

WEEK FOUR: REMEMBER WHO YOU LOVE

Statement...in class, we are seeking practical ways to get our lives back from a crazy world and to find FIND MORE OF GOD. There is nothing, absolutely nothing, that brings us more of God than loving him. Loving God for who He is and letting God love us. It sounds so basic, obvious: to love God! It is simple and yet it's complicated. Why? Because we are complicated! Our loyalties are divided, our wills are conflicted, and we often don't know WHO WE ARE or WHAT WE WANT.

DON'T MAKE IT COMPLICATED...practice loving him. Start your day saying "GOD, I LOVE YOU"-not just ONCE but MANY TIMES. Don't complicate it or stage it. Recall how Jesus related to his Disciples: talking, laughing, and sharing life together. Make Jesus your heart's 1st love. Instead of loving him, we keep our distance. We only let him love us when we stop pretending to be in charge. Grasp it: an eternal/merciful God loves you. He doesn't have to love us, yet he chooses to love us.

IN LOVE WITH ONE WHO LOVES ME...the way some Christians act, you would think Jesus came to make us miserable. The image many people have of God makes them SICK/DYSFUNCTIONAL. God sent Jesus to show us how much we are loved. Draw near to God; let him love you; pray your heart out. When we lose sight of Jesus, faith gets tedious. Loving Jesus is our destiny: it's not just admiring his words but loving the man himself. Turning our hearts toward him in love opens souls to receive him like no other grace/practice we have discussed.

AVAILABLE TO THOSE WE LOVE...loving God is a DAILY PRACTICE: we actively and intentionally love him. Start with your soul's relationship with God. The more we love him, the more we experience him. Part of it has to do with God's nature; part of it has to do with us. We don't GIVE OUR HEARTS to just anyone or give access to the deep places in our souls to idle acquaintances. When SOMEONE TRULY LOVES US, we make OURSELVES AVAILABLE to them. God FEELS THE SAME WAY.

START WITH THINGS WE LOVE...grace is unmerited; God's love is available to all. However, INTIMACY WITH GOD, is different. There is no spiritual practice equivalent to TURNING OUR HEARTS TO GOD IN LOVE. Start with something you love: SUNLIGHT ON THE OCEAN, A BELOVED DOG, FAVORITY SONG, A FRIEND, SOMEONE YOU LOVE. The next step is to think, "GOD IS THE CREATOR OF EVERYTHING I LOVE" Your heart naturally opens to God. You throw your faith A LIFELINE: everything wonderful in your life is his gift.