message for our time? Enoch was translated, and we are also to be translated among the 144,000. But before we are translated there must be a testimony that we are pleasing God. How meaningful this is to the whole series about *seeking to please God*. What are we to examine in reference to us pleasing God? It says that *without faith it is impossible to please Him*. We see in the following scripture a connection link of faith into the subject of this hour:

Galatians 5:5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. 6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

Faith is needed to please God; but it is a faith that works by love. And here we are introduced to the examination of this meditation: Do I have a faith that works and works by love? Do I have the love there that makes faith pleasing to God?

Faith and love are the essential, powerful, working elements of Christian character. {SD 71.3}

We are being examined whether our characters are pure. Here it is: *Faith and love are the essential, powerful, working elements of Christian character.*

Those who possess them are one with Christ, and are carrying forward His mission. . . . We are to sit at Christ's feet as continual learners, and to work

with His gifts of faith and love. We shall then wear Christ's yoke, and lift His burdens, and Christ will recognize us as one with Him; in heaven it will be said, "Ye are labourers together with God." Will our youth remember that without faith it is impossible to please God? and it must be faith that works by love and purifies the soul. {Ibid.}

We need a pure soul. And we are told that we must have *faith that works love*. Love is needed for faith to be effective. We are, then, approaching a very important, deep searching of our hearts. Does my faith work by love? Is this an important message for us, being the people of Laodicea, *the people of the judgement?* Jesus is appealing to the people of God's judgement; He is saying, Examine yourselves; search your hearts; I have something against you. I want you to have something which you need to buy of Me. What does He say in Revelation?

Gold Tried in the Fire

Revelation 3:18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich;

What is this that He is saying we are to buy of Him, that we may be rich? The Laodicean people say, We are rich and increased with goods; but it says they know not that they are poor, wretched, miserable, and naked. We need to search our hearts, because there is something I may not know about myself. I need to buy of Him gold tried in the fire. What is this? What is meant with *gold tried in the fire?*

Will you obey this voice? Will you heed the counsel of the True Witness to seek the gold tried in the fire, the white raiment, and the eyesalve? The gold is faith and love, {5T 233.2}

So the subject we are examining, as we search our hearts to come to know ourselves, is indeed the subject that Jesus wants us to examine ourselves in—to buy of Him gold, which is *faith and love*. What are the meetings we are blessed by? Those in which we do deep heart searching that we might know ourselves, and especially so now in reference to faith that works by love and that we are to buy of Jesus. Do I know myself? I would like us to spend this time in research, not only to know what God's word is saying, but to see inside of myself how I actually measure up with this high calling. Do I love? Do I function with a motive of love in reference to all of God's will? Examine yourselves.

Do I Have Love?

How can I know whether I truly have love? Can I know it? The Spirit of Prophecy gives us this amazing research stimulus that is going to let me know whether I actually have love or not:

It is true that there may be an outward correctness of deportment without the renewing power of Christ. The love of influence and the desire for the esteem of others may produce a well-ordered life. {SC 58.1}

We even desire God to esteem us; and the people came to Jesus because they wanted to be esteemed by Him. This will produce a life that will be trying to measure up with what is expected of us.

Self-respect may lead us to avoid the appearance of evil. A selfish heart may perform generous actions. By what means, then, shall we determine whose side we are on? {Ibid.}

Here is the question. How can I know whether I have faith that works by love or not? Here is the answer:

Who has the heart? With whom are our thoughts? Of whom do we love to converse? Who has our warmest affections and our best energies? If we are Christ's, our thoughts are with Him, and our sweetest thoughts are of Him. All we have and are is consecrated to Him. We long to bear His image, breathe His spirit, do His will, and please Him in all things. {SC 58.2}

If I have love for Jesus in my heart, this is how it will be revealed.

