

Cost of Discipleship - Part 2

by Paris Reidhead

To love God means to seek the best interests of God, to commit one's will to pleasing God, and to seek the satisfaction and joy of God.

Duration: 25:28

Scripture: Romans 10:9

Topics: "Cost Of Discipleship"

Description

In this sermon transcript, the speaker shares a personal experience of speaking at a youth conference in Charlotte, North Carolina in 1955. After the service, a pianist approached the speaker and revealed that he felt the speaker was speaking directly to him and his struggles with faith. The speaker advises the pianist to share his testimony and the gospel with others, and to fully surrender his life to Jesus Christ. The pianist later reconnects with the speaker at a conference the following year, sharing that he had accepted Jesus as his Savior and was committed to living a life that pleases Him. The speaker emphasizes the importance of wholeheartedly loving and trusting the Lord, and encourages the audience to examine their own commitment to Christ.

Transcript

Now, that's not the way I was or you were by nature. The essence of sin, what is it? The essence of sin is self-love. The essence of sin is, I, I want to please me, I want to do what I want to do.

Ye shall be as God said the serpent to Mother Eve. What was happening? Well, let's go back to the word love. We were getting a definition of it now.

What does it mean to love, love God? It's interesting that the word love comes from an ancient Anglo-Saxon word that's pretty well forgotten now. It survives in one or two forms. It's the word luf.

We have it, for instance, in one form, lifon, which is shortened to be-lif, be-lifon. Lifon means together with. And to be-lif or be-lifon means to exist or live or have your being together with.

That's the word be-lif. And another form of the word lifon is luf, together with, from which we get our word love. That means together with.

Now, what does it mean, therefore, to love God? Does it mean to feel soft and warm and cuddly and sentimental when you hear the name of God? No. This is a commandment, and God made us, and God

knows that our emotions are not under the command of our will. This is not an emotion word.

This is a volition word. God doesn't command the impossible. Look, let me illustrate it.

Suppose I were to say to you now, I'm going to count to three, and when I reach three, it'll be just one, two, three, and when I come to three, I want everybody in this auditorium, on the count of three, to be angry. Would you do that now? All right. One, two, three, be angry.

And you do precisely what you're doing. You laugh. Well, why? Because your emotions are not under the control of your will.

If I want you to be angry, I won't tell you to be angry. I will get you to think about the thing which will make you angry. And if I want you to feel sad, I'll tell you the thing that makes you feel sad.

Because your emotions are not under the control of your will, they are influenced by your thoughts. And this is a volition word. Thou shalt love.

What's it mean? It means to be together with, or in another way, to seek the best interests of, the greatest happiness of, the satisfaction of, the pleasure and fulfillment and joy of. It means a commitment of the will to seek the pleasure, the joy, the satisfaction, the happiness of God. That's what it means to love God.

It isn't a question of how emotional you feel, it's where's your will fixed, where's your decision centered, what's the supreme choice of your life, what's the purpose of your being. That's love in the biblical sense. Now, sin in the very, its very essence is the contrary.

Sin is the supreme choice of the will of the life to make one's own pleasure and gratification and satisfaction the end of his being. And a sinner is a person who at the age of accountability responded his mother, even father, Adam, by saying, I will do what I want to do. I will rule my life, I will choose how to be happy, I will make my pleasure the supreme choice and purpose of my life.

That's the essence of sin, selfishness, self-love as the reason for being. Now, when he says, thou shalt love the Lord thy God, that implies a change from that which characterizes us before. I'm going to do what I want to do.

Isaiah said, we have turned everyone to his own way, all we like sheep have gone astray. What did he mean? That every one of us had committed our will and our purpose to the end of pleasing ourselves as the reason for our being and the purpose for our life. Now, if that is true, and it is because it says, all have sinned, this is a choice that's made, this is a commitment that's made, and it characterized us as sinners.

Therefore, if this is, there is to be a change from this, then there has to be a change of mind and a change of purpose and a change of intention from I'm going to do what I want to do, I'm going to live to please me, to something else, and that else is, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? What does it mean, therefore, to love God? It means a change of mind and a change of intention and a change of purpose from pleasing self to seeking the blessedness and the joy and the satisfaction and the happiness of God. This, therefore, is why I see the Lord Jesus saying, on this commandment or these commandments hangs the law. Thou shalt love the Lord.

Why? Because every one of the Ten Commandments is an evidence of and a proof of the fact that we have chosen to please ourself as the reason for our being. And thus the law is the schoolmaster to bring

us to Christ and show us the enormity of the crime that we've committed in loving ourselves and in seeking to please ourselves. Now, what then does it mean to us to love God? It means that there comes that moment of choice, that moment of purpose, when the whole man, the mind and the soul and the heart, the whole person is unified, totally involved in a change from a purpose, renunciation of that purpose, an abandonment of that purpose, and a new commitment and a new purpose.

The old purpose and plan of our life was to please ourselves, to seek our own satisfaction and joy and happiness and blessedness. That's the crime of sin. We renounce that.

We renounce it totally. We renounce it completely. We don't even understand what we're renouncing.

