

# The Secret of Devotion

by Zac Poonen

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*The key to loving Christ is understanding His love for us, and meditating on the cross and Christ's sufferings can stir our love for Him.*

**Duration:** 59:05

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Luke 16:13, 1 John 2:15-16

**Topics:** "Devotion"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of prioritizing our hunger for God over worldly distractions, such as excessive television consumption. He shares the story of David Wilkerson, who was convicted by God to give up watching television and instead spend that time in prayer. This discipline led to God burdening Wilkerson's heart to help troubled youth in New York. The speaker encourages listeners to view things from an eternal perspective and not become entangled in earthly disputes. He also highlights the danger of accumulating knowledge without prioritizing the study of the Bible, which has resulted in a generation that lacks biblical understanding.

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## Transcript

You know, there are two contrasting loves spoken of in scripture. One is love for Christ, and the other is love for the world, or love for God and love for the world. And it says in 1 John and chapter 2, if anyone loves the world, verse 15, the love of the Father is not in him.

To love Jesus and to love God is the same thing, and a lot of Christian preaching is negative. And a lot of preaching that we have heard through the years, things that we have read, are very negative. That means, don't do this, and don't love the world, and don't lust, don't get angry, don't do this, don't do the other thing.

And yet, if we are honest, we have to say that a lot of these things we are told not to love, we really love. There is something in our flesh that draws us to them. It says about Jesus that he loved righteousness and hated sin.

And if he could get there, it would be very easy to give up sin. Like, you know, you are given a command like, don't stoop down and lick this floor. Not a difficult command to obey.

Or, don't go and put your head in the toilet bowl, or something like that. These are easy, because you hate it. Or, don't eat garbage.

And if you... Now, when you think of the story of the prodigal son, why was he eating what the pigs were eating? Pigs eat garbage. And why do you think he was eating what the pigs were eating? Jesus told that story, and it was a pretty sad state of affairs. And I think when the angels from heaven looked down at the world, and all the people in the world, and the things people in the world run after, which look so attractive to the people in the world, the angels look at it and say, boy, it's amazing how these people are eating all this garbage.

Just like we would look at the pigs. But those pigs themselves, they really enjoy it. They don't have any problem.

They don't have the same outlook on that that we have. But it's because the prodigal son had nothing better. You tell a person who's hungry, don't eat what the pigs are eating.

Well, he knows it's not good. He knows he can get sick. He knows it can cause so many problems.

But he still does it, because there's a hunger in him. He says, I've got to eat something. And you know, you and I would never eat from a garbage bin.

But we have seen children eat from garbage bins. What is it that drives them to a garbage bin, when you and I would never eat from there? It's hunger. It's a great hunger to satisfy a need in the body, which is not being satisfied any other way.

But once that prodigal son came to his father's house and started eating all that good food on the table, see how all of a sudden his hunger for all that other stuff disappeared. And if we were as hungry as those little boys who eat from the garbage bins, we would eat that too. You see in these railway stations, some of the poorer stations in India, how little poor beggars, they eat the scraps of what people have thrown out from their leaves, which they've already eaten.

Now we'd never do it. We'd think, even if I'm hungry, I won't do it. Well, you will.

Hunger is such a tremendous force that it'll drive you to eat from a garbage bin. It'll drive you to eat the leftovers of other people. It'll drive you to eat one day what the pigs are eating.

If that's the only way you can satisfy your hunger. In fact, the Bible, you read about mothers who killed their children and cooked them and ate them. Can you believe it? Can you imagine a mother killing her children and cooking the child and eating it? Hunger is a tremendous power and the flesh is like that.

It's got a tremendous hunger and goes for all this stuff. But like I said, when the prodigal son got something better to satisfy his stomach, the other hunger disappeared. And we have to say that it's because we haven't really found a satisfying life in Christ that we hanker after these other things.

It's true. If you face up to it, then there's some hope. Lord, the reason I hanker after all these things is because I haven't found a satisfying life in Christ.

I believe that's the reason why a lot of people hanker after money. I believe all of us need money to live and we must look for jobs, good jobs. That's why right from the beginning of CSC, I've always encouraged young people to get the highest education possible and get the best job possible.

