

## GATE School of Ministry [DC] Bible Study Notes

Reach | Resource | Reform

**Module** : The Primacy of the Word of God

**Session 10** : First Love – Part 1

**Focus** : Love For God is Reflected By Love for His Word



Word to the World  
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The main business of the House of God is the Word of God – See Isaiah 2:1-5 and Micah 4:1-4. One's 'FIRST LOVE', biblically, is a love for God's Word (We will demonstrate this in our next session).

The greatest commandment given by the Lord is to love God and to love one another.

### Mat 22:37-39

36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"

38 And He said to him, "YOU SHALL **LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD** WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.'

38 "This is the great and foremost commandment.

39 "The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL **LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF**.'

John 13:34 "A **new commandment** I give to you, that you **love one another**, even as **I have loved you**, that you also love one another.

**[Aside Note:** The commandment to love one another progressed from 'as yourself' (Matt.22:39) to 'as I have loved you' (John 13:34)].

Your love for God is evidenced by your attitude towards His Word, specifically your level of obedience to His Word. Jesus said that if we love Him, we must do His commandments.

John 14:15 "If **you love Me**, you will **keep My commandments**."

The degree to which you are obedient to the commandments of God is the degree to which you love Him. There is no other yardstick by which to measure your love for God, except by how much you obey His commandments in His word.

The love of God is perfected within by you keeping His Word. The issues of loving God on the one hand, and keeping His Word on the other, are not two separate issues, but the one provides proof of the other.

### 1 John 2:4-5

4 The one who says, "**I have come to know Him**," **and does not keep His commandments**, is a liar, and the **truth is not in him**;

5 but whoever **keeps His word**, in him **the love of God has truly been perfected**. By this we know that we are in Him:

In John 14, Jesus indicates that the world will not see HIM, but we, His disciples, would be able to. How? He and His Father would make themselves known through His Word to those who obey it.

**John 14:19-26**

- 19 "After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you *will* see Me; because I live, you will live also.
- 20 "In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.
- 21 "He who **has My commandments and keeps them** **is the one who loves Me**; and he who loves Me will be loved by **My Father, and I will love him** and will **disclose Myself** to him."
- 22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?"
- 23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone **loves Me, he will keep My word**; and **My Father will love him, and *We will come to him and make Our abode with him.***

‘Having’ and ‘keeping’ the commandments of God positions you to access unique expressions of the love of the Father and Son (v.21), as well as being privy to certain disclosures of God of Himself to you.

Failure to love God by not loving and obeying His Word has deep implications on your attitude towards your brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ.

**1 John 5:2-3**

- 2 By this we know that **we love the children of God**, when **we love God** and **observe His commandments**.
- 3 For this is the **love of God**, that we **keep His commandments**; and His commandments are not burdensome.

Verse 2 suggests that one does not love the Body of Christ – the family of God – your brothers and sisters in Christ, when you demonstrate a lack of love for God by disobeying His Word. Loving God and His Word is not a personal or private matter per se, since disobedience to His commandments provide evidence of a lack of love for God, and this disobedience adversely affects the community of saints to which you belong (cf. the negative affect that the sin of Achan had on Israel’s success in warfare – Joshua 7).

Love for God is not defined as a positive emotional feeling of endearment toward God. It might include this, but this does not indicate the presence of love for God. Love for God is only measured in one way, viz. the extent of obedience to His Word.

**2 John 1:6** And **this is love**, that we **walk according to His commandments**. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should **walk in it**.

## PASSIONATE DELIGHT IN AND FOR THE WORD OF GOD

**DELIGHT** = **chephets** = desire, pleasure, to be inclined toward a thing, longing

To obey His Word, one must firstly DELIGHT in and BE PASSIONATE about His Word. To delight in His Word, one has to see the value of the Word and highly prioritise it. That which you esteem, you will love, and that which you love, you will obey.

### Blessings of DELIGHTING IN and LOVING God's Word

- 'Delight' Facilitates 'Obedience'

Psalm 119:35 Make me **walk in the path of Your commandments**, For **I delight in it**.

Job 23:12 "I have **not departed from the command of His lips**; **I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food**.

Note the reason that Job obeys God by 'not departing from the command' of God's lips, is because he has made a decision to 'treasure the Words of His mouth' - even as more essential than physical food. Your high estimation of His Words facilitates your obedience thereof.

God's commandments are not burdensome to the one who loves Him and His Word.