But we renounce it anyway, because we're through with the foul and filthy thing of defrauding the rightful sovereign of his worship, of defrauding him who's worthy to be praised of the praise that he deserves, and enthroning ourselves on that throne so big that we can't possibly fill it, and saying, I will be like the Most High. I'll do what I want to do, irrespective of what he wants. We renounce it.

And then we turn around and we say, Lord, that allegiance that I gave to myself, and unknowingly to Satan, that purpose to please myself, and at the same time unknowingly to gratify Satan, making my joy and pleasure the end of my being, that which has controlled and governed me, I now repudiate. I renounce. I abandon.

And from today on, Jesus Christ is going to be in charge of my life. I believe that he's God, that he made the world. I believe that he lived a sinless life, he died on the cross for sinners, and that you've raised him from the dead.

And I confess with my mouth, Jesus to be Lord! And I believe in my heart that you've raised him from the dead. And from today on, the purpose of my life is going to be to please him. He's going to be the king and the boss and the ruler and the governor and the control of my life.

And I so receive him as the only one that's wise enough and good enough and big enough to have that kind of allegiance and that kind of service. Now, this, I think, is something of what we see when we hear those words of Christ, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and mind and soul, the whole being brought into focused purpose and commitment to please Jesus Christ. Now, how many are there here tonight that maybe, as I was, that wasn't exclusively mine, wasn't just my problem? I was down at a Prattville, Alabama, in a youth conference back in 1956, 56, 54 perhaps, 54, 5. And I spoke something as I've spoken to you.

I'd previously had the same quartet from Takoa Falls with me at a meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina. And they were there that day singing for us at this youth conference, I believe, on the 4th of July, back in 1955. After the service was over, the pianist came to me and he said, I heard you speak at Charlotte, and you will recall by being there I said yes.

He said, I went home that night and I realized that you'd been talking about me when you gave your testimony, you were giving mine. And ever since that time, I have been aware of the fact that Jesus Christ is just a name, he's just a word, and he's not been beyond that to me. What shall I do? I said, do you know the plan of salvation? Do you know the gospel? He said, of course I do, I'm a senior student at Takoa.

I said, all right, then I want you to go home. When the others go to sleep, I want you to get out and tell the risen Lord just what you've told me, and just what you know about yourself, and just what you're prepared

to do in regard to sin, and that you're prepared that Jesus Christ shall take complete charge, and the purpose of your life is going to please him. And you meet him, and when you know that he's forgiven you, and pardoned you, I want you to come and tell me.

Will you do it? Well, he left that night and went into the dark, and I didn't see him again till I was speaking at the alliance conference at Hendersonville, North Carolina, the next summer in '56. And after the service, this young man came and stood there, and he said, do you remember me? I said, indeed I do. What happened that night? He said, I went home, I went to bed with the others, but after the others had gone to sleep, I awakened and knelt beside my bed, and I did just what you said.

I told Jesus Christ who I was and what I knew about myself, and that the purpose of my heart, whether he ever saved me or not, was to serve him and obey him because he was worthy, and that I do believe that he had shed his blood for sinners like me and for my sins. And he said, before the sun awaked across the sky and the night gave way to gray dawn, Jesus Christ saved me, and I knew it. And he said, since that time I've been walking in the joy of the Lord.

And that man came to us and gave that testimony when his pastor, the gospel tabernacle, Alton Bynum, came as our director of music. Again, so that you don't think it's unique, in 1968 I was 67, rather. 66, I believe I'm going to have to get this straight one way or another.

No, I'm going to go back. 67, it's important to me. I was at Harvey Cedar's Bible Conference, where I will, at the end of this month, have been there for the 12th year in a row.

My son Jim was with me. He was going from his senior year in high school to his first year in college, and he'd come down to spend the week. And as we were driving back, we got off the main highway and onto the road that led to our little town, the Catskills.

We turned off the road to go up toward our home. And just as we turned off that main road, up the road that would take us to our home, Jim, who'd been quiet for two or three miles, said, Dad, would you pull over and stop for a minute? Of course I did. I waited.

I could see in the light of the dashboard that is very important to him. He said, Dad, I've got to be honest with you. He said, you remember that night in the tabernacle when I went forward and prayed and I told you I was saved? I said, yes, I remember.

Well, he said, Dad, I wasn't. Nothing really happened. And I've been living a lie ever since that time, letting you think I was a Christian when I've known I wasn't.

He said, Dad, I can't go on like this anymore. He said, I don't even know that there's a God. I don't know that Jesus Christ is alive.

I don't know anything. And I just can't fool you and Mom anymore. I've got to be honest.

He went ahead and told me a little more. And I was praying while he was talking that the Holy Spirit would guide me. I finally responded and I said, Jim, do you know the plan of salvation? Sure, he said, I know the plan of salvation.

Haven't I listened to your preaching for all these years? I said, Jim, do you know what kind of people does Jesus Christ save? He says, Dad, you've been saying he saves lost people. I said, Jim, someday you're

going to find out how lost you are and how badly you need a Savior. And I just want to make sure that when that happens, you'll know what the plan of salvation is.