We're not against all that. I taught my own children to do that. But there's a lot of difference between that and hankering after money and money and money, more and more and more.

It destroys people. It's because they think there's a hunger. You know, there's a hunger in all of our bodies for more comfort and more pleasure.

Now, to tell you quite frankly, I don't know why the Bible says the love of money is evil, except that I've seen the results of it in many places and why God has put money and God as opposites. To my human reason, money doesn't look evil like committing adultery with somebody or killing someone. In no stretch of my imagination can I equate running after money with killing somebody.

And that's why you have, you know, what's known as the prosperity gospel, which teaches that you can have God and money also. You can rather love God and money, which is totally wrong. I believe that God gives us enough for our needs if we seek his kingdom first, so he may take us through periods of testing.

I'm just using that as an example. Just like it says here, don't love the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

Now, many people don't understand that. That you can't love the world and love the Father. But that's a very clear contrast, which is never mentioned in the Old Testament.

It's exactly the same type of contrast in the use of the word love. In Luke chapter 16, in Luke 16 and verse 13 it says, no servant can serve two masters. He will either hate the one and love the other, or else be devoted to one and despise the other.

And there the two masters are God and wealth. So, here it speaks about being devoted to one and loving one. And not just not loving the other.

It says you've got to hate the other. So, Jesus spoke about God and wealth as opposites. God and the world as opposites.

A lot of things I look out in the world and I say, what's wrong in a lot of things in the world? And a lot of Christians pursue those things. Well, to tell you honestly, I don't know the reasons for all that. But through many, many years, I have discovered that God's word is true.

Even if I can't understand it. There are a lot of things that our children can't understand. Why we as parents tell them, don't do that.

Don't play around with that. I think a little two-year-old won't even know why you can't play around with a plug point. It's dangerous that they don't understand it.

You know, the hole in a plug point is so tempting for a two-year-old. They don't understand the seriousness of it. And I suppose many times we're like that.

We don't understand the seriousness of a lot of things. But if there's a sensible two-year-old, and that's rare to find, but if some sensible two-year-old will just say, OK, Dad says that, that's right. And I say that's all I can say.

God says you can't love Him and the world. OK, I believe that. God says you can't love Him and money.

I believe that. So when we talk about love for Jesus Christ, you know, if you hear a negative message, don't love the world, don't love money, it's very difficult to do that, because there's something in us that draws us to these things. So, I've used an illustration in the past of how, you know, there's a girl who is

madly in love with a boy, and he's not a good boy.

If it's not a good boy, and the parents are always telling her to give it up, give it up, give it up, give it up, and she doesn't give it up, and no matter what the parents try to do, she doesn't give it up. And there's always secretly, when nobody's looking or listening, she phones her up, phones him up, and, you know, this is how a lot of believers love money and the world. You know, they hear, don't love it, don't love it, don't love it, don't love it, and it's like this girl being told not to love this boy whom she's madly in love with.

There's so many stories we've heard of girls who just secretly made contact with boys like that, and finally get married to them as well. And all the exhortations of the parents don't seem to succeed. Supposing this girl, one day suddenly, she drops this man, and the parents are delighted, and they say, what happened? We tried to stop you from, told you to give him up for so long, and you didn't do it.

What happened now all of a sudden without our telling you did it? You know what happened? She found somebody better. She found someone more handsome and richer and kinder and better, and then what happens? Even when the other person calls her, she doesn't want to talk to him. What a deliverance! This is called the expulsive power of a new affection.

A new love can push out of your heart another love which you tried so hard to give up, and which no matter how much you tried, you couldn't give up, because there was something in you drawing towards it, because you didn't have anything better. So, you know, if we are honest and say, Lord, I haven't really seen your beauty. I've only heard about you.

Go back to this illustration I used about this girl who was madly in love with a boy who was a bit of a rascal. The parents don't want her to be attached to him. And if the parents just tell him, listen, you know, there is a wonderful boy out there, and tell him, keep on telling her stories about this wonderful boy, and you know, you really should fall in love with him.