1 John 5: 3 For this is the **love of God**, that we **keep His commandments**; and His commandments are not burdensome.

### Deut. 30:8-20

- 8 "And you shall again **obey the LORD**, and **observe all His commandments** which I command you today.
- 9 "Then the LORD **your God will prosper you abundantly in all the work of your hand**, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your cattle and in the produce of your ground, for the LORD will again rejoice over you for good, just as He rejoiced over your fathers;
- 10 if you **obey the LORD** your God to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law, if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and soul.
- 11 "For **this commandment** which I command you today **is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach**.
- 12 "It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?'
- 13 "Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will cross the sea for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?'
- 14 "**But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it**.
- 15 "See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity;

- 16 in that I command you today to **love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments**, that you may live and multiply, and that the LORD your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it.
- 17 "But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them,
- 18 I declare to you today that you shall surely perish. You will not prolong *your* days in the land where you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess it.
- 19 "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants,
- 20 by **loving the LORD your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days**, that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."

Note how the following are all connected (verse 20): Loving God - Obeying His Voice - Holding fast to Him. Then the powerful statement; 'For this is your life'.

A blessing accompanies obedience – see verses 9, 10 and 16 above.

A curse accompanies disobedience – see verses 15, 17 and 18 above.

- **Delight in God's Word Empowers One to Endure Affliction**

**In the midst of adversity always ask yourself:**

1. **Is this trial a consequence of my personal disobedience?** If so, repent and obey. At times the very consequence of our disobedience can be used by God to get us to a place of more determined and resolute obedience to His Word.
2. **Is this trial a global initiative of God in His bid to accomplish strategic aspects of His will for the nation or a specific community of people?** (Cf. Elijah in the midst of the 3 year famine; or Israel in the times of the plagues of Egypt).
3. **Is this personal trial because of a Divine permittance by God to accomplish certain things within my life?** God may be wanting to perfect your obedience through your trial. Although Jesus was the Son of God, He LEARNED obedience by the things He suffered – see Heb. 5:8.

**Psalms 119:67** Before I was **afflicted** I went astray, But now **I keep Your word**.

**Psalms 119:71** It is **good for me that I was afflicted**, That **I may learn Your statutes**.

In these times of suffering and affliction, one must not doubt God's promises attendant with obedience and hence lose one's determination and will to continue to obey God.

**Job 6:10**

**NASB:** "But it is still my consolation, And I rejoice in unsparing pain, **that I have not denied the words of the Holy One.**

**CEV:** Then I would be comforted, knowing that **in all of my pain I have never disobeyed God.**

**ERV:** Then I would be comforted by this one thing: Even through all this pain, I never **refused to obey the commands of the Holy One.**

**NirV:** Then I'd still have one thing to comfort me. It would be that I **haven't said no to the Holy One's commands.** That would give me joy in spite of my pain that never ends.

**If for whatever reason, you suffer in trials and diverse difficulties, never lose your delight for God's Word.**

**Psalms 119:92**

If Your **law had not been my delight**, Then I would have perished in my affliction.

**Psalms 119:49-50**

**Remember the word** to Your servant, **In which You have made me hope. This is my comfort in my affliction, That Your word has revived me.**

**A Reminder** - Rehearse Session 3 in this series of teachings. Every Word or promise that one is exposed to will be tested in your life. You will go through many tests until the Word becomes incarnated in your life. Joseph was subjected to multiple tests by God, and all these were part of God's process of shaping and equipping him for readiness to fulfill his ultimate calling. Understand that your testing is because of the Word you hear.

**Psalms 105:19**

Until the time that **his word came to pass**, The **word of the LORD tested** him

**Rev. 1:9**

I, John, your brother and **fellow partaker in the tribulation** and kingdom and perseverance *which are* in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos **because of the word of God** and the testimony of Jesus.

Paul's 'thorn in the flesh', whatever this was, was allowed by God to keep him humble in view of the abundance of revelations given to him.

**2 Cor. 12:7-10**

7 Because of the **surpassing greatness of the revelations**, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me--to keep me from exalting myself!

8 Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me.

9 And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

10 Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

- DELIGHT in the WORD and by it's LIGHT you can WALK through times of 'Darkness'

Psalm 18:28 For You light my lamp; The LORD my God illumines my darkness.

Prov 20:27 The spirit of man is the lamp of the LORD, Searching all the innermost parts of his being.

Psalm 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

Prov. 6:23 For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light; And reproofs for discipline are the way of life

Psalm 19:8 The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.

Job 29:3 When His lamp shone over my head, And by His light I walked through darkness;

**Considering all of the above Scriptures, we may conclude the following:**

God's spirit communicates with the spirit of man. God communicated with Adam in the COOL or Ruach – spirit of the day. Your spirit is the place of reception of spiritual things or things of the Spirit. The words that God speaks are spirit and life. Spiritual intelligence is a function of the mind of the spirit and not the mind of the soul. The mind of the unrenewed soul that is out of sync with a renewed spirit, fails to comprehend spiritual things. The mind of the soul must be brought into alignment with the mind of the spirit.

