

## ***Session 3: Defining Wholehearted Love: Four Spheres***

### **THE FOUR SPHERES OF THE FIRST COMMANDMENT**

Well, tonight we are on Session 3 of the “First Commandment” course: the first commandment restored to first place. We are taking twelve sessions on the first commandment. My spirit is just exhilarated looking at these very fundamental truths, believing that the Lord is smiling over us, saying, ‘This is what I want you to talk about. This is what is on My heart. This is what I am talking about when I am talking to you. Are we talking about the same thing?’ I say, ‘Yes, Holy Spirit, we are having the same conversation.’

God created us specifically to love Him in these four spheres of our life: with all of our heart, that speaks of our emotions and affections; with all of our soul: that is our personality, which is the way we express ourselves; with all of our mind: that is obviously our thoughts; with all of our strength: that is a reference to all of our resources.

If we use our resources in the right way in relationship with the Holy Spirit, it will actually enhance our ability to feel love and to return it back to God; but often people use their strengths in a way that is not in relationship with the Holy Spirit. I am talking about believers and the very blessing of God, that they actually have results in their spirit, is dulled and diminished in their ability to feel the love of God and return it back, and then overflow to others.

This issue of strength is a very important one. It is our money; it is our time; it is our influence. We will look at it in a few moments. Jesus said, “You shall love the Lord your God with all of your heart, all of your soul, all of your mind, and all of your strength” (Mt. 22:37). Now whenever God gives a commandment, it is the promise of the enabling to walk it out. Now it is only Jesus, He is the only king who gives a commandment that leads to the benefit and the greatest of the people who obey the commandment.

It is a requirement that leaves us with great benefit and with greatness. Our debt of love is our gift. It is the very debt of love that we have to Jesus, when walked out, that becomes the gift that He gives us in how to live our lives and carry ourselves before Him.

In this session we are going to look at some of what it means to express our love to God in these four spheres of life. Obviously, at best it is a mere faint introduction to a very vast subject.

## **DEFINING LOVE**

The question: What does love look like? This is the question of the hour. We know this. Love is much more than sentiment, than religious sentiment. Love is much more than extravagant expressions in a worship service, though those are cool. The reason I think it is important to mention this is, some people, when they think of the bride of Christ, just think, “I want to be wholehearted.” What they are imagining is something ethereal, maybe just smiling and thinking about love, but when I have pressed people over the years, they do not have concrete answers to what that looks like from Monday to Friday. We have to have clear, practical answers to what it looks like to love.

To love God in a sentence: True love requires heart responses with follow-through. True love requires specific heart responses with follow-through.

Now, not perfection in the sense that we never fail. We can have true love and still stumble as we are reaching to give ourselves to God in these concrete heart responses. (Now, these heart responses are defined by God, not the culture. That is a really critical point we will look at in a moment.) We are not content with love for Jesus; that is just rhetoric. It is words. It is banners. It is posters. “We love Jesus; we are radical.” If it does not have concrete, daily expression, and again I do not mean perfect expression in the absolute sense where there is no failure, but love must be on God’s terms and must be more than a slogan about being on fire. Loving God on God’s terms.

There are many definitions of love: liberty; freedom; freedom in the Spirit. What does freedom mean? There are many definitions of grace in our culture, but in a secular culture that our nation is steeped in, much of that secular culture finds its way into the church culture. I find that there is too much confusion in defining love that has its roots in secular culture, not in the revelation of the Word of God. One of the core issues at the end of the age in the generation the Lord returns is how love is defined, because everybody will use the term “love.” The people who love according to God’s definition and the people who do not will all use the term “love.” The people who walk in grace according to biblical definitions and the believers who claim grace, but do not walk in it, will still use the same term, “grace.”

Everybody says “freedom, grace, compassion, and love,” but only a small percentage of the human race is actually walking it out in a way that God agrees with. My goal is not to point out how bad the other groups are doing it; my goal is to see to it that we are walking in truth, in reality, and not being distracted by the definitions of the secular culture that are inundating the church world at this time.

We define love on God’s terms. This is radical. The reason I am saying it’s radical, I don’t mean, “I have it clear, I understand it all;” I just know that God’s terms are far different from man’s terms. They are radical. The terms of Jesus are bearing a cross and denying our self. Saying no to the flesh is humility in a way that heaven agrees with, not in a way that you get the reward at the banquet for. It is

love that has allegiance to Jesus. It is a definition of love that is in obedience to the written Word of God.

So we renounce all paradigms of love that are emerging in the church in this very hour. We say no; we are not interested in it. We are not pressured to make sure that everybody is happy with our definition of love, as long as it is biblical. Much of what is called love is, in fact, other than what the Word of God is calling us to. A lot of folks are pressured by that, and they get swayed by the fear of man. I will just give you a real specific example: nothing more clearly brings false views of love and grace to the surface than the biblical view of salvation. All people, I do not care who they are, regardless of how much they seem to love, everybody goes to hell forever unless the gift of God through Jesus on His terms is received by them. That is the definition of love.