It's just up in the air. She doesn't know anything about, I mean, she's got to see him and get to know him. And boy, that's more than hearing the parents say, there's a boy out there, you know, in that other street, or who lives the other side of town, and you really got to meet him, and he's all the good qualities you tell the girl.

It may all be true, but she's not impressed. So, very often a lot of Christian preaching has that effect on us. We hear all these wonderful things about Jesus, and we say, well, if you really get Him, you don't need all this.

It's all stories. We go away from the meeting and we're still attracted to the old boy, to that old chap. But if one day you meet this new boy, all of a sudden the other love is gone.

I really believe that's the answer. And that's why the New Testament speaks about love, not just the New Testament. In the Old Testament it was a command, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind.

And it was a very difficult thing to do. Why was it difficult? Because they didn't know what God was like. Very often they had this fear, you know, a God who got a person killed because he was picking up sticks on the Sabbath day, or killed a son who was rebellious to the parents, or killed a woman caught in adultery.

Life under the law, they didn't really know what God was like, because the whole purpose of the law was to teach people the seriousness of sin. It's not that God has started loving sin now. I believe He hates sin just as much today as in the Old Testament.

I wouldn't say more. He hates it just as much because He never changes. Even a million years ago God hated sin because that's His nature.

He doesn't hate sin anymore or now. He didn't hate sin anymore in the Old Testament time. But the full revelation of God came through Jesus Christ.

And that's why one of the things that Jesus said was, I have revealed Father, I have revealed your name to them, John 17. I have made known to them that you are a Father. And why is the death of Christ given us in such detail and such explanation as to how much He suffered and how much He died? Because that is the way in which our senses are stirred to realize that somebody loved me enough to die for me when I didn't even want Him.

And the Bible says in 1 John chapter 4, 1 John 4 verse 19, we love Him because He first loved us. So the basis of our love is that He first loved us. So if you want your love for Jesus to grow more, you have to understand how much He loved you more.

The more you understand how much He loved you, the more you love Him. I mean, you may love somebody who did a small favor for you, like say somebody who got admission in a college for you, when it was difficult to get admission for your son. Yeah, you love that person.

But somebody else who risked his life to save you, maybe your son was kidnapped and he went and risked his life and fought against those kidnapers and delivered your son. I think you love that man a little more, because that man did more. Why is it you love the other person less? You say, well, college admission, that's not a great thing.

This one saved my life or saved my son's life. So, the measure in which we understand how much Jesus loved us, that's going to determine how much you love Him. So I'd say, if you love Jesus so little that you're always drawn to the world, what am I going to tell you? Am I going to tell you, don't love the world, don't love the world, don't love the world? Well, I say, you haven't really seen how much Jesus loved you.

In fact, I believe that's one of the first things that right from the beginning of our Christian life, we should meditate on and let our hearts be gripped by. I remember when I was a young Christian, I didn't know much about all these things, but I think one big advantage I had was that most of the time, I was, in the early days of my Christian life, I was alone, usually without any believers around me, on a ship most of the time, and used to travel around, and I wouldn't be meeting the same believers. I couldn't really, I really didn't become a part of a local church, in a sense, for three, four years after I was saved.

And I think, when I was saved, I was for a short time, but then most of the time I was out, and that really helped me, because I didn't get brainwashed with all the doctrines that people hear in meetings. I think if I had gone to a lot of boring meetings, I would have just got fed up with Christianity. But because I was alone, I sort of developed my own theology of understanding what Jesus was like, and knowing him from the Bible.

And I think God allowed that. And I'm very thankful for it, because I used to meditate a lot in those days on the cross. I didn't understand the deeper meanings of the cross, like I shared the other day about Jesus

being forsaken by the Father, and losing fellowship.

I didn't understand all that. I didn't understand all that for maybe nearly thirty years after I was converted. And I don't think those are the things that stir us initially.

Initially, we are stirred by the fact that Jesus suffered physically. And that's why that is described in detail in all the Gospels, because that's where we begin. And death, that cruel death is such a terrible thing that if we even just meditate on that, it will produce in us the love for Jesus.

Because we have the Holy Spirit cooperating with us in this one area to really make us love Jesus. So if you haven't meditated sufficiently on the cross and the physical sufferings of Christ, I would encourage you to do it. Think of how much he suffered for you, and think of why he would do it.