The entrance or opening of the Word brings light and understanding to our spirits. This Word, i.e. the 'commandments of God' enlightens the eyes and brings illumination to our daily short terms steps. This lamp of the Lord is also the spirit of man. What man needs is for God to light his spirit. God does this by sending His word to you through the ones He sends and positions in your life as spiritual fathers. They speak the Word, decoding its mystery, revealing its meaning and thus providing entrance into God's Will and Way for you. This lamp – a word-illuminated spirit – must be over your head, i.e. over and dictating to the mind of the soul – influencing and conditioning our mentality, viewpoint, decisions and behaviour .

But also the Word LIGHTS our path – long term direction. Teaching or doctrine is the light. By this light we can walk through darkness.

**Psalm 43:3** O send out Your light and Your truth, let them lead me; Let them bring me to Your holy hill And to Your dwelling places.

- Prosperity and Success comes to him who Delights in the Word

**Psalm 1:1-3**

- 1 How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!
- 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.
- 3 He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers.

In verse one, the terms “WALK”, “STAND” and “SIT” encapsulate the entirety of one’s life.

The man who is blessed is one who does not do certain things (verse 1) simply because he does another thing, viz. delighting in the Word of God.

His capacity to overcome wicked counsel, sinful paths and scoffing seats is empowered by the subject and focus of his delight, which is the WORD OF GOD. That which you delight in could be your empowerment over that which is designed to defeat you.

‘Delight’ is evidenced by consistent meditation. The man who intensely delights in the Word is likened unto a tree planted next to streams of water. This analogy is intended to demonstrate the powerful effects and benefits of delighting in the Word.

**The benefit is threefold:**

1. **Fruitfulness** relevant to any season in God.
  2. **No Barrenness** – Leaf does not wither. Leaves wither in Autumn or when the plant decays. Leaf in this context is symbolic of prosperity amidst adversity. He lives immune to the external negative, natural environments. He does not evade the crisis in which he is located, but he is sustained through it by God.
  3. **Whatever he does prospers.**
- Delighting in His Word is an Expression of your FEAR and Reverence for God.

Your fear of God is evidenced by your delight in His Word.

**Psalm 112:1** Praise the LORD! How blessed is the man who fears the LORD, Who greatly delights in His commandments.

- Delight in His Word as You would if you Had Access to Unquantifiable Financial Riches:

**Psalm 119:14** I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, As much as in all riches.

**Psalm 119:162** I rejoice **at Your word**, As one who finds **great spoil**.

**Psalm 19:10** They are more **desirable than gold**, yes, than much **fine gold**; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.

**Psalm 119:72** The **law of Your mouth** is **better** to me than **thousands of gold and silver pieces**.

- Delighting in His Word ensures you will not Forget His Word. His Word is forgotten when the principles of His Word are not upheld in your life as principles to live by.

**Psalm 119:16** I shall **delight in Your statutes**; I shall **not forget Your word**.

- Delighting in the Principles of the Word is Access to Inheriting Them.

**Psalm 119:111** I have **inherited Your testimonies forever**, For they are the **joy of my heart**.

Your total inheritance in God is bound up in His Word.

**Acts 20:32** "And now I commend you to God and to the **word of his grace**, which is able to build *you* up and to **give you the inheritance** among all those who are sanctified.

- Delighting in the Word will naturally result in it being dominant in your thoughts and meditation

**Psalm 119:97** O how **I love Your law!** It is my **meditation all the day**.

**Psalm 1: 2** But **his delight** is in the law of the Lord, And in His law **he meditates** day and night

- Delighting in His Word is Evidenced by it Being Assimilated into the Entirety of One's Life – and this Provides Proof that you are Natured after the Nature of God.

**Jeremiah 15:16** **Your words were found and I ate them**, And Your words became for me **a joy and the delight of my heart**; For **I have been called by Your name**, O LORD God of hosts.

'Name' here speaks of 'nature'.

**BBE:** But to me your **word is a joy**, making my heart glad; for I am **named by your name**, O Lord God of armies.



- Delighting in the Word is an absolutely Satisfying and Pleasurable Experience:

**Psalm 19:10** ... **Sweeter also than honey** and the drippings of the honeycomb.

**Ezekiel 3:1-3**

- 1 Then He said to me, "Son of man, eat what you find; **eat this scroll**, and go, speak to the house of Israel."
- 2 So I opened my mouth, and He **fed me this scroll**.
- 3 He said to me, "Son of man, feed your stomach and fill your body with this scroll which I am giving you." Then I ate it, and it **was sweet as honey in my mouth**.

