



Links Players

RELATING TO GOD 3: THOSE WHO LOVE GOD

“Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.” (Luke 7:47, NIV)

LET’S GO BACK TO YOUR TEENAGE YEARS. You’ve dropped off your girlfriend, given her a kiss under the porch light, climbed back in your car, given the engine a bit of gas, and turned the corner away from her house. Then *that song* comes on the radio, the one that says everything you feel about love. It’s the sound track of your drive home, with your girl on your mind and those lyrics on your lips.

When you hear that song now, you might consider it with the experience of life and realize how insufficient it was in its understanding of love. But its tune and its lyrics are with you for good. They may conjure up more than nostalgia.

Love is a wildly broad concept. High school dates get mingled with grandchildren and garlic bread and even your 7-iron. We wouldn’t be surprised to hear you say you love any one of these things. It’s the way we use the word. Broadly. Maybe even carelessly. It can mean a fondness, a strong preference, or something deeper.

When it comes to the way love is taught from the Scriptures, you might find yourself listening to a preacher talk about love’s covenantal quality. “Love is not a feeling,” this preacher says. “It’s a commitment.” Which is absolutely true and absolutely incomplete—because even committed love can come with all the emotional expressions of your favorite balladeer.

Consider the case of the woman who came to Jesus at the Pharisee’s house. Jesus was there for dinner, where he was invited but not greeted with any noticeable warmth. Then enters the woman. She wet Jesus’ feet with her tears, dried them with her hair, kissed them, then anointed them with perfume. This was no emotionless covenant; it was a vibrant expression. And it did not go unnoticed.

When the Pharisee questioned within himself this woman’s sinful background, Jesus read his thoughts. He told a parable of two men who had been forgiven debts, one small and one large. Then he asked which would love the moneylender more. From here Jesus explained that those who have been forgiven much love much.

In our relationship with Jesus, we have been forgiven much. Everything, in fact. For this reason, we should be those who love him much. Jesus doesn’t just love you; indeed, you have every reason to express your love to him, too.

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2020 Links Players International. An introductory video for this study is available here: <https://youtu.be/IXNXPJcLks>

Opening questions What is your favorite club? Is it always faithful to you, or do you find yourself having to forgive it at times, when it produces ugly shots?

READING Mark 12:28-30; Luke 10:25-37

Upward: Aspects of loving God (Mark 12:28-30)

The greatest of all commands, confirmed by Jesus and captured in the L in the LINKS acronym, is that we love God. How might you engage in each of these aspects of loving God?

Heart _____

Soul _____

Mind _____

Strength _____

Outward: Loving others (Luke 10)

What did Jesus say was the second great commandment?

How does the parable Jesus told here emphasize the extent of our neighborly love? How do others know that *you* love God?