Those who become new creatures in Christ Jesus will bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Galatians 5:22, 23. They will no longer fashion themselves according to the former lusts, but by the faith of the Son of God they will follow in His steps, reflect His character, and purify themselves even as He is pure. The things they once hated they now love, and the things they once loved they hate. The proud and self-assertive become meek and lowly in heart. The vain and supercilious become serious and unobtrusive. {SC 58.3}

So how can you see yourself there? Let the Spirit of Prophecy reveal to us whether or not I have love.

Who has the heart? With whom are our thoughts? Of whom do we love to converse? Who has our warmest affections and our best energies? {SC 58.2}

If we are Christ's, if we love Him, our thoughts are with Him, and our sweetest thoughts are of Him. We long to bear His image, breathe His spirit, do His will, and please Him in all things. Let us reflect on those words. Let us reflect and see and understand ourselves.

When the Motive of Love Grows Thin

Those of you who were once married, can you reflect back when you first fell in love with your spouse? You looked forward to being together with them when you were separated; you couldn't stop thinking about them; they were dear to your heart; and every request that they made to you, you were ready to jump to it and do it. You were not annoyed with their interventions in what you were doing; you loved to please them. And you laid many things aside so that you could spend time with them. But after a period of marriage, when the romance has worn off, was it the same, is it the same? Or does your spouse start to annoy you a little bit with some of their expectations of you? Does your spouse make you feel uncomfortable, instead of joyful, just being in their presence? When they were about to get married, my daughter and son-in-law asked me to give them in *one* sentence some counsel. The Lord reminded me and I said, Never become used to each other.

The relationship of God's church with Jesus, with God, is a relationship of marriage. Can we become used to God in our life, and the excitement we once had when we first found Him as our personal Saviour has worn off? and the expectations of God, the following of His will becomes a burden, when once it was a delight? When Christian excitement wears off and the romance of Christianity loses its shine, we begin to think, This is a hard life; I'm finding it so difficult; and the gospel of Jesus Christ, the story of expectations, becomes a difficulty. The motive of love has become thin.

God's Voice Is No Longer Pleasant

The finding of God's truth for the first time in my life filled me with devotion, time to study the Bible, enjoying time with God's word, spending time with Him, talking with Him; but then come the inroads of self and the sinful flesh that we carry, and, like with Adam and Eve, we no longer enjoy God. They used to hear God's voice speaking in the garden, and they would run to Him, because they loved Him; but when they were finally deceived by Satan, just by eating a fruit, which was nice to the taste, a lovely fruit really, what now? The voice of God speaking in the garden became an unpleasant experience. When someone you once loved becomes an annoyance, what has happened?

Love Has Gone Out the Door

The very early church, the apostolic church, the church of Ephesus in Revelation, went through that very thing. Jesus, the One they loved, had something against them. What does He say?

Revelation 2:2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: 3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

But what does He have against them now? What happened now? You are doing all these things, He says. And we often misunderstand and look upon what we are doing as *love*. He expresses to them, “I know your doings, your works, your labour, your patience, that you cannot bear them which are evil; you have tried them who claim to be apostles, and are not, and have found them liars; you have borne, you have had patience for My name’s sake, and have laboured, and have not fainted.” Well, don’t I love Him for doing all that? He says:

Revelation 2:4 Nevertheless I have [somewhat] against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen,

Remember what you were like, and from whence you have fallen,

Revelation 2:5 ...and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

This is a phenomenal exercise of mind. Here are people who are patiently working, reaching out to do God’s will; but they have lost their first love, and it is something to repent of.

So we want to examine closely some testimonies to search our hearts to see whether or not we fall into that same thing. Have I lost that which I once used to have? As you reflect back into your life, can you see times early in your experience when Jesus meant everything to you? You were just ready to jump to action any time; you were enjoying His presence; you were absolutely full on for Him; but then something happened and you lost it. So He says: *Remember from whence thou art fallen*. These are very stigmatising words, causing us to think. What was it like? I have fallen? To remember from where I have fallen? This is what I have against you, He says; I am displeased.

Though the Theory Is Correct

You can actually have a love for God's truth, loving the theory of it, and still have lost your first love.