Sincerity and seeming love: There is a lot of confusion and darkness in it. We do not need to define all the different expressions of it. We are just committed to Jesus' terms of love. For example, people look at suffering and they think that somehow suffering, or even humanistic efforts to help others (which is good in itself, as long as we don't trust in it), they think that somehow that plays into their salvation. The famous movie of *Schindler's List*, the story of the man who saved the Jews from the concentration camp: let me say this tenderly but clearly: if he did not know Jesus, and if the Jews that he saved did not know Jesus from the death camps, they will be in the same hell that Adolf Hitler is in.

It is an issue of justice; it is not an issue of goodness. The only reason that I am saved is because an innocent One, Jesus, took the role of the guilty and paid the debt. Only because my debt is paid, not because I was good or sincere. It is an issue of justice. That justice is so exacting and so clear that if Adolf Hitler on the day of his death accepted him, he would be in the same heaven that Paul is in. That is how extreme and how powerful the gift of salvation is. We have to define love on God's terms. I tell you, there are more and more people in the church that are letting of it, getting swept into humanism in the church with Jesus' language.

Again, I am only interested in the kind of love that holds steady when I stand before the Lord on the last day. I am only interested in the kind of love that the Holy Spirit is excited about as He looks over the earth: "Lord, here we are. We are working together with You in truth."

Believe it or not, the true definitions of love will actually get you in trouble and in conflict even in the context of the professing church, the church that names the name of Jesus. God's definition of love does not involve accepting everybody. We respect everybody. We have respect for believers and unbelievers, for sinners. We respect their humanity, but we do not tolerate and accept their false standards. I don't mean we go beat them up, but we do not pretend to accept them as though everybody has their own way to truth. No: we respect them; we are tender; we serve them, but with a clear witness that they are in

error, and they are in deception. Not that you have to say that in every conversation with them, but that is the premise.

There are a lot of definitions of love that have romantic notions of just being happy in God. There is truth to that. Our spirit will be happy in God. But Jesus is not our boyfriend. He is the Bridegroom King. He is nobody's boyfriend. He does not want to be your boyfriend. He does not want to have date nights with you. He really does not. I mean this. In the bridal paradigm, neither is Jesus the humanistic hippie who kind of chills out and lays back. His definition of love is rooted in the Word of God, and that is the definition we are going with.

#### **FOUR PREMISES: OBEDIENCE, ADORING TRUST, LOYALTY, LOVESICK DEVOTION**

We are going to look at four different premises. These are not the same as the four spheres of love we are going to look at in a minute. These are not comprehensive; you could lay out several more.

Premise number one: Biblical love requires the pursuit of obedience to Jesus. You could write poems, do dances, have outreaches, but if you are not pursuing obedience, you do not love Him. It is a pursuit of obedience. It is not the obtainment of it in maturity, because we can love Him in our immaturity, and our love is real, but the reach to obey it is real. I have been reaching to obey Jesus for many years and failing many times. Every time I fail does not mean my love is false, it means it is weak, but when I call it sin, repent and reach to obey again, then it proves the genuineness of the love even though my love is immature. Some folks imagine that if they sing songs, do plays, and have outreaches they can disregard the Holy Spirit's leadership in the areas that He is focusing on in their lives, and somehow they equate it with love. It is not love; it is deception.

Jesus' definition of love is the one that will exhilarate us. It will liberate us. It will make us powerful. It will make us great in God's eyes forever. This is the only safe definition of love. It is not a cruel one. It is not a mean one. It is the only good one. I trust His leadership, so I am saying, "I am going for your leadership. I don't get it all. I have an unrenewed mind in various areas. I trust You. What You say is love is good and I am going for it." That is the confession of the church of Jesus Christ. Here is what He says. Look at John 14:15-23. He says it three times in one passage: "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (Jn. 14:15). "He who has My commandments and keeps them, this is the one who loves Me" (v. 21). The next two verses: "If anyone loves Me, he keeps My word" (v. 23). There is no such thing as loving Jesus that does not diligently seek to obey the Word. Again, we have immaturity in our love, but our love is reaching. We are seeking to do it for real, in private.

If you want to get it really clear, Jesus defined love as the Sermon on the Mount lifestyle (Mt. 5-7). That is the clearest definition of love. If you are doing that, if you are reaching for that, beloved, you are walking in love. Yes, you reach and fail. That is all part of the growth process, but reaching for it is the

critical point. We must deny lustful desires. There are many categories of lust beyond sexual immorality. Galatians 5 talks about the nineteen expressions of the flesh. Those are all dimensions of lust: anger; pride. But the denying of lustful desire, whether it is anger, bitterness, pride, immorality, covetousness, whatever it is, you deny it because you love Him; you are trying to obey Him; whatever it is, is the theatre: it is the stage in which Jesus chose that we express love to Him. He says, “Now that is to love Me.” “Lord, I want to do this, but Your Word says do it the other way. I really want to do it my way, any of these types of lust, but I am going to deny it to obey you. I really don’t want to obey you, but I am going to.” The Lord says, “I take that personally. It is the theatre in which you show Me your love.”

