

## ***Encountering God's Affections: The Pathway to Our Destiny***

### **I. TRANSFORMED BY ENCOUNTERING THE AFFECTIONS OF GOD**

- A. To know the love of Christ means to know by experience His affections. God wants us to feel His affection for us. It has significant implications in the way it impacts our hearts.

***That you...may be able to comprehend...what is the width and length and depth and height--19 to know (experience) the love (affections) of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Eph. 3:18-19)***

1. Feeling God's affection brings pleasure and exhilaration to our hearts. This is a part of our inheritance.
  2. Feeling God's affection equips us for our full destiny by anchoring our soul in God. The breakthrough of the anointing of power and divine favor brings with it added the pressures of temptation, pride and criticism. When we are anchored in the experience of God's love, then we are equipped to resist compromise in times of temptation, to walk in humility in times of exaltation and to not yield to the fear of man when criticized.
  3. It is the foundation that empowers us to run to God instead of from God as we so often encounter our sin and weakness during our journey in this life.
- B. Paul said that God's love passes knowledge. In other words, we cannot comprehend it without the help of the Holy Spirit. It cannot be comprehended with only our natural ability.
- C. There is a paradox today in the Church. Many talk about the love of God while being content to not press into it ***to actually experience its power***. In a spiritual culture of compromise and permissiveness, some are falsely comforted by references to God's love without understanding the glorious reality of it.
- D. The genuine experience of God's affection makes us ravenously hungry for more. In other words, for holiness. We go hard after God's heart to experience more of His affection. Holy diligence is not an attempt to earn us God's love but positions us to experience more of it.
1. Enjoying the love of God is not the opposite of holiness.
  2. Enjoying the love of God in truth, never leads us to spiritual passivity.

- E. The ultimate statement about our worth and value is that Jesus has the same measure of love (affection) towards us that His Father has towards Him.

***As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide (live in) in My love. 10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love...11 These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. (Jn. 15:9-11)***

1. ***That My joy may remain in you*** – when the Holy Spirit releases Jesus' joy is in us, we feel a confidence in God with a buoyant joy and a free spirit. These times of "inspiration" greatly change how we feel for a few hours. This inspiration can be an ongoing grace.
2. ***That your joy may be full*** – the "impartation" of Jesus' joy to our emotions transforms our character (emotions make-up) which is consistently strengthened with joy.
3. ***Abide in My love*** – the challenge is to abide in God's love. We must contend to understand God's affections, then continue to fight so that we might remain in its reality. This is the primary issue that Satan will attack as our accuser (Rev. 12:10).
4. ***If you keep My commands*** – the consistent pursuit of 100-fold obedience increases our experience of God's affection by positioning us to receive more of it (not to earn more).
5. ***These things I have spoken to you*** – the Word of God is God's way for us to grow in the experience of His affections in a consistent way.

***You shall know (experience) the truth, and the truth shall make you free. (Jn. 8:32)***

***You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. 40 But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life...42 I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you. (Jn. 5:39-42)***

- F. The most powerful weapon against Satan's perpetual accusations is the fact of God's affection.

***If God is for us, who can be against us?...33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died...who also makes intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love (affection) of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution...or peril, or sword?...37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved (has affection for) us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love (affection) of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 8:32-39)***

## II. WORSHIPPING GOD WITH AN OPEN SPIRIT

*Love has been perfected (made mature/strong) among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. 19 We love Him because He first loved us. (1 Jn. 4:17-19)*

- A. Principle #1: The fear of judgment involves torment. Therefore, we all close our hearts when we fear being judged. In all our relationships (with God and people), we guard our spirit when we feel judged or condemned. Thus, we receive must less from God when we worship Him with a closed or guarded spirit.
- B. Principle #2: The finished work of the cross gives us boldness in the day of judgment because we know that in the same way that Jesus is received before the Father, so also are we received by Him (2 Cor. 5:17-21). This is not only true after we die, but is even true while we live in this world (1 Jn. 4:17c), filled with weakness.