To lose His love from our hearts means much. Yet He Himself says: "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love" (Revelation 2:4). There is danger of presenting the truth in such a way that the intellect is exalted, leaving the souls of the hearers unsatisfied. A correct theory of the truth may be presented, and yet there may not be manifested the warmth of affection that the God of truth requires every one of His messengers to cherish and manifest. {9MR 299.1}

We might be reformers with all our hearts, just like the early apostles were, as Jesus describes them. They were wonderful in their Christian manifestations; but there was something that they had lost. The theory is correct, the upholding of the pure doctrines is correct, as Jesus said to them: "*Thou canst not bear them which are evil, He said, and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars. You are defending the pure truth, but you have still lost your first love. You are presenting the truth in such a way that the intellect is exalted, leaving the souls of the hearers unsatisfied.*"

A correct theory of the truth may be presented, and yet there may not be manifested the warmth of affection that the God of truth requires every one of His messengers to cherish and manifest. {Ibid.}

This is what I should have—the warmth of affection to Jesus, cherishing that, spending time in embracing this, and manifesting it, so that I actually *manifest* the love and affection for God. When I have an affection that is strong, how does it become manifest? It is in your vision, in your face; there is no mournful look on your face, no mournful expression; it is all peace and inward gladness on the countenance.

The religion of many is very much like an icicle--freezingly cold. The hearts of not a few are still unmelted, unsubdued. They cannot touch the hearts of others, because their own hearts are not surcharged with the blessed love that flows from the heart of Christ. There are others who speak of religion as a matter of the will. They dwell upon stern duty as if it were a master ruling with a scepter of iron--a master, stern, inflexible, all powerful--devoid of the sweet, melting love and tender compassion of Christ. Still others go to the opposite extreme, making religious emotions prominent, and on special occasions manifesting intense zeal. Their religion seems to be more of the nature of a stimulus rather than an abiding faith in Christ. {9MR 299.2}

Then she also mentions others who to go to the other extreme and are all emotional, intensely zealous, always seeking for stimulating by some sort of emotion. This is another extreme the other way. We can see, then, in the light of this, what we are to examine in ourselves. Lord, do I need to repent here? I love the truth, I know this is the truth for the last days, and I am very strict; but I lose my emotions and affections for Jesus and the truth that are separate from self, failing to just admire the other person, Jesus.

Being Faithful to the Externals

Then comes another element of examination. We can be faithful to all the reforms, but in a manner that is external, and not from the deep affections.

The law given upon Sinai was the enunciation of the principle of love, a revelation to earth of the law of heaven. It was ordained in the hand of a Mediator--spoken by Him through whose power the hearts of men could be brought into harmony with its principles. God had revealed the purpose of the law when He declared to Israel, "Ye shall be holy men unto Me." Exodus 22:31. {MB 46.2}

But Israel had not perceived the spiritual nature of the law, and too often their professed obedience was but an observance of forms and ceremonies, rather than a surrender of the heart to the sovereignty of love. {MB 46.3}

You can get into the habit of just doing what is expected of us as Christians while the affections are left out of it.

As Jesus in His character and work represented to men the holy, benevolent, and paternal attributes of God, and presented the worthlessness of mere ceremonial obedience, the Jewish leaders did not receive or understand His words. {Ibid.}

I still hear echoed in my mind, as I have for many years been preaching the love gospel in connection with obedience, how certain people who were reformers kept on saying, All we can hear is love, love, love; all we can hear is Jesus all the time; and it was nauseating to them, just like Jesus was nauseating to the Jewish leaders.

They thought that He dwelt too lightly upon the requirements of the law; and when He set before them the very truths that were the soul of their divinely appointed service, they, looking only at the external, accused Him of seeking to overthrow it. {Ibid.}

The one who upholds the pure love behind the law, and doesn't make requirements, but makes love motivation everything, that is foreign to the Jewish leaders and to people who have lost their love. As it says, the heart was not surrendered *to the sovereignty of love*. God loves His church, and the expressions of affections to unworthy beings like us from the Majesty of the universe are just amazing, unbelievable. What is their heart response? This is for us to examine in our own selves.