Why would he do it? And did he have to do all that in order to win me and deliver me from sin? Yes, he had to. And the more you understand his love, the more you'll be able to love him. And I think the other thing that helped me very early in my Christian life was to have a sense of what is going to matter in eternity.

I think that's also very important. Everything that you look at and see in the world, how much is this going to matter in eternity? I'm not saying therefore you neglect it. For example, some of you are students and you're studying and you say, well studies are not going to matter in eternity, so I neglect it.

Now don't misunderstand me. I mean if you were going to enter into eternity tomorrow, I'd say, forget your studies, brother. But you may not enter into eternity for another 50 years.

I don't know when Jesus is going to come. And if you're not going to enter into eternity for 50 years, your studies now are going to matter. Otherwise you'll be begging on the streets.

So it's not going to matter in eternity, but we don't know when we're going to enter into eternity. And therefore we've got to work harder. What is the purpose of studying? It's in order to get a job, to support ourselves so that we don't become dependent on others, we don't become beggars.

And so, I understand what I'm saying in the right context, but to see things from the perspective of eternity, without going into a fanatical extreme, and in other words, you know, I can understand if somebody is going to have a fight with me over some little earthly thing, I say, brother, take it, I'm not interested, I'm not going to have a fight with you. Because it's not worth having that fight with that person over some silly thing like that. So, when we think about... I'm thinking now particularly about human opinion, man's opinion.

I'm not thinking of studies or material things or clothes or... I'm thinking particularly now about man's opinion, the worklessness of man's opinion in eternity. That is another thing you really have to meditate on. You know, the reason I say meditate is because it's got to sink into you.

It's got to sink into your heart that man's opinion is worthless. And I don't know whether it has sunk into all of our hearts, because, I'll tell you the reason why we don't love Jesus enough is because we're so concerned about man's opinion. What does that person think of me, or what do the other people in the church think of me, or what do the other people at my workplace think of me? And do they think I'm odd or peculiar? You know, when I was saying this morning about the amount of immorality there is among young people nowadays, I'm amazed at what I hear is going on in particularly residential colleges nowadays.

It's absolutely evil. And lot of these boys and girls are going to some so-called evangelical, even Pentecostal churches in Bangalore. Big ones, they go to.

And then, you know, these big churches, nobody is there to shepherd these young people, nobody is there to watch out for each of them. These people are living in sin and nobody knows it. Why is it? For example, I can understand why a young man goes after immorality.

There is a drive in him. But why does a young girl go after an immoral relationship with a boy? There is no drive in a girl for that. In fact, she's got much more to lose.

Why does a girl go for an immoral relationship with a boy when she's got so much to lose in it? I'll tell you. It's because she cares for people's opinions. What will people say? And all the other girls say, Oh, come on, all the boys also, they know how to deceive the girls.

And they say, Oh, come on, don't be so old-fashioned. And then you don't want a reputation as old-fashioned. That's why they make, that's why girls are sort of compelled to dress in the way all the models and all dress on TV and advertisements.

They say, come on, what's this? The old-passion dress. And that 16-year-old girl is terribly disturbed that she's called old-passion. And she can't stand it.

And she loses her love for Jesus because she's concerned about something that will have no value in eternity. What is that? The opinion of some of her colleagues. So, it's very important to meditate on what is this person's opinion going to matter in eternity? Nothing.

But if I follow this way of trying to become popular and accepted, I'm going to destroy myself. I'm going to stop loving Jesus altogether. And I believe a lot of young people, their love for Jesus is gone because there's this tremendous pressure to conform to the standards around us.

Because otherwise you look odd. They laugh at you. We can't stand people laughing at us.

I'll tell you something. If you want to follow Jesus, you've got to be willing to have people laugh at you, mock at you, and in our place of work. I know they did that to me when I was in the ship.

They'd mock at me and laugh at me and call me all types of names. And I said, fine. And, you know, one of the good things is that the Lord was so merciful that He never allowed me to be tested beyond my ability.

Every now and then I'd get fellowship with believers and that preserved me. So, fellowship is important. You can't live all alone.