The Word may be sweet to the taste but it is a bitter process to internalise it and assimilate it fully into ones being, making it an essential part of who you are. **This requires obedience as you go through the process of obeying the Word of God.**

**Rev. 10:9-10**

- 9 So I went to the angel, telling him to give me the little book. And he said to me, "Take it and eat it; **it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey.**"
- 10 I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and in my mouth it was sweet as honey; and when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter.

Revelation and Truth can be pleasant to the mouth. It has an appeal to it. We are drawn to it. But at times, to implement it might be a bitter experience as you die to your flesh and your own will in a bid to please God.

- Delight to DO HIS will because you have stored up His Word and Will as a delight within your heart.

**Inscribe His Word upon Your heart:**

**Jer 31:33** "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put **My law within them and on their heart I will write** it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

**Psa 37:31** The **law of his God is in his heart**; His **steps do not slip**.

**2 Cor. 3:1-3** Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some, letters of commendation to you or from you? You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men; being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, **written** not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but **on tablets of human hearts**.

**Psalm 40:7-8**

- 7 Then I said, "Behold, I come; **In the scroll of the book it is written of me.**  
 8 **I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your Law is within my heart."**

God's will in each of our lives is embedded within His word – "In the scroll of the book it is written of me". As we love His Word and store up His law and commandments within our hearts, there will come a DELIGHT in the exaction of His purposes and intentions.

Also, like Jesus discovered prophetic scriptures of Himself in the Word of God – we too – will find confirmation of specific details of various paths of obedience in which God wants us to walk into – See Luke 4 below.

**Luke 4:15-22**

- 15 And He *began* teaching in their synagogues and was praised by all.  
 16 And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read.  
 17 And the **book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him.** And **He opened the book** and found the place where it was written,  
 18 "THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED,  
 19 TO PROCLAIM THE FAVOURABLE YEAR OF THE LORD."  
 20 And **He closed the book**, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him.  
 21 And He began to say to them, **"Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."**  
 22 And all were speaking well of Him, and wondering at the gracious words which were falling from His lips; and they were saying, "Is this not Joseph's son?"

**John 4:34** Jesus said to them, "My **food is to do the will of Him** who sent Me and to accomplish His work.

**NEVER LOSE YOUR LOVE FOR GOD'S WORD****Psalm 119:47-48**

- 47 I shall **delight in Your commandments, Which I love.**  
 48 And I shall **lift up my hands to Your commandments, Which I love;** And I will meditate on Your statutes.

**Psalm 119:96-97**

- 96 I have seen a limit to all perfection; **Your commandment is exceedingly broad.**  
 97 **O how I love Your law!** It is my meditation all the day.

**Psalm 119:127-131**

- 127 Therefore **I love Your commandments** Above gold, yes, above fine gold.  
 128 Therefore I esteem right all *Your* precepts concerning everything, I hate every false way.  
 129 **Your testimonies are wonderful**; Therefore **my soul observes them**.  
 130 The unfolding of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.  
 131 **I opened my mouth wide and panted**, For **I longed for Your commandments**.

**Psalm 119:159-160**

- 159 **Consider how I love Your precepts**; Revive me, O LORD, according to Your lovingkindness.  
 160 The sum of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting.

Let us conclude by quoting Derek Prince:

*.... it is impossible to overestimate, or overemphasise, the importance of the place of God's Word in the life of the Christian believer. Let me present these truths to you in a direct and personal way: the keeping of God's Word is the supreme distinguishing feature which should mark you out from the world as a disciple of Christ. It is the test of your love for God. It is the cause of God's love and favour toward you. It is the way that Christ will manifest Himself to you. It is the way that God the Father and God the Son will come into your life and make their home with you. (John 14:23).*

*Let me put it to you in this way. Your attitude towards God's Word is your attitude towards God Himself. You do not love God more than you love His Word. You do not obey God more than you obey His Word. You do not honour God more than you honour His Word. You do not have more room in your heart and life for God than you have for His Word.*

*Do you want to know how much God means to you? You can easily find out. Just ask yourself, how much does God's Word mean to me? The answer to the second question is the answer also to the first. God means as much to you as His Word means to you – just that much, and no more.*

*[Source: Prince, D. (1986) Foundation Series – Volume One; Thomas Nelson Publishers; pages 27-28]*

To Be Continued.

### **QUESTIONS AND ISSUES FOR PERSONAL REVIEW AND GROUP DISCUSSION**

1. How is your love for God determined or measured?
  2. Consider how your passionate delight in God's Word facilitates your obedience of the Word.
  3. How are we to make sense of our times of affliction in reference to our love for and understanding of God's Word or promise to us?
  4. What are some of the blessings attendant with delighting in God's Word?
  5. Jesus discovered aspects of His Father's will for His life through His reading and study of God's Word. Explain this statement from the Scriptures.
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