Unity Threatened

When a person doesn't have the love anymore, how does he react to members of God's church? How do they view each other? It is like when romance wears off. When we first came into this message there was this beautiful bonding of God's people together, and so it was in the early apostles' experience.

After the descent of the Holy Spirit, when the disciples went forth to proclaim a living Saviour, their one desire was the salvation of souls. They rejoiced in the sweetness of communion with saints. They were tender, thoughtful, self-denying, willing to make any sacrifice for the truth's sake. In their daily association with one another, they revealed the love that Christ had enjoined upon them. By unselfish words and deeds they strove to kindle this love in other hearts. {AA 547.3}

Such a love the believers were ever to cherish. They were to go forward in willing obedience to the new commandment. So closely were they to be united with Christ that they would be enabled to fulfill all His requirements. Their lives were to magnify the power of a Saviour who could justify them by His righteousness. {AA 547.4}

But gradually a change came. The believers began to look for defects in others. {AA 548.1}

Is that what we do sometimes? Do you see the defects in others? And then you think, "Why are they like that?" "Look at this, look at what they are doing there."

Dwelling upon mistakes, giving place to unkind criticism, they lost sight of the Saviour and His love. They became more strict in regard to outward ceremonies, more particular about the theory than the practice of the faith. In their zeal to condemn others, they overlooked their own errors. They lost the brotherly love that Christ had enjoined, and, saddest of all, they were unconscious of their loss. {Ibid.}

Isn't that the Laodicean condition as well? I counsel you to buy of Me gold, *faith and love*, says the True Witness, because you haven't got it; you've lost it. Same message. They didn't realise it. You know not that you are wretched, and miserable, poor, blind, and naked. *They were unconscious of their loss.*

They did not realize that happiness and joy were going out of their lives and that, having shut the love of God out of their hearts, they would soon walk in darkness. {Ibid.}

Here, then, are those three testimonies: one, that we have a love for the theory of the truth, but there is that affection missing; two, that we are very careful about the externals, while the heart is not wrapped up with the eternal love heart of God; and three, in our relationship with the members of the church, that beautiful love that once was pulsating through the church is then turned into examining other people, seeing their mistakes, and dwelling upon them. Haven't we experienced that? How easy it is to fall into that trap.

Now that we have examined ourselves, we may think, Oh no, that's me; there is me again. Have I lost my love?? Can I rekindle it? Can it come back to me the way it used to be—the affection, the joy, the relationship communion with each other? Can it ever come back to me again like it used to be?

Acknowledging

We want to conclude our meditation with an understanding of how this can be rekindled in our hearts. The first thing is to open my heart to what we have just read and acknowledge to myself that, Yes, I *have* lost the elements of that first love that I used to have; yes, I am no longer speaking to my brothers and sisters the way I used to; I am no longer speaking to my spouse the way I used to; I am not longer fragrant in my experience and my affections; I can see it, and I feel so condemned and so overwhelmed with this terrible condition I am in. So I should be. And what did Jesus say? Unless you repent, you're going to go down. I have to acknowledge and behold Christ's response to my condition.

What is Christ's response, even though He had just said to them, You must repent, because I have something against you? He goes on commending them:

Revelation 2:6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. 7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

I am speaking to you, I am saying to you that I have something against you, says Jesus; and then He says, You hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, you hate

this ungodly kind of Christianity, and I want you to overcome. I haven't given you up. There is the love: I have failed Him so badly; I've lost my first love; and it feels so terrible; but He speaks to me comfortingly; He says: Overcome; I am here, and I am going to give you to eat of the tree of life; I am not casting you away.