You need fellowship. But, you know, I mean, today you come to a church where you're challenged all the time to live for Christ, to deny yourself, to live a holy life. I never had a church like that in my younger days.

And that's why I say that in my case, fellowship wasn't going to be a big help. If I'd gone to some dead church where they just preached boring Christianity, I'd just get turned off. But when you have the opportunity to be in a good church, fellowship is a very good thing.

To be in fellowship with those who have a fervent love for Jesus. Those are the people who should be your best friends. Not the... You know, in every church there are those who are in the core, who are

devoted to Jesus.

And then there are those who are on the periphery. Every church has got a peripheral group of people who just come along and they're casual. They're always talking about useless things and worldly things.

Now, that's the type of people you keep companionship with. Well, that's the type of person you're going to become over a period of years. And don't think you'll be able to resist it.

Because it says in 1 Corinthians 15, don't be deceived. Verse 33. Verse 33.

Bad company will ruin, corrupt good morals. So, if you've got a good moral standard in your life and you keep company with people who are bad, it's going to corrupt everything in your life. Sure.

So, don't think that bad company will not affect you. Because it does affect you. The type of company you keep... I mean, even in the world they say that.

The type of company you keep will show me what type of person you are. So, that's one thing which we have to really seek to be free from. And you know, when we are young, I don't know whether you have this... See, nowadays there are so many things in which we can keep ourselves occupied, particularly computers and internet and all that.

There are a lot of dangers there too. But one of the dangers of all these things that my growing up years, television was almost unheard of. I think it was invented only in the 1950s when I was a teenager.

So, we didn't have television. I am very thankful to tell you honestly. Because there is so much in television which is so attractive.

I don't mean evil things. So many other things which are so attractive which can be a tremendous waste of time. Good things.

But which are not necessary. I mean, it gives you information. For example, the study of science.

You go to something like Discovery Channel or History Channel. There are things you can... Very interesting. You see once in a while, OK, but to just keep on, there is no end to the accumulation of knowledge.

And you know the result of this. The result of this is, today we have a generation of people who don't know the Bible, who are not studying the Bible. It's true.

It's one of the greatest griefs of my heart that we have young people who are not serious students of the Bible. Because they got so many other distractions. I want to say, be careful in your younger days.

Devote yourself to the study of the scriptures. Because that will increase your love for Jesus too. See, I am just giving you some practical helps.

Devote yourself to the study of the scriptures, the New Testament and you know, we have so many things to help us today in the study of the New Testament. We have a whole lot of tapes available on number of Old Testament books, New Testament books. Study the scriptures.

Read books that help you to understand scripture. I got a letter the other day from a... last week from a Roman Catholic old man who... I haven't met him yet. But he said he had been living abroad and he came

back to India couple of years ago and his sister was an old nun who died, been a Roman Catholic nun all her life and who died recently in a convent somewhere in Kerala and he went there to the convent and asked them, what was my sister like? And he said, your sister had such a godly good testimony here, highly respected.

How did she spend her days? And they said, she used to read most of the time she'd read the Bible and she'd read one other book, some Christian book. So he said, can I see that book? And that book was Beauty for Ashes. And he'd never seen it, never heard of me.

He took that book. Imagine this old nun was reading it along with the Bible and reading it many many times. So he took it back to Delhi where he lives and he read it so many times and he went to a Christian book shop and discovered some other books of mine and he wrote to me that, I have read 18 books of yours many times over.

Can you see the hunger there? See, we have them all available here and I wonder if how many people have even read through them once. Okay. Now this chap says, he says, from the month of March onwards I've been wanting to come and meet you because I want to be born again.

I don't know how to do it and I want to travel to Bangalore. I inquired in the month of April and you were not there. I inquired in the month of May I wanted to come for the conference.

I was told conference is only for some people and I couldn't come. Now I sent you this letter by courier and I've got my cousin, nephew there to ring you up and as soon as I know that you are there I'm going to book my ticket and come to Bangalore because I want to be born again. Now, let me ask you, do you think God would probably do a little more for somebody like that than for you if you don't have that type of hunger after Him? How many people would want to travel and take a ticket and come all the way from Delhi to Bangalore just to know how to be born again? See, God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him and like the old saying, familiarity breeds content.

