



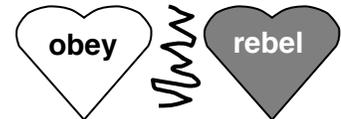
#13 Desire for a Loving Relationship

Redemption displays God's intense love for his human creation. As children of God we are to live in loving relationship with Him.

* Ruined Relationship (Genesis 6:5-7)

"The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. The Lord regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled." (Genesis 6:5-7).

- The original purpose for humanity was that they relate to God through loving relationship. In humanity's relationship with God love and obedience are inextricably tied in scripture. Obedience is the expression of love.



~ "Love the Lord your God and keep his requirements, his decrees, his laws and his commands always." (Dt. 11:1)

~ "Jesus replied, 'Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching.'" (John 14:23)

- Adam & Eve chose (and we through them) the opposite of love when they rebelled against God. The heart which is seen as the _____ of love is corrupted in the fall.
- The fall presents this problem: men and women will always choose rebellion, hate & disobedience. The solution cannot come from the ruined heart of man.

* Relating With Rebels (Genesis 25:23-26)

"So she went to inquire of the Lord. The Lord said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger." When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau. After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob." (Genesis 25:23-26)

- God chooses to enter relationship with those He desires regardless of their behavior or effort. Before Jacob and Esau are born the sovereign Lord declares that the _____ will serve the _____. This is a reversal of the cultural norm – the eldest is usually held in high esteem.
- God's choice to freely extend "one-way" love is known as _____. Through this aspect of redemption God displays His grace, mercy and sovereignty. (Romans 9:10-16)
- The solution of redemption for humanity's heart disease is that God elects the undeserving to receive His love, attention and sacred promise.

"The covenant principles continue to be demonstrated in Jacob. Through the election of grace he becomes the descendant of Abraham through Isaac to whom the promises of God are made" – Graeme Goldsworthy, According to Plan

* Relationship Reborn (John 3:3-8)

"Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again." "How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!" Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." (John 3:3-8)

- In the O.T. a pattern emerges in God's choice of people to whom he will communicate and relate. By