Now, everyone in this room, and every believer in the earth has a different struggle, according to our personality and circumstances. Everyone has a unique personality and a unique set of circumstances. It is your assignment to show Him your love. He says, “I have given you this assignment in this season.” He writes every decision for love in His book. Maybe for one person it’s the immorality. Maybe it’s the covetousness. Maybe it’s the laziness. You are saying, “You know what, I am going to rise up and obey.” Nobody ever sees the movement of your heart, but He sees it and it moves Him. He calls it love. He writes it in His book.

So, first, it is the pursuit of obedience.

Premise number two: it involves adoring trust of this Man. It is not just disconnected obedience. It is feeding our mind and our spirit in a way where we learn who He is, where our adoration increases while we are obeying Him. It is not disconnected obedience, which is slavery, but it is adoration and trust. Now, that adoration grows over time, but that in itself is part of love. As I feed my spirit on who He is, I read the Word of God and my adoration and my gratitude increases. “Jesus, I really like you. You are really amazing.”

He says, “I like that. I like that that moves you.”

I say, “Wow. You are treating me so much better than I deserve. So much better. Why? You are so kind; You are so amazingly brilliant and powerful. I trust You. I want to obey You because of who You are.”

There is an adoring trust that is a feature of love. You want to develop that part of your spiritual life. In Psalm 45 the Psalmist said, “My heart overflows with a good theme.” He was talking about Jesus. “My heart overflows. I write my composition concerning King Jesus. My tongue is like an enthusiastic pen of a ready writer. I am exploding with enthusiasm.” Admiration and gratitude is what he’s talking about. Having a tongue like a ready writer means, “I am ready. I am enthusiastic; I am exploding. I have so much adoration. I have gratitude because You are fairer than the sons of men. You are beautiful in Your splendor, Your wisdom, and Your kindness towards me.”

There is a dimension of love that is enhanced as we develop this adoring trust, this awestruck affectionate love. That is what I like to call it. The way we are going to love Jesus forever will be awestruck gratitude. Our love in eternity forever will be motivated by awestruck gratitude. Forever we will say, “Oh, You are amazing; thank You. Thank You. Thank You. I love You.” You are awestruck. “You are amazing” – adoration. “Thank You” – gratitude. “Therefore I love You.”

Premise number three: Love requires loyalty to the truth – the truth as we understand it. Again, as the months turn to years and the years turn to decades we get more light, and our perception of truth increases – truth as we know it in the Word of God. He requires us to be loyal to it. The Word of God is politically incorrect in the eyes of man: the things that Jesus promises, what He requires, and what His plans are; what He is going to do in the earth (just read the Book of Revelation) is politically incorrect.

Much of the church – too big of a percent – is siding with secular humanist thinking, and they are distancing themselves from the political incorrectness of His truth. I am talking about the unrenewed secular mind. Jesus requires loyalty to the truth as an expression of loving Him. When I know something, I don’t have to say everything I know in every sitting, but when I know something, He says, “I really take it personally if you don’t stand for it when I have revealed it to you.”

“Well, Lord, those guys don’t really believe that.”

The Lord would say, “But I believe it. I have called you to stand with Me in it. Do you love Me?”

“Yes, I love You, but they will get mad at me.”

“Do you love Me?”

“Yes.”

“Then be loyal to the truth.”

Great conflict arises in the generation the Lord returns over the truth of who Jesus is and how He defines love. Beloved, I want to say by the grace of God as a people, we want to be loyal to that which we understand and our understanding will increase as the years unfold. But we are determining we are going to show love to God on God’s terms, and that is being loyal to the truth.

There are three truths: there are more than three, but these are the three I run into often that offend the humanist mind that is even in the church.

Number one: His deity. He has the absolute right to define the standards that He holds every city, nation, and person accountable to. He has the right to define those standards as God. “Well, you never know everybody in their own way and everybody according to what they see.” No. There is one Man who has total right to declare what is right and wrong because He is God. If He is not God, then that is a different story. He is God.

Number two: He is the only way of salvation.

Number three: He possesses the wisdom to judge the nations. The judgment of Jesus, His loving judgments, are released to remove everything that hinders love. His judgments are an expression of His passion for purity in the greatness and glory of His people. The issue of Jesus’ judgment comes into great conflict because the people begin to debate about this group of innocent people in the earth. Beloved, there are no innocent people on the earth. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Everyone deserves not to love and everyone deserves to go to hell. Before God we are all guilty. By His kindness we have life; by His kindness our life is extended. By kindness we have eternal life – end of story.