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 18 Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus...19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them...21 for He made Him (Jesus) who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Cor. 5:17-21)*

- C. Principle #3: There is no fear of being judged to those with a revelation of God's love.
- D. Principle #4: A perfect or mature revelation of God's love (affection) casts out the fear of being judged and rejected.
- E. Principle #5: Love is made perfect (mature/strong) among us in "this way" or by understanding first, God's affection, second, the work of the cross and third, in pursuing a 100-fold obedience.
- F. Principle #6: He who fears has not been made perfect or mature in his revelation of Jesus' love.
- G. Principle #7: We are transformed progressively by the revelation of God's love or affection.  
*We love Him because (we understand that) He first loved us. (1 Jn. 4:19)*

### III. BEING TRANSFORMED BY THE REVELATION OF GOD'S AFFECTIONS

- A. When God wants to empower us to love Him, He reveals Himself as a lover to us.  
*We love Him because (we understand that) He first loved us. (1 Jn. 4:19)*
- B. We *love* Him because we understand that He first *loved* us. We *enjoy or pursue* Jesus because we understand that He first *enjoyed or pursued* us.

- C. **Principle:** whatever we encounter about God's heart (His passion) for us becomes awakened in our heart back to God. Encounter (meditation unto revelation) results in transformation. What we understand about God's heart is essential to transforming our emotions.
- D. **We change our mind, then God changes our hearts.** We change our mind (understanding about God), then God changes our emotions (unlocks our hearts). Wrong understanding about God damages our hearts. Wrong ideas about God's personality leads to blocking our intimacy with Him.

#### IV. BEHOLDING THE GLORY OF GOD – HIS POWER, WISDOM AND EMOTIONS

*But we all, beholding...the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Cor. 3:18)*

- A. **The "beholding and becoming" principle** – whatever we behold (meditation unto revelation) in God's heart towards us becomes awakened in our heart back to God (transformation). Beholding God's heart refers to studying about it until we understand it more and thus encounter Him.
- B. In 2 Cor. 3:18, Paul was specifically referring to the situation in Moses' life in which he cried out to behold God's glory. To proclaim the Lord's name is to proclaim His personality (His emotions).

*Moses said, "Please, show me Your glory." 19 Then He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you..." (Ex. 33:18-19)*

*The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth..." (Ex 34:6)*

1. To proclaim the Lord's name is to proclaim His personality (His character).
2. God's glory includes His power and wisdom, however, the pinnacle of God's glory is His emotions (revelation of His passions).
3. **The Lord is merciful** – He is tender with our weaknesses.
4. **The Lord is gracious** – He does not give us what we deserve.
5. **The Lord is longsuffering** – He bears with us and does not write us off.
6. **The Lord is abounding in goodness** – He overflows with good plans for us.

- C. The emotions of God that are most easily grasped are His tender mercy and gladness. We will not comprehend His affection for us until we have a foundational understanding of His tender mercy and gladness towards us.
- D. God's tender mercy is far beyond anything that we can compare with it.  
*Let the wicked forsake his way...let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him...for He will abundantly pardon. 8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. 9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." (Isa. 55:7-9)*
- E. Jesus walked in the anointing of gladness more than any man in history (Heb. 1:9; Ps. 45:7). He had a free spirit filled with gladness that radiated out of His countenance. Gladness and joy are at the center of Jesus' personality. Jesus imparts His joy to His people through feeding on His Word unto transforming their emotions so that it becomes their joy. David, the theologian of God's gladness, described God's heart as full of joy and pleasures. Jesus is full of joy. His primary posture of heart and leadership style is gladness (Ps 16:11).
- F. God's glorious gladness is infinite. However, the paradigm that is most common is that of a **God who is mostly mad or mostly sad when we relate to Him**. The revelation of a **God with a smiling heart** awakens a smiling heart in us. This revelation releases security in us with a free spirit instead of being dominated by condemnation.
- G. As we become students of God's emotions, we grow in revelation of His tender mercy, then His gladness and then His affection.