And I want you to make, if I know that, then I can trust you to the Lord. I can trust you to him. Now, I said, Jim, I'm not going to bring this subject up again unless you do.

I'll talk to you anytime you want to. I'm going to tell your mother what you've told me, and I know she won't bring it up. Not that we don't want to talk to you, not that we wouldn't do anything to have you come to know him.

But, Jim, you've got to meet him. You've got to do it. Now, I said, Jim, there's just one thing I want you to promise me.

I don't know when you're going to come to Christ, but I'm sure you are. Just this, if I'm alive when you do, wherever you are, the day that you know that Jesus Christ is Savior, that day I want you to start for me. Maybe it's halfway around the world.

But, son, I want you to start for me, and I want you to come to me and tell me that Jesus Christ has saved you. Will you promise me that? He put his hand out, and he said, I will, Dad. We stopped for a moment, looked at each other, deep in each other's eyes.

I started the car, and we drove on home, and I told my wife. I said, now, don't bring it up. Oh, we prayed for him every day.

He went through that school year. He was the most exemplary boy, helpful in every way. The next summer, he finished the work at home, and then he went to Cornell University.

And our older son was a senior that year, and he called one night. He said, you know, Mom, Jim's pretty wild. He's doing a lot of things here I didn't think he'd do.

Should I talk to him? And she said, Sonny, you just leave your brother alone. If you do anything, pray for him, but don't talk. I said, oh, you know about it.

Well, we don't know about it, but we just know what we've got to do. Now, you leave Jim alone. You just pray for him.

November, I had to make a trip to New Orleans, and I came back on a Thursday night. And when I drove into the yard, there was a Volkswagen. I didn't know whose it was.

I went in, and to my amazement, there was Gene Chase and Jim. And we chatted for a few minutes, and after a while, I said, well, you fellows will be here in the morning. I'm going to go to bed.

I'm awfully tired. I left New Orleans this morning. And so I started in toward our bedroom, and I heard a voice, Dad, can I talk to you for a minute? It was Jim.

We sat down by the dining room table. He said, Dad, do you remember the night alongside of the road? Now, it hadn't been mentioned for nearly a year and a half, a year and three months. I said, Jim, you know I do.

There hasn't been a day I haven't remembered it. He said, you remember my promise? I said, yes. He said, that's why I'm here, Dad.

I said, what do you mean, Jim? Well, he said, two weeks ago, Gene came to me, and he asked me to go to prayer meeting at the Alliance Church. If there's any place in the world I didn't want to go, it was the prayer meeting, and if there's any church I didn't want to go to prayer meeting at, it was the Alliance Church. But he said, I said, yeah, I'll go.

I don't know why. We sat in his car and talked till 1.30. The next Wednesday, he called me, and he said, Jim, I want you to go to prayer meeting. How about it? And I'd made up my mind all week.

If he asked me again, I wouldn't go, and I heard myself saying, yeah, Gene, I'll go with you. We talked till 12. We came in.

I tried to go to bed, and at 1 o'clock, I was up. And he said, Dad, somewhere between 2 and 3 in the morning, I told Jesus Christ that as long as I lived, He was going to be the king and the boss and the ruler and the governor of my life, and that the purpose for my being was to please Him. I don't know how well I'm going to succeed at it, Dad, but that's what I'm planning to do.

And he said, before 3 o'clock, I knew that I had passed from death to life, and God had saved me and made me His child. And you remember, you made me promise that I'd come, and I got here just as soon as I could. And I'm going to leave at 5 in the morning, because I got a test at 8.30 back at Cornell.

Now, what am I talking to you about? I'm talking to you about the heart of the whole matter. Whom do you love? What do you mean, love? Have you made the decision as to whom you're going to please? That's what it's all about. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.

Real. Someone's here tonight like my Jim, like Alden Bynum. I don't know where you are, but I know you're here, and God's been dealing with And we're just going to give you an opportunity tonight to take the first step in the direction of reality, to acknowledge your need, and to come.

Oh, Father of Jesus, look down upon us tonight, company of men and women, midway between birth and death, on most of us well on the road toward meeting the end of our hours, our days, our time. What a tragedy it would be, Lord, for some to have a name to live and be dead. How often we've been so cruel to our children by letting them be satisfied with less than the reality we demanded of ourselves.

And so tonight we're asking that there will come just a settling hush of the Spirit of God as each of us looks well into our heart and realizes that the first and wisest step that we can make when there is a question and there is an uncertainty is to expose it and ourselves to the prayers of thy people and to the focused concern and love of those who've cared. That's why we're here, Father, to meet with thee. And so we plead the precious blood of Christ over and upon us, and as we sing, we're asking, Lord, that thou wilt just make it easy for those to whom thou hast been speaking to mind thee and to follow the drawing and the pulling love of the Holy Ghost.

Father, we do know that there's no saving power in this altar, but there is in the acknowledgment of our need and brokenness in confession and receiving faith and counsel and prayer of those who know and love thee. And so we're asking, Father, that this evening those with whom thou hast been speaking will respond to thy wooing love, move toward thee.

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