

LOVE'S JOURNEY "Love's Reward"

Luke 6:32-35

- 32 "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' love those who love them.
- 33 And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' do that.
- 34 And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full.
- 35 But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. **Then your reward will be great**, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. NIV

We examined the principle of "love your enemies" in "Love's Challenge." What we want to focus on now is the reward of love. Now, you would think that love would be its own reward. And in some ways it is. It may seem contradictory to look at love's reward when love "seeketh not her own." But our Father is a multifaceted motivator. He not only wants us to do what is right because it is right, He also wants us to know that our right doing will be rewarded. This is why Jesus let the disciples know that if they loved their enemy, their reward would be great.

Luke 6:36 "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful." NIV

Mercy is love in action. How is this love manifest and what benefits or rewards do we receive by walking in love?

Luke 6:37-38

- 37 "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.
- 38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." NIV

Love not only constrains us to act in a certain way, it also confines us from behaving in other ways. If we do not judge, we will not be judged. If we do not condemn, we will not be condemned. If we forgive, we will be forgiven. And if we give, we will be given to.

1 Cor 13:1-3

- 1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.
- 2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.
- 3 If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. NIV

Please note that all of the above are worthy endeavors. We should pray in the Spirit. We should prophecy, receive revelation, and do miracles. We should give to the poor and offer our bodies as living sacrifices. But without love, all of them are worthless. Without love, all of them are meaningless!

But when we do these things in love:

- *Our prayer languages will have meaning.*
- *We retain our identity in Christ. (Matt 7:22-23)*
- *Our deposits in heaven will receive full credit. (1 Cor 3:13-15)*

Matt 7:22-23

22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?'

23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!' NIV

If Christ doesn't know you, then you truly are nothing!

1 Cor 3:11-15

11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw,

13 his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work.

14 If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward.

15 If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames. NIV

Giving alms with no love is like making a deposit at the ATM and not recording your account number! Without love, the gifts will bring no personal profit. The poor will be blessed, to be sure. But we would receive no benefit from it.

Rom 12:20-21

20 On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."

21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. NIV

Again, this is the essence of love, overcoming evil with good. What was more evil than the murder of The Innocent Man on the cross? What was more good than His selfless sacrifice that bought for us fellowship with the Father? Love is well doing.

Rom 2:6-7

6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: KJV

Glory-

Glory is brilliance and shining, manifest honor.

Rom 8:18

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. NIV

Phil 3:21

who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. NIV

Glory will be had by the body of Christ. The question is to what degree?

1 Cor 15:40-44

40 There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: **for one star differeth from another star in glory.**

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:

43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:

44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. KJV

Just as in the heavens, one star shines brighter than others, so also in the resurrection of the dead.

Dan 12:2-3

2 Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.

3 Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever. NIV

What could be more loving than to lead many to righteousness? Both are said to cover a multitude of sins.

James 5:20

remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins. NIV

1 Peter 4:8

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. NIV

Honor-

Honor means having value or being paid a price.

1 Peter 1:6-9

6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.

7 These have come so that your faith-of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire-may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

8 Though you have not seen him, **you love him**; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,

9 for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls. NIV

Love sustains us through trials of faith. Though faith, hope, and love remain, love is the greatest of them all.

2 Tim 2:20-21

20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor.

21 Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, **he will be a vessel for honor**, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. NKJV

When we move from a heart of love, we will be vessels of honor fit for the Master's use.

Immortality-

The word used here for immortality actually means incorruptibility. Love is a preserver.

1 Cor 15:42

So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. NKJV

Love remains and builds incorruptibility into our lives.

Rev 22:12-14

12 "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done.

13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

14 "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. NIV

Because He is coming back with His reward in His hand, we need to hold on to love as our motivation, walk, and challenge that we not lose our reward. How do we do it?

Rom 5:5

And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. NIV

He has enabled us by His Spirit to love as He loves. All we need to do is do it!