

## **First Love**

Who was your first love? Who is your first love now? What is “first love” anyway?

If we all take a stroll down memory lane, we can probably think back to a time in our lives when we felt the tugs in our hearts for that special person. Our feelings ran away with our hearts, and we knew we cared for someone that went beyond merely liking them. We fell in love or what we felt to be love for that person. Even now, if we hear a certain song or other stimulus, suddenly we are fifteen again.

Most would agree that our first experience was really special and laid a foundation of our understanding of what love is. Commonly this event occurs during our teenage years and lasts for most of High School. This can also have a negative impact as well if there was heartache involved over a breakup. Sometimes these feelings can last a lifetime.

These types of “first loves” leave memories in our brains and sometimes in our hearts. They have influence in becoming extensions of ourselves and our perception of what love is. Experiencing this first love during our teenage and formative years can play a role in who we become. It provided us with feeling all of the emotions of a relationship, both good and bad. Often, our first love creates a

bond in our mind with that feeling and encounter. Based on the ages when we go through this, the relationships rarely last due to immaturity. However, there are those who marry and spend their entire lives with their childhood sweethearts. Regardless of our present age, there will always be a special thought for that one relationship that helped us form our version of love and what it means.

But what does “love” really mean? According to Merriam-Webster the definition of love is an unselfish loyal and benevolent concern for the good of another, such as the concern of God for humankind. This is a condensed version of the definition, and they included the love of God for mankind. We know this to be true.

**John 3:16-** “*For God so loved the world* that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have everlasting life.”

**1 John 4:16-19-** “And we have known and have believed the love that God has toward us. God is love, and the one who dwells in love is dwelling in God, and God in him. By *this spiritual indwelling*, the love of God is perfected within us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment because even as He is, so also

are we in this world. There is no fear in the love *of God*; rather, perfect love casts out fear because fear has torment. And the one who fears has not been made perfect in the love *of God*. We love Him because **He loved us first.**”

So, what is our first love in the spiritual sense? Our relationship with God must be our first love. Our first love is no longer a person, a place, or a thing. Nothing of this Earth should be number one on this list.

If we place more importance on anything other than loving God first, we make it an idol. We should have these Commandments committed to memory by now.

**Exodus 20:1-6-** “And God spoke all these words, saying, “I *am* the LORD your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourselves any graven image, or any likeness of *anything* that *is* in the heavens above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the waters under the earth. You shall not bow yourself down to them, nor serve them, for I, the LORD your God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me, But showing mercy to thousands of those who love Me and keep My commandments.”

**Leviticus 19:4-** “Do not turn to idols, nor make molten gods to yourselves. I *am* the LORD your God.”

**Psalm 44:20-21-** “If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god, Shall not God search this out? For He knows the secrets of the heart.”

God makes it truly clear He does not want anything to come between us and our love and devotion to Him. Nothing.

**Isaiah 2:17-19-** “And the pride of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low; and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day. **And the idols He shall utterly abolish.** And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth for fear of the LORD and for the glory of His majesty, when He arises to shake *terribly* the earth.”

We are commanded to love God first with all that we are. Not a religion or a church, but God Himself.

**Deuteronomy 6:5-6- “And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be in your heart.”**

**Deuteronomy 11:1- “Therefore you shall love the LORD your God and keep His charge and His statutes and His judgments and His commandments always.”**

**Deuteronomy 30:6-7- “And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your seed, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live. And the LORD your God will put all these curses upon your enemies, and upon those that hate you, who persecuted you.”**

**Deuteronomy 30:16-19- “In that I command you this day to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments so that you may live and multiply. And the LORD your God shall bless you in the land where you go to possess it. But if your heart turn away so that you will not hear but shall be drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, I denounce to you this day that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong *your* days on the land where you pass over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you *that* I have set before you life and death,**

blessing and cursing. Therefore, choose life, so that both you and your seed may live,”

**Matthew 22:36-38-** “Master, which commandment *is the* great commandment in the Law?” And Jesus said to him,” ‘You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is *the* first and greatest commandment;”

When we love God first, loving others will follow. We will be willfully aligning ourselves with God’s will.

**Mark 12:30-31-** “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’

This is the first commandment. And the second is like this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

In loving God first and aligning ourselves with His will, we begin to see things through spiritual eyes. In loving our neighbors as ourselves we can grow in wisdom and learn how to edify one another *without* condemnation. Unless there is

a personal relationship between a person and God the Father, this connection cannot be made.

**1 John 4:6-8-** “We are of God; the one who knows God listens to us; the one who is not of God does not listen to us. By this *means* we know the Spirit of the truth and the spirit of the deception. Beloved, we should love one another because love is from God; and everyone who loves has been begotten by God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God because God is love.”

**1 Corinthians 10:24-** “Let no one seek that which benefits himself; but let each seek that which benefits the other.”

Our direction becomes distorted. Many are deceived because they believe they know God because they read the Bible and call themselves a “Christian.” The enemy is clever in leading numerous people down this trail.