We can get so familiar with certain things that we don't value them anymore. Just like that with the Jews. Jesus said, the Queen of Sheba travelled all the way from wherever Sheba is, many hundreds of miles to come and see Solomon.

And Jesus said, someone greater than Solomon is here, in your midst. And you don't value Him. So, God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him and He's got no respect of persons.

If He finds a Roman Catholic hungry after Him, He'll meet with him. And if He sees somebody else who's got all his doctrines right and says, well, I'm not a person who worships Mary and all that, but doesn't have a hunger after God, He's just going to miss out on what God has. So, if you, anything that takes away your hunger for God, you must give up.

I want to tell you that. If you find watching a lot of television takes away your hunger for God, give it up. You read the story of David Wilkerson and the cross and the switchblade, and you know that whole story, the foundation for that story was that one day when he was watching television, as a young 28-year-old man, God said, stop seeing that.

And he decided, he'd only spent half an hour watching news or something. This is when, 1960 or something, and when television didn't have any filthy programs and he decided that that half an hour that he'd spent watching television every day, he'd spend in prayer. It's just a little discipline.

And it was in one of those times of prayer when God put a little burden in his heart to go up to New York to try and help some of these boys, young boys who were gangsters. And from that came a whole ministry. But it came out of a little discipline where he saw something is taking away my hunger and love for Jesus.

I don't know what it is in your life, it may not be that, it may be something else, it may be your job, it may be, you know, we should work hard in our job. But I personally believe, from the time I became a Christian, I lost ambition to go to the top. Because if I wanted to go to the top, I'd have to sacrifice my Christianity, not compromise, but be devoted to my job.

And I was not going to be devoted to my job. I would do my job faithfully, do the minimum necessary for the salary they were paying me. Because every job is such that you can spend as many hours as you like.

That's up to you. But something else has to be cut out. And I decided that I'm not going to do that.

Before that, before I was converted, that was everything for me. But afterwards I said, I want to be devoted to Jesus. And you know, you see how people who do science and research, they're always a challenge to me.

They're so devoted to their research. They sit late at night in the laboratories and all, and they're determined to get to the bottom of something. When you're devoted to something, you forget about everything else.

There are people who neglect their families to do research. The people are so impressed with computers that they neglect their families. We call them computer widows, we used to call them.

They're so taken up with their, the people who are devoted to their jobs. But very often it is for some satisfaction. I'm not talking about survival.

I mean, if your job is such that you have to work so long to survive, that's another thing. But if you're giving more to your job because it's not survival, it's a question of, you want to get on in the world, and get on, and be somebody big, and earn much more, and all that. Actually, you better forget about devotion to Jesus.

It's not possible. You have to make a choice. Is it this boyfriend or that boyfriend? It's the same old question.

So, devotion to Christ is similar to the devotion a research scientist has for his research, and a businessman has to his business. His mind is always thinking of how to expand his business, or like a boy and a girl who are in love with each other, always thinking, where shall we meet next, and what shall we do, and how can we spend the time, and etc. See, there is a, we have the ability to be devoted, and we make a choice what to be devoted to.

And that's where we make the mistake. God says, I am the one you should be devoted to. And the world is full of people who made the wrong choice.

And from this world, God has picked out a few people, that's you and me. And God has to love him. And the sadness in God's heart is, not that the worldly people don't love him, but the people who claim to be his children are not devoted to him.

The worldly people are devoted to their God, but his children are not devoted to him. And that is a form of idolatry. You know, if you really examine your life, many of you may discover, dear brothers and sisters, you've got your feet in two boats, that are going in opposite directions.

And you've got to decide to put both your feet into one boat. That's another way of saying what Jesus said to the church in Laodicea, you be cold or you be hot. Don't be lukewarm.

I mean, live all out for the world and live like that. Or live all out for God. That's the only way.

And you can hear all the pep talks you like on being devoted to Jesus, and you won't be devoted. Unless you make a decision, you're going to put both your feet in one boat, and from now on, you're just going to go in one direction. See, the other thing that helps us to love Jesus is what we read in Luke chapter 7. In Luke chapter 7 we read the story of this woman who anointed the feet of Jesus.

