



Building Wholehearted Disciples of Jesus

The Wholeheart Disciple

Starting Points 4

Teacher: Steve Holt

Series: Outlier University

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The greatest man who ever lived
gave us
The greatest command ever given
that we might experience
The greatest love ever offered.

Mark 12:28-30

28 Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, "Which is the first commandment of all?"

29 Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment.

- This is the stirring of our hearts, this is true revival. Revival is when we start contending for the 1st commandment in our lives.
- This is how we overcome lust, anger and fear in our life.
- People ask: how do I overcome these addictions? This is it! Growing to love God with all your heart.
- This is our place of freedom.
- If we decide to grow in this, we will see victory in these other areas.
- When you struggle with anger, lust or bitterness, then we must turn and focus on this commandment.

- Satan wants to redefine love. Redefine our purpose. His goal, one of the great battle fronts, is to get us off track on what love is.

God wants us preoccupied with this commandment. John 14 says if you love me you will keep my commandments. The spirit of obedience does not quit. If you love Me, you will not quit.

- The key to greatness in this life is all found right here! We have grown accustomed to evaluating our life according to our accomplishments and achievements but Jesus says “Beloved, this is it! This is the greatest commandment—if you follow this, everything just lines up. This is success; this is greatness.”
- This is the life we are all longing for, growing in, contending for, battling in our hearts to love God with ALL of our heart, soul, mind and strength.

Jesus gives us 5 Focused Ways to Love Him—we have to be Laser Focused on this!

Matthew 12:30

And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment.

Last week:

The 1st Focused Way:

Love the Lord your God with all your Heart

- You cannot love God with your natural heart. It cannot be done.
- When we get saved, do you know that you get a new heart?! A new heart is your birthright as a Jesus follower.
- You also receive the Holy Spirit, a new heart, a new Spirit.

- Loving God with all our heart means a lot of things but functionally it means:
 - With your emotions. It means being in love with Jesus. It is an intimate growing dynamic love relationship with Jesus through the Holy Spirit.
 - Sanctified emotions! “Enthusiasm” (latin—God possessed) flows through asking God to sanctify, purify, revive your emotions.
 - It is an enthusiastic passionate love affection. Like David in Psalm 18 “I will love you Lord.”
 - It is not about being dutiful and more about being devoted.
 - This is not easy!
 - The key habit you absolutely must develop is setting aside time each day for worship and prayer, getting alone in your own special anointed sanctuary to seek the Lord.
 - PB&J (prayer, bible and journal)

And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul,

2) Secondly, Loving God with all your Soul

- The soul is the place of our identity. This is the place where we decide how we will evaluate ourselves: whether we are successful or not.
- The soul is our identity, our deeply held values of how we will measure whether we are successful.

- It is the place where we measure success. Identity is how we measure our value.

3 ways we can form our Identity

- 1)** The first has no idea of God and creation but rather looks outward at one's accomplishments and achievements. It is wrapped up in duty. Duty to country, duty to a job, duty to making it and finding value in one's outward success.
 - Our world tells us that the measure of our value is based on achievements and accomplishments, how big our bank account is, what kind of car we drive, who we know, what promotions we have received.
- 2)** The second way to look for identity is looking inward. They also have no belief in a cosmic order, but rather rely on personal competition and finding themselves and their inner peace based on self esteem.
- 3)** But there is a 3rd option. These are people who do not look outward or inward, but upward. This is captured by Isak Dinesen in the book Out of Africa. She writes, "Pride is faith in the idea God had, when he made us." What if God made you for a mission? What if God made you for a joy in personal calling?
 - What if it does not matter what society thinks about you? What if it does not matter what you think about you? What if what matters is what God thinks about you?
 - Soren Kierkegaard writes, "In fact, what is called the secular mentality consists of simply of such men who, so to speak, mortgage themselves to the world. They use their capacities, amass money, carry on enterprises... perhaps to make a name in history, but they themselves they are not. Spiritually speaking they have no self, no self for for whose sake they could venture anything, no self before God."

- Could it be that our identity could be based in the original creation of who you were created to be? Not how much someone loves you, a fallible fickle human being, but rather in the unconditional unchanging, transformative love of One who adores you and will adore you forever.

Look what Paul says in **1 Corinthians 4:3-4**

³But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. ⁴For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; But He who judges me is the Lord.

- Paul says I do not care what you think of me or what any human court thinks of me. I also do not care what I think of me! I am judged by God. My identity is in God.
- The Christian identity, the biblical identity, is found in loving God through this new formation in Christ. Unlike the outward view or the inward view. Our new identity is not achieved but received.
- Jesus did not come primarily to show us how to live (though he did do that) but to actually live the life we should have lived and die the death we should have died.
- We love God with our soul when we rest in His life, His death and His resurrection. When we rest in His salvation alone.
- For many believers they live a good moral life so that they can be accepted by God. It is moral religion.
- Gospel Christianity works in the opposite direction. God accepts me in love, in grace, unconditionally in Jesus Christ. Therefore I have the power to live a good and moral life.
- The motivation for such identity is not fear but joy!