Under His leadership, and under His judgments that will cause the premature death of multitudes in the generation He returns, there is no innocent group that has the right to challenge His leadership as being lacking in love, justice, and wisdom.

Premise number four: Love is a consuming desire. There is a dimension of being abandoned, of being lovesick. It is not passive. I am not talking about personalities. Different personalities are more energetic, some are more laid-back; that is not what I’m talking about. All the different personalities the Lord has, He’s playing this symphony through all the thousands of personalities. I’m not talking about whether your personality is quiet, loud, extroverted or introverted; love is not passive at the heart level. He wants us engaged. He wants us caring, given, and abandoned in our pursuit of Him.

He is lovesick. He wants us lovesick. He wants us to want Him more than anything else: more than a bigger ministry; more than looking good to the people we love. He wants us to love Him even if we humble ourselves and lose out in the arena of man. He wants us to love Him more than increase. The increase will come and it will go in seasons. The point is not whether the increase is good or bad. The point is, He wants something bigger on our heart than having our circumstances set up the way we want them. “When I get the guy or the girl I’m going to marry, when I get the ministry and the house finally lands and I get it lined out, then I am going to kick into a whole new gear.” No. We kick into a whole new gear now, and he or she comes now, then, or never, and if the ministry flourishes or never takes off

or you get the house or you lose it, we are in this thing for love. There is something bigger than having everything laid out just right. We are in it for love. That is part of loving God with all of our heart.

### **SPHERE 1: LOVING GOD WITH THE AFFECTIONS**

Let's look at these four spheres of life: four spheres in which we show Him our love that has obedience in it, that has adoring trust, that is loyal to truth, and that has awakened desire in it. As a matter of fact, I want to recommend a book by Dana Candler called *Entirety*. "Entirety" means loving God entirely, with the entirety of your being, with all that you have.

Sphere number one: love God with all the heart. Now these, the heart, the soul, the mind, and the strength, Jesus meant them to be distinct. There are some verses where they overlap, but when Jesus laid it out here, He gave a command with the promise of the anointing to do it. This was very deliberate by the great psychologist of the ages, the one Man who truly understands the nature of man. He was not just giving a definition of the make-up of a person's life in these four areas, in a general, "Well, you know, they all mean the same anyway." I have read some commentators who say, "Well, He is really saying the same thing." I say, "I don't think so." Now they all overlap in some ways because the human is one person. Our humanity, our life, has a wholeness and a oneness about it, but these are four different spheres in which we are challenged and anointed to love God. I look at these four spheres and the Holy Spirit is saying, "Mike, I will give you more in this area if you want it." I say, "Of course I want it." He says, "Come after Me, then, in this area of love."

Loving with the heart is the affections, the emotions, the longings, the very impulse of desire. It is that, that current in our being that determines just the way we see life. It is desire on the inside. We have such powerful desires that move us. Now we cannot define all of our desires. Some of them we can define very clearly, others not so clearly. For others, we don't have language, but those desires in every human being are very powerful and Jesus wants to be loved from that part of our life.

The Psalmist says this: "Because he" (talking about how the man of God has set his love upon God) "because he has set his love upon Me" (the Psalmist writes, speaking for God), "therefore I will deliver him" (Ps. 91:14). Here is the point I want to make: our love can be set. Within the human makeup, under Jesus' creative genius – He created us – we have the power to choose, to set our affections, to set our emotions. To set our heart, is a better way to say; and our emotions will eventually follow wherever we set our self. We determine the course that our emotions will eventually develop in. You cannot today, at seven o'clock in the evening, will that your emotions will change within an hour, and suddenly your emotions are changed. It does not work that way. But you can set your heart on something, and in the next months and years your emotions will follow the course of that setting. It takes time, but your



emotions will follow wherever you have set your soul. It's years later, and the guy, the gal is still stuck in a huge, unsettled issue. It isn't a month later; it isn't a year later. It's many years later, the Lord is saying, "I want you to set your heart to love Me in that area."

You will get victory in time, but there needs to be a more clear setting. Victory will not necessarily come in a day, but beloved, the way the human makeup is made, there is such a powerful dynamic that is part of the dignity of the human spirit: if you will set a goal – I don't mean a goal like, "I want to make this amount of money next year, or lead this many people to the Lord" – I don't mean goals like that, though those are good goals. I am talking about a goal that says, "The goal of my life, my being exists to obey God with obedience, affection, trust, desire, and I want to be loyal to truth. I want to obey You in these ways. It is my goal. I am going for it. It is the consuming goal of my life." I tell you, whether it is months or years – I mean, it doesn't take years; the process gets stronger and stronger in a positive sense – your emotions will follow the course of the setting of your heart. Whatever emotions you have today.