Rekindling the Love

As we receive this meditation and enlarge it in our minds Jesus, and the way of His love even though I have failed Him so miserably, now comes this beautiful description we want to pick up on to let it rekindle our love:

The divine Teacher bears with the erring through all their perversity. {Ed 294.2}

Isn't it a perversity this lack of love, without any affection anymore to Him or to the brothers and sisters? *His loves does not grow cold*; He bears with their perversity.

His love does not grow cold; His efforts to win them do not cease. With outstretched arms He waits to welcome again and again the erring, the rebellious, and even the apostate. His heart is touched with the helplessness of the little child subject to rough usage. {Ibid.}

Some of us have testified of the rough usage they suffered under in their childhood. Jesus understands.

The cry of human suffering never reaches His ear in vain. Though all are precious in His sight, the rough, sullen, stubborn dispositions draw most heavily upon His sympathy and love; for He traces from cause to effect. The one who is most easily tempted, and is most inclined to err, is the special object of His solicitude. {Ibid.}

Take it to heart, as you see the consequences of your mistreatment of the past, as you see yourself losing love because of the effects. Jesus traces from cause to effect, and He wants to rekindle our love as we see Him appealing to us. You have lost your first love; when you first met Me, you were so on fire for Me; you made such a change in your life because you loved Me; but now you've lost it. Let it be rekindled by this amazing story. Meditate upon it; enlarge it. Enlarge this; don't enlarge the faults of others, or the unpleasant things in the other person's life. Don't do that! Enlarge this story. And we will have love for one another when we see each other erring. We will not criticise each other at all, because we will see what has happened in the past, and we will bear one another in love, and we will kindle love in each other's hearts. This is the love of Je-

sus that is needed in the Laodicean condition to recover. And Jesus says, I stand at the door and knock; will any man open his heart to this love?

A New Flame

"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." Thine is a decay, a declension in holy zeal--not forsaken is the object of it, but lost is the fervor. {7BC 956.8}

I haven't forsaken you, He says; My counsel to you is not that I have forsaken you; it is that I have made you aware of the loss of your fervour.

The first affection of the convert to Christ is deep, full, and ardent. It is not necessary that this love should become less as knowledge increases, as the more and increased light shines upon him. {Ibid.}

It shouldn't mean this; but rather, we are learning something here, that when the love is lost, we should get to know Him better. It's wonderful how God turns the negativity into positives. He can bring light out of darkness. As I see the loss of my love, He is kindling in my heart a new flame. I haven't forsaken you, He says, I will accept you again even if you've apostatised.

That love should become more fervent as he becomes better acquainted with his Lord. {Ibid.}

More fervent, I am becoming better acquainted with Him. He is not casting me off after He has told me He has something against me, that I have lost my first love. I am not casting you off, says He; I am letting you know the loss of fervour and the first affection that you had. Remember. That love may become *more fervent as you become better acquainted with your Lord.*

God will accept nothing less than the whole heart. Happy are they who from the commencement of their religious life have been true to their first love, growing in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. The sure result of their intercourse and fellowship with their beloved Lord will be to increase their piety, their purity, their fervor. They are receiving a divine education, and this is illustrated in a life of fervor, of diligence and zeal. {7BC 956.9}

It is our work to know our special failings and sins, which cause darkness and spiritual feebleness, and quenched our first love. {7BC 957.1}

This is our work—to *know our special failings and sins* that have caused *darkness and spiritual feebleness, and quenched our first love.* It is our work to do this; this is

what we are doing in this hour of worship, to actually examine it, not to come away from this message with a sense of, I have completely lost my love; I'm terrible, aren't I? No; Jesus has just made it known to me so that, as I realise this, His love becomes more precious to me, and kindles my love in my heart.

May God grant us restoration by an ever-deeper acquaintance with our Lord and His love in contrast to our sinfulness. Know yourself, your sinfulness, better, and the more you know yourself, the more you see yourself as short off the mark, the more your love is kindled. God grant this to us; and never fall into this trap of becoming down-hearted because I have lost my first love. Kindle it by seeing His love.

Amen.