We know how she was a prostitute, she was a sinful woman. And she had taken the money which she earned as a prostitute and poured it at the feet of Jesus. Simon the Pharisee, in whose house Jesus was eating the dinner, said, hey, how does this holy man accept this ointment bought with harlot money? In fact, there was a law in the Old Testament in Deuteronomy 23 that harlot money must never be given to God.

And he said, no, this can't be a prophet. I thought he was a prophet, that's why I invited him home, verse 39, but he's not a prophet. And Jesus answered him, saying, Simon, I've got something to say to you.

He said, there was a money lender who had two debtors. One owed him 500 silver pieces, and the other 50. Neither of them could pay up, and so the money lender cancelled both debts.

Which of the two will be more grateful? Or who will love him more? Who will love him more? That's the question. You gave me no water for my feet, but she's wet my feet with her tears. You gave me no kiss, but she's been kissing my feet.

You didn't anoint my head with oil, but she anointed my feet with perfume. For this reason I say to you, her sins which are many have been forgiven. It's like saying, because she loved much.

In other words, I know that she has been forgiven much. How do you know? Because she loved so much. That's what Jesus is saying.

Here is the proof, that she has had many sins forgiven, because she is loving so much. She took her entire life savings and poured it out at my feet. And the other fellow, how do we know that he was forgiven very little? Because his love is so little.

So what do we learn from this? That our love for Jesus is dependent on what? Tell me. Any other answers? How much we've been forgiven? Right. How much we realize we've been forgiven.

Is there anybody here who has been forgiven very little? Anybody among perhaps the young people, brought up in good homes from childhood? Some of them born into the church. Can you say you've been forgiven very little? There is nobody. Everybody has been forgiven much, but some think they have been forgiven little.

How do we know that? Because they love so little. But some realize they've been forgiven so much. How do we know that? Boy! See their love for Jesus.

So you see, we need to ask God to show us, how much he has forgiven us. We don't really need. You just got to exercise your memory.

You don't need to ask God for that. Just exercise your memory, and see how much you've been forgiven, forgiven, forgiven. That also helps us to forgive other people.

See these people who love Jesus very little, they are very hard on others. What a lot of husbands there are, who are very hard on their wives, when they make some small mistake. Some small silly mistake, that a wife does concerning some earthly thing.

This husband, who thinks he has been forgiven very little, finds it very difficult to control his temper. It's usually some worthless earthly thing, leave alone eternity, it won't even matter next month. But, he's very upset.

Because he hasn't realized how much he's been forgiven by God, concerning much more serious things that he did. I'll tell you honestly, the thing that's helped me most in my life to forgive others, is to understand how much God's forgiven me, and how freely he forgave me. It's taught me to be merciful to all people.

And if you find it difficult to forgive somebody, here's the reason. If you don't love Jesus much, here's the reason. You feel that you have been forgiven very little.

But we've been forgiven a tremendous lot. And that's why you often hear me quoting 2nd Peter 1, that we should not forget our purification from our former sins. 2nd Peter in chapter 1, it says, having forgotten, verse 9, 2nd Peter 1, 9, speaks about those who forget their purification from their former sins.

Do you forget how much you've been forgiven? Then, you'll be blind, like that verse says. You'll be short-sighted. Short-sighted means, you can't see eternity's values.

You see only the next 50 years' values. You know how children are stupid. They don't see ahead for 50 years.

They usually see just today, tomorrow. As we grow older, we tend to look a little further. That's why children don't want to go to school.

I mean, the first day you put a child in the kindergarten, he doesn't want to go to school. He can't see the future. But, then you see that same boy, when he's in college, boy, he's studying on his own, and his parents always say, hey, get to bed, man.

They suddenly realize, they got to the future, but they're still short-sighted, because they're thinking only of a certain time. Or they get a job, they get a good job, and they're still short-sighted, because they think of only a short time. They don't think about eternity.