There might be some exceptions: emotions related to chemical or physiological reactions, or situations in people's bodies. I am not being strict in the strictest sense when I say "all of our emotions," but generally speaking, the emotions we have today are the fruit of the setting we had ten years ago. Whatever you set your heart on five and ten years ago, you are living in the crop of it right now. You say, "I was only ten years old ten years ago." It is still the same. The human spirit under Jesus' leadership, and His creative design, has the ability to determine the course of their emotions under the Lord's leadership. It is a marvelous thing. You change your goals; your emotions will change in time. We set our love on Him, our affections to love with all of our heart or all of our affections. So when I say "the setting of the love," I am talking about the setting of the heart, the affections.

In this setting we want to remove everything that diminishes our affections, meaning, "I want to love God with all of my emotions." Well, other emotions, various other lusts emerge, and the Holy Spirit would say, "Those other emotions you must declare war on because they will hinder and diminish your capacity to feel love for Me and return it back to Me." Beloved, it is not a matter of just setting our heart to walk in love; we have to declare war on the emotions that come and choke. In the parable in Matthew 13, Jesus said it is the weeds that choke the seed. You can plant the seed, but you have to address the weeds growing around it. You cannot have your eyes being involved in that which incites immorality. You cannot have your heart inflamed with covetousness, or your tongue with slander, and somehow have your spirit end up buoyant in love. So I look at these negative emotions as enemies to love. I say, "These things are enemies. They are coming after me. They are going to destroy love in my spirit." Attacking these enemies is a part of setting your heart to love God with all of your emotions. It is not enough to say, "I want to love You, Jesus." "I want to love You. I want to love You so much I am going to resist that which quenches my ability to love."

King David said it. David really got this point. David said, “I will love You, O God my strength” (Ps. 18:1). This was not just a statement of experience: “I do love You.” He said, “I WILL love You.” Now, David loved God in that moment, but David is coming out of Ziklag. For those of you who know the life of David, he is coming out of sixteen months of failure in his life, and compromise. It is the roughest, most negative season in David’s life, spiritually, in his walk with God – the Ziklag years. The day after Ziklag he writes Psalm 18. He says, “I will love You. I don’t feel it like I am going to, but I have set my heart.” What a powerful statement, the day after he was freed out of that sixteen months of compromise in Ziklag.

We can decide things that form our emotions. Now our decision by itself is not enough. It is not enough to say, “I will love. I will love.” It is not just the force of self-determination. “I will; I will.” It is an important, indispensable part of growing in love, but there is more to it than the decision. The decision is indispensable, and no one can make that decision for you.

So I say, “Lord, I want to love You with all of my heart.” The Holy Spirit may say something that is critical. You maintain that goal because some people have that goal for a few months; then a year or two later they don’t have that clearer goal. They remember having it, and they are thinking, “Well, I guess I still do. I mean, I have never changed anything that I know of.” Beloved, you are changing every day and every week. You are either growing closer or you are growing further. There is no static, meaning there is no place in God where once you get it, you keep it. You are gaining ground or losing ground, and the only way you will keep the ground you gain in the Spirit is by taking new ground. The only way I can maintain the love I have walked for in Jesus over the years is by increasing it. If I want to keep it the same, it will decrease. I have to increase the scope of my life that is coming under obedience for my love to stay even and increase. It has to increase to keep from decreasing. There is no such thing as neutral ground, so the decision is critical. It is indispensable, but it is not enough. There are other factors involved in loving God besides the raw decision itself, but the decision is powerful.

David went on again in Psalm 37 and said the same point. He said, “Delight yourself in the Lord; He will give you the desires of your heart” (Ps. 37:4). What a powerful understanding that David had of how the human makeup works under God’s leadership. “Delight yourself in the Lord.” That doesn’t mean that today you could just have busting, overflowing desire: “I am going to desire you today and before I go to bed tonight I will have new desires.” No. It does not work that way. That is not what delight means. Delight does not mean manufactured desire. The desire is God’s action after David delighted. The delight is David’s part. The new desires imparted and injected into his spirit is God’s part. You cannot, by a force of will, create new desires, but David said, “I delight,” meaning, “I am setting my mind to give myself fully to you. You are my delight, not my kingship, not my relationships.” Those are the issues that have God’s blessings on them, whether it is possessions, position, or

relationships. It is good to delight in God's blessing in that secondary sense, to enjoy them and to rejoice over them. They cannot be the premier delight of our heart. In Job 22:29–30 Job said, "Take your gold, throw it down in the dust, make God your gold" (paraphrase); that is a decision; that is what it means to delight in the Lord. Make God your gold, whether you feel it or not. It is the guy or the gal who says, "You know what, I am going to choose righteousness. I am going to turn off a bunch of stuff and I am going to downsize some of the activity in my life. I am going to go after Him. I am going to fast and pray and go after Him. I don't feel anything; I don't like it; the Word of God is boring; prayer is more boring but I am doing it." That is called delighting in the Lord and making God your gold.

David understood the power of this. I tell you, he is a successful man in the Spirit, meaning he loved God and walked in humility. That is what a successful man in the Spirit is. I don't mean he was famous and was a king. He loved God and walked in humility. That is what success is and he did it. If you want to follow his teachings, he says, "You do your part. You choose that God will be your chief delight, whether you feel it or not. What will happen in time, He will give you: He will impart new desires to you."

When the Scripture says God will give you the desires, it doesn't mean, whatever you want, you will get it, it means the things you want change if you delight in the Lord. Your desires He will give you, Holy Spirit-inspired desires. Do not underestimate the power of setting your heart on God, whether you feel a thing or not. The Holy Spirit will honor this decision. There is power in this decision to love God with your heart. It is a decision to set your heart, to set your love on God. The Holy Spirit waits for us to do it. We don't do it once; we renew it and we renew it. I don't renew it every day. That would not be honest. I tell the Lord I love Him every day, but there are several times in the course of the year, maybe five, ten, or twenty times (one year is more than the next), but there are those moments when I say, "Wait; slow down. I have got to realign," and in a very important ten, twenty, thirty, forty-minute conversation with the Lord (I don't mean it takes all day to do it), I go, "Wait. My life is not about IHOP-KC, it is not about being a preacher, it is about loving You. Wait. Stop. Everything slow down. I am in this thing to love You." The Lord says, "Come on. Talk to me; talk to me."

Some years I do it more because I lose the connection. I am talking about the clear focus of why I exist on the earth. I start thinking, "I exist to be a leader in the body of Christ."

The Lord says, "No, that is your assignment. I want you to do it with all your heart, but that is not the main thing. That is not your main assignment. Your main assignment is to love Me with all your heart."

I say, "Yes, I did it again." I realign myself several times a year.

I want to challenge you. You have got to do this. Don't think the decision last month or two years ago is the final time. No. You have got to renew it. You renew your love.

## **SPHERE 2: LOVING GOD IN PERSONALITY AND SPEECH**

Sphere number two: We love God with all of our soul. Now our soul is our personality. It is different than just our desire, and the most expressive part of your personality is your speech. It is more than speech but speech is the primary issue this is talking about.

Beloved, this is a big subject. It is certainly more than a three-minute point on session three in a series. This is a huge point. I'm only tipping you off to it if it is new to you. I'm not trying to expound on it and fully lay it out.

What I say in the next seven days, in the next seven weeks, in the next seven months, whatever the time frame you want, whatever I say in the next week is going to enhance or diminish my ability to feel love and to grow in love towards God. It is going to do one or the other for sure. My speech and yours is the rudder on the ship that will lead you into love or lead you into a quenched spirit (Js. 3). I'm not talking about not just slandering. The number one issue of our speech, all of us, is pride and complaint. Slander is down the list, three, four, or five. I challenge you: in the next twenty-four hours, in the next seven days, take every phrase of complaint as an issue about your love to Jesus. Not that He is mad; like if you complain, He says, "Oh, forget it; we are never going to relate to each other." I am not saying He is mad, but what complaining does is, it quenches the Spirit, and the Spirit is the key to your love being inflamed. I cannot love Jesus if the Spirit and I are not in agreement. He will not agree with complaint. That is by far the number one. It is pride. All complaint is pride.

I am talking about just the category of the normal complaints of life. There are complaints in prayer that are like the imprecatory songs, where they're crying out, "Oh, God." There are biblical complaints. I don't mean in that technical sense, but I am talking about the complaint that is pride because I think I deserve a better deal. "The dog shouldn't bark next door when my window is open. The guy shouldn't cut me off on the highway. The other guy shouldn't mess with my stuff. I deserve better." It is, at the end of the day, pride: when we bridle our tongue and we just think, "Ugh." We thank the Lord – not that we thank the Lord that somebody is annoying us, that we are being bugged – but we thank the Lord that He is watching our humility and we are actually having an encounter, an ability to encounter Him in that moment. I say, "Lord, I really wish they would quit doing that; however, I am not going to vocalize it. I am giving myself to You. I am giving myself to love. I am with You, Lord. My spirit feels different." Now multiply that ten thousand times. It is not like one vitamin is going to take a sick person and make them healthy, but they take vitamins for years. You do that thousands of times and your spirit will be really different in one year, two years, and three years.

Many people do not love God with their soul. They love God with their heart, meaning their emotions – “I want to do this all the way” – but when it comes to their soul their tongues are not under the government of the Holy Spirit. Again, it is not like Jesus is mad and He doesn’t want you in His family, but the Holy Spirit says, “No. I am going to starve you out by your dullness and barrenness until you do it My way. You have to do it My way and then you will feel My presence.” Not that you earn His presence. It is that you feel His presence when there is just agreement with our spirit and His spirit. It is not about earning; it is about coming into agreement. A radical part of our love, the way people carry on with members of the opposite sex, the way they promote themselves, the way they manipulate, the way they do many, many things is your soul. Most of it is about words. The Holy Spirit says, “Oh, I long to give you more, but I want you to love Me with all of your soul, too, not just your heart, but your soul.”

### **SPHERES 3 AND 4: THE TOXIC SMOKE THAT QUENCHES LOVE**

Sphere number three: This is different from our soul and our heart. It is our thoughts, all of our mind. Now, to love God with all of our mind involves a number of things. Again, this is so elementary, what I have on these notes, and so limited. Don’t read these notes and say to yourself, “I have got it.” No, no, no. These are only like a table of contents. Take these notes and go, “Okay, Holy Spirit. I have got an open Bible. I have got You. You love me. I love You. Teach me these four spheres. I have got time ahead of me. I don’t know how long before I meet Jesus face to face, but let’s get on with it. Let’s grow in all four areas.” So I want to challenge you to go after these four things. I am going after them; I want to go after them more. I am not satisfied with where I am at in these four things but at least I know where I am aiming at.

Your mind is so precious. Your soul is. Your heart is. So far, these are three biggies. Then the fourth one is just as big, the strength. We cannot have our mind filled with dirty smoke. It’s like the guys decades ago, before they had labor laws, who would work in certain environments where the environment was really dirty with smoke or in the coal mines. They were toxic. After ten years they found out that they had these horrible diseases. There are many examples of that, so they made the labor laws. We are living in a toxic mine. It is like a guy working in a toxic mine for ten years: they are guaranteed that everybody gets the disease if they work in that mine and in those particular conditions. That is why they made the labor laws. What we do with our minds on the Internet and on TV and where we take our mind; the long periods of time we spend without filling our mind with the Word of God and the lies that we believe about Jesus; the lies that we believe about ourselves. There is so much toxic power quenching love. We have to love Him with our mind; our minds must love Him. The way that I want to love Him with my mind: I want to take the hours of my day and I want to invest it in my mind getting clean air; not the toxic air of working in the mines in the decades past. I don’t mean you read the Bible all day, every day. But I want to learn to speak the Word more in my heart, the prayer without ceasing: talk to God more, and in my time, when I can get the time, I want to be in the Word. Many times when I read the Word I

don't feel anything. The Word doesn't feel powerful, but I tell you it is marking your mind whether you feel it or not. You say, "Well, I don't feel like it; I am kind of down; I am a little burnt out." The definition of burnout is really confused in the body of Christ. Burnout normally means, "I am in a bad mood." You do not want to throw your spiritual destiny away when you feel burnt out because that is going to be almost every other day for the rest of your life. Just throw that burnt-out thing away. I am tired and burnt out. I have been tired for thirty years, nearly. I really mean it. I have been tired most days for thirty years, to some degree. So what? Big deal. I am not waiting to get rested and happy before I start the kingdom of God. I say, "Okay, I am a little tired. So, I know what to do. I am going to read the Word. I don't feel anything. So, it is still marking my spirit." I have learned that over thirty-plus years.

Don't wait to get rested. Don't wait to get happy. You will never do the kingdom if you wait for that. I really mean that. The fourth sphere is all of our strength. Again, this is shark-infested waters. All of these are heavy. What I mean by "shark-infested waters" is, our strengths are the areas God has blessed us in. We have a certain influence, whether it is in the family, the neighborhood, the church, the marketplace, whatever: a little bit of influence, a little bit of blessing with circumstances. Everyone has got a different setup. Maybe it is a physical ability. You have the giftings for that organization to where you can be distinguished because you have the gifting for it. In our setting, if you can sing and play, that is really important, but in the other setting they don't care if you do that. You have got to be able to do something else. There are many different giftings for whatever different setting. My point is, don't lock into here and just think, "Whatever my giftings are, whatever my economic blessings, whatever my favor with men, whatever my influence is, those are the areas of my strength." Whatever your energy level is, just having energy and health is one of your strengths. What He calls us to do is have a very specific relationship with Him. It is called the fasted lifestyle, where we take our strengths that we normally use to enhance our life – and we are supposed to enjoy them; we are supposed to use our strengths to enhance our lives. There is nothing wrong with enhancing your life with five or ten areas of strength that God gives you. However, there are times when He says, "Now, Mike, you see that money where you can enhance your life, see the energy you have to enhance your life: I want you to fast this day."

"I lose a little bit of energy and I lose brain power."

"That is okay."

"I get a little wobbly, a little weak, and I cannot really do what I normally do."

"That is okay, because you and Me have a relationship. You voluntarily fast, which means embrace weakness in that area and over time I will give you more strength through My blessing than you could ever produce by keeping your strength high. You will have more buying power if you give Me a bunch

of your money than if you keep it all. You will have more influence if you humble yourself when you are attacked instead of answering back.”

It will not happen in a week or a month, but over the decades you will have way more influence. It is called fasting. Fasting means we take our strength, we lay it at His feet, and trust the Holy Spirit in the interaction in our relationship with Him because you talk to Him all the time when you are fasting. When you give money away, giving money away is a form of fasting. It is giving your strength away economically. Fasting food is giving your strength away. Prayer is giving your time away. “Lord, here we are; You want me to sit in a room and tell You what You tell me to tell You? You already know it. I’m late today. You want me to take an hour to tell You what You already know.”

“Yes.”

“Do You realize what I could do in this hour?”

“Yes. You could do more.” (I mean even in the positive sense).

“Then I lose my physical energy and I can’t eat; then I have to give my money away. Then the guy is mad at me and I have to bless him, or just be quiet at least.”

“Ah.”

The Lord says, “Now, talk to Me,” because when you fast you talk to God. You have got a thousand arguments to stop doing it. Keep the money, eat the food, don’t pray, get even with the guy, but fasting is the opposite of all of those. When you fast, when you love Him with your strength, it draws you into a dynamic conversation with the Holy Spirit. “Oh, man, I am starving. Why am I doing this again? Because You told me I would have more if I do this. Okay. Okay. Good. I am running late again and have all these people I need to talk to and I have all these problems to solve. Why am I in this prayer meeting telling You what You tell me to tell You? Because if I do this You and me will get further, more will happen in ten years. Okay; okay; okay...”

It drives you into a dynamic dialogue all day long in whatever area you are fasting in. The Lord requires it. What many do is, they take their strengths and they just run with them. They do not love God in their strength. They give God tokens. They throw Him a token offering on the way out the door. They give God a tip, but they are not giving Him their strength. They are giving God a tip of their time, a little tip of their money, a little tip of their honor. What happens is, five or ten years come and go and their spirit is diminished in love.

They actually lose their ability to walk in love. The guy says, “I just got too busy. I just got burnt out.”

I say, “No. You did not love God with your strength. You did not fast your strength. You did not love Him with strength. You did not love Him with your soul. You talk the way you want to talk. You did not love Him with your heart. You did not set in your heart to love God. You set in your heart to have a big ministry. You did not love Him with your mind. You were too busy with entertainment, recreation, playing.”

The body of Christ in America plays too much and rests too much and messes around too much. We have got this powerful mind, a Bible, and an open heaven, and God says, “You have got as much time as everybody else does. You have got a mind. You have got a Bible. Do you want anything with all of this?”

“Yes, I do.”

“Love Me with your mind, then.”

Amen. Let’s end with that. Let’s stand.

### **MINISTRY TIME**

Well, I am massively convicted right now. I didn’t feel nearly as bad writing it. Saying it, I say, “Ouch.” I’m not joking.

We all need to renew our love, obviously. I am going to take a few moments where we give ourselves to God in these four areas. Talk to Him about setting your heart, using your strength, soul and mind to love Him. Let’s take the next fifteen, twenty, thirty minutes and just talk to Him. The Lord may give it to you, but the goal is not to get a big exciting experience in the next hour to prove that what you did is real. You may not feel anything in an hour, but what you are doing is real. I have done this for years. This is how you do it. You feel nothing. I feel nothing many times but it works and when I look back I say, “Wow.”

You take vitamins for decades you end up healthier. You look back and say, “Hey, I got healthy. How did that happen?” It is the same way spiritually. Just stay with it. You might feel something dramatic tonight. I hope you do but if you don’t, don’t walk away and say, “Well, that didn’t count.” That’s absolutely wrong; it counts what you are doing. Justin please. “Here we are Lord. Here we are Jesus in our weakness.”





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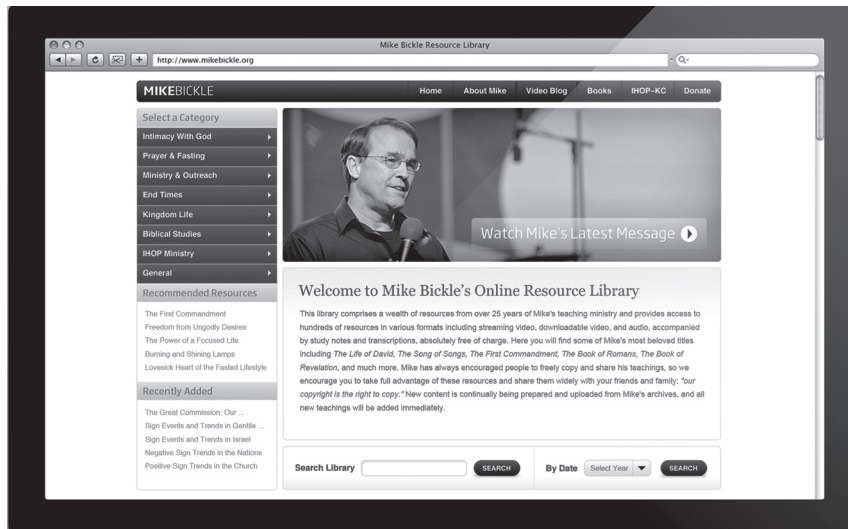
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