**Romans 10:1-3-** “Brethren, the earnest desire of my heart and my supplication to God for Israel is for salvation. For I testify of them that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they, being ignorant of the righteousness *that*

comes from God, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.”

**1 Corinthians 8:2-3-** “But if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet to the degree that he ought to know. But if anyone loves God, he is known by Him.”

Others may have the deception of focusing on man rather than on the righteousness of God and His Word. Directing attentions to things of the world other than God can be destructive. It is prudent we use caution when seeking spiritual information outside of God’s Word. It is not a sin but beware of the snares of the enemy.

**John 5:40-44-** “But you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life.

I do not receive glory from men; **But I have known you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves.** I have come in My Father’s name, and you do not receive Me; but if another comes in his own name, you will receive him. How are you able to believe, you who receive glory from one another, and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?”

**2 Timothy 3:1-5-** “Know this also, that in *the* last days perilous times shall come;

For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, braggarts, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, savage, despisers of those who are good, Betrayers, reckless, egotistical, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; Having an outward appearance of godliness but denying the power of true godliness. But *as for you*, turn away from *all* these.”

**1 John 2:15-17- “Do not love the world, nor the things *that are* in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him Because everything that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pretentious *pride* of physical life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world and its lust is passing away, but the one who **does** the will of God abides forever.”**

Pride was in the mix of blinding our spiritual vision. Satan is an expert at lulling us into a place of complacency. Wisdom from God comes through the infilling of His Holy Spirit. You cannot get it out of a book or a video. It is best received on your knees in prayer, trusting Him and His guidance. God knows who seeks Him and who doesn't.

**Proverbs 16:18-20-** “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. *It is better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly than to divide the spoil with the proud.* He who handles a matter wisely shall find good, and **whoever trusts in the LORD, happy is he.**”

When we know God, we see Him in His creation all around us. He reveals Himself to us in a way that surpasses understanding.

**Romans 1:19-22-** “Because that which may be known of God is manifest among them, for God has manifested *it* to them; For the invisible things of Him are perceived from *the* creation of *the* world, being understood by the things that were made—both His eternal power and Godhead—so that they are without excuse; Because when they knew God, they glorified *Him* not as God, neither were thankful; but they became vain in their own reasonings, and their foolish hearts were darkened. While professing themselves to be *the* wise ones, they became fools”

The countless blessing begin to unfold when we obey God and sincerely love Him first. He is our hope. He answers our prayers when we cry out in faith and when we call upon Him in truth.

**Psalm 31:23-24-** “O love the LORD, all you His saints! The LORD preserves the faithful and fully repays the proud doer. Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who hope in the LORD.”

**Psalm 116:1-2-** “I love the LORD because He hears my voice and my prayers. Because He has bowed down His ear to me, therefore I will call upon Him as long as I live.”

**Psalm 145:17-20-** “The LORD is righteous in all His ways and loving in all His works. The LORD is near unto all who call upon Him, unto all who call upon Him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry and will save them. The LORD watches over all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy.”

God always has our best interests at heart. I had a fantastic phone conversation with Byron Norrod around 1:00 AM this morning. We had church for about an hour. He is a wonderful friend and inspiration in sharing God’s Word and His love. We talked of how loving God first leads to trusting God even more. When we live this, we draw closer to God and align ourselves to His will. He will guide us in all we seek.

**Romans 8:27-28-** “And the One Who searches the hearts comprehends what the strivings of the Spirit *are* because it makes intercession for *the* saints according to *the will of* God. And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.”

Nothing can separate us from the love of God. **Nothing**. Loving God first, this becomes our bond that solidifies our trust in Him.

**Romans 8:37-39-** “But in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him Who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which *is* in Christ Jesus our Lord.

When God warned the Church at Ephesus about leaving their first love, He was not speaking of a teenage crush. They knew Who their first love was and should always be.

**Revelation 2:4-** “Nevertheless, I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love.”

It is certainly possible to lose your first love for God. The trials of life, the stresses and distractions of everyday living can take their toll on anyone's spiritual walk. It is even easier if you *never* had that "first love" for God in the first place. Many think they do. But know this, while we may forget, God never will leave or forsake us!

**1 John 2:24-27-** "Therefore, let what you have heard from *the* beginning dwell in you; if what you have heard from the beginning is dwelling in you, then you will be dwelling in the Son and in *the* Father. And this is the promise that He has promised us: eternal life. These things I have written to you concerning those who are leading you astray. But you yourselves have dwelling in you the anointing that you received from Him; and you do not have need of anyone to indoctrinate you; for the same anointing instructs you in all *spiritual* things, and is true, and is not a lie; and **if you do exactly as it has taught you, you will be dwelling in Him.**"

Each week, the world gets a little blurrier in the rear-view mirror and the road ahead becomes clearer. When I remember to put away my old self and remember to forgive, to take no offense, to edify one another, to esteem others more important than myself and not to judge others, the world has less of a hold on me.

God gives us His peace and joy that comes with His way of life. He is my first love. Is He yours? Amen.

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