- For example, so we no longer pursue a career to gain our self-worth but to serve a loving God!
- To love God with all our soul is that process of renewing your mind, transforming your heart to a new identity.
- God's Identity for us: "God loves me; I am beloved; I am worthy; I am adopted. I love God; therefore I'm successful."
- It is a revolutionary identity. A biblical identity based on God's Word—God loves me, I love God, therefore I am successful.

This is what has helped me in this area: to pray out loud something like this:

"Lord, I may fail today; I may let someone down today; I probably won't do everything perfect today; But I am worthy; I am beloved; I am adopted; I am gifted; I am successful because You say I am. I am going to take risks and love You and others today. Thank you that I'm successful because You love me and I'm beloved and worthy of love."

- This is the true self—as Kierkegaard puts it, "the true self is the self before God."
- "I am God Almighty" said the Lord to Abraham in Genesis 17:1, "walk before me faithfully." To walk with someone, in Hebrew idiom, meant to befriend someone, to journey with them face-to-face.
- But the enemy knows that if you get this, your whole worldview will be changed. Thus, it is at the soul level that demons attack us, the world teaches us through shame.
- The soul is that place in our life that we feel shame and sin. It is the soul area that most Jesus disciples can never truly give over to Jesus.

- Shame might be defined as those things in your life that if others knew about them, they would no longer want a relationship with you.
- All of us have shame in our lives. Every one of us.
- This is the dark place in our hearts that no one knows about, but God knows.
- This is the dark spot in our heart that we just will not ever talk about, and if we do not, they grow, enlarge and take over.

Connection is why we are here—it is what makes life worth living.

- When you ask people about love, belonging, they always tell you about their broken hearts, their disconnections and their losses. Why?
- Shame is the fear of disconnection. We all think, “Is there something about me that if people see it I won’t be worthy of connection?” No one wants to talk about it and the less you talk about it, the more you have it. It is universal. All of us have it.
- Loving God with our soul is loving God with our shame through a renewed identity that we are going to love God with our heart, soul, mind and strength.
 - How do we do that? We become vulnerable about our shame, we share it, we own it, we take it to the Lord and lay it at the foot of the cross.
 - If we don’t, it comes back, it haunts us, it starts to overcome us.

- Loving God with our shame means we confess, we “agree with God” that it is there, it must be dealt with.
- Vulnerability is the beginning of breaking the power of shame.
- For example, in my darkest days two years ago, God mightily spoke to me from **2 Corinthians 4:1-6**

¹Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart. ² But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God (vulnerable). ³ But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴ whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. ⁵ For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus’ sake. ⁶ For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Three Critical Steps to Breaking the Power of Shame

1. Realizing you have shame—this is absolutely the most important and the most hard to discern.
 - Most of us do not want to admit that we have been shamed or that those things that happened to us have any bearing on our life now.
 - Yet this is the very reason we do not get help and do not get healed.
2. Being vulnerable with some brothers and sisters in our life about the secret places of our life.

- Get it out in the open so demons have no place to hang on.
- We need “bloodstained allies.”
- When you get your shame out in the open, you get set free. The grip of the shame is loosened.
- We quit posing, pretending and projecting being a “Good Christian” and get real about our sins.

3. Walk with Jesus. Invite the Light of Jesus to shine in our hearts.

- You have to fight for this, contend for it; it is a battle.
 - To be laser focused on our shame, our soul and saying “God I want to be wholehearted.”
 - Wholehearted means to love God with your WHOLE heart, even the dark secret places.
- This how we break the power of porn, adultery, alcoholism, anger, greed, lust, lying.
 - When we start loving God with our soul, we quit posing, pretending and projecting to be a “good Christian” and start living the greatest life—no more lies.
 - Key words: Authenticity! Integrity! Being in public what you are in private.
 - We must make authenticity and integrity the focus of loving God. Instead of retreating into our shame we say “Lord I give you this shame area and I need you to empower me to love you right here, right now!”
 - Then the Father says to the Son, “Wow, He gets it. He’s beginning to love us with his soul. That’s the love we have for each other.”

- It is praying...

“Lord, I may fail today; I may let someone down today; I probably won’t do everything perfect today; But I am worthy; I am beloved; I am adopted; I am gifted; I am successful because You say I am. I am going to take risks and love You and others today. Thank you that I’m successful because You love me and I’m beloved and worthy of love.”

The Great Paradox, the Great Irony:

- The more you discover your identity in Christ the more you discover yourself!

Timothy Keller says it well,

“The great paradox is that we find ourselves, this unconquerable identity and confidence, only through humbling ourselves, giving up the right to self-determination, and following Christ. [Jesus said] “Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.” (Matt. 10:39). That, when we stop trying to find and serve ourselves and instead give ourselves in service to God and others as we put our faith in Christ, we find ourselves. This is the path of Jesus.” (*Making Sense of God* p. 142)

In other words:

- You will never stop trying to make a good impression on others until you stop thinking about what sort of impression you are making.
- You will never stop worrying over being happy until you find joy in Christ, for then you will be happy.
- The principle of loving God with all your heart and soul is about giving up yourself to Jesus and you will discover the true you, the authentic you.

- Nothing you haven't given up is really yours. Nothing in you that has not died will ever be raised from the dead.
- But give yourself wholeheartedly to Christ and you will find your whole heart!