Is my life going to count? Am I going to live on earth in the way I should live? Why are they short-sighted? Because they've forgotten how much they have been forgiven. You know, when we are living in sin, and many of you have had that type of life, and you came to Christ and you were forgiven, what tremendous gratitude you had. But as time has gone on, and now as you look back over the last many years, it's been relatively free from those wicked old days.

And we begin to forget all those old days, how much we've been forgiven. And if we forget how much we've been forgiven, we love little. It's true.

That's why just as much as we must meditate on how much Jesus loved us, I would encourage all of you to meditate on all the wicked things that you did, frequently. Am I telling you to get condemned over them? No. No condemnation.

It's all forgiven. It's not a single sin that you have repented of, and confessed that it's not forgiven. However gross it may be, however evil it may be, it's cleansed.

But if you don't know it's cleansed, then don't meditate on it. You better first get sure that your assurance of being forgiven, cleansed in the blood of Jesus, is gone. But once you're sure, I'm sure, absolutely sure, that all my sins are cleansed in the blood of Christ, so I can meditate on them every day.

Because the more I understand how much He forgave me, the more I love Jesus. And not only that, I find another thing happens when I meditate on my own sins. I don't meditate on other people's sins so much.

I tell you, you husbands and wives who have a problem with each other, here's a simple bit of marriage counseling. Why do you meditate so much on your partner's sins? Because you don't meditate on your own. That's why.

Why not switch? Put the switch the other way from now on and start meditating on your own sins. And your wife will get a different husband, your husband will get a different wife. You won't be so impatient.

Do you know how impatient people are with each other for silly little things? Every, some small little thing, we jump, why you do that? Yeah, we have forgotten how much we've been forgiven. And I would encourage you to meditate on it. See, that woman, I mean, she was a prostitute.

But, you don't need to be a prostitute to know how much you've been forgiven. The apostle Paul said, once said this in Acts 23. He said, a remarkable testimony which I certainly don't have.

I don't know if any of you have. In verse 1, Brothers, I have lived with a good, perfectly good conscience before God right up to this day. What a testimony! Even that rich young ruler said that.

From my childhood I've kept, of course the standard was lower in those days. It was only the law. According to that they kept it.

And the same Paul says in 1 Timothy 1.15, I am the chief of sinners. I am the greatest sinner in the whole world. How did this man, who never committed adultery, never bore false witness, honored his father and mother, from childhood, kept all the commandments, better than probably all of us sitting here, could say at the end of his life, I feel I'm the greatest sinner of all.

Do you know how that was? Because, I'll tell you, the closer you come to God, the more you realize His holiness and how you see sin in far greater intensity than when you're far away. And you see a lot of sins which you don't see when you're far away from God. God is so holy that even the sinless angels have to cover their faces.

When we come close to Him, we see a lot of sins in us which we never see otherwise. And when you think you're okay, many of us may think, I'm okay, I'm a good Christian. That reminds me of the child who just learned the multiplication table and says, yeah, I know everything about mathematics now.

What has he learned? Up to twelve times multiplication table he's learned, he thinks he knows everything in math. And here's this PhD, post-doctoral studies math student saying, boy, he says, math is such a vast subject, I know almost nothing about it. See a different testimony from the seven-year-old and the twenty-five-year-old who is doing post-doctoral mathematics.

He feels he knows nothing. It's like that when you get close to God, you feel that, oh Lord, I know almost nothing. And how much sin there is in me, lot of things I never thought were sin before.

I want to say, dear brothers and sisters, if you're getting light only on the same old sins that you've always committed, you have to say there's no progress in your life. Progress means that we're really discovering new things, not every day, but at least every year. We're getting some light on something which we never got light on before.

We're getting closer to God. And I'll tell you, this is not by spending many hours on our knees and the Bible doesn't tell us to do that, but it does tell us to love Jesus. It's by keeping our heart devoted to Jesus.

So please remember these things and don't be satisfied with the good testimony you have in CFC or the good times of praise and worship we have on Sunday. Say, Lord, I'm thankful for all these, but these can all give me a deluded opinion of my own spirituality. The real test of my spirituality is in my secret life, how much do I love you? How much do I long to know you better? Anyway, that's a good beginning, what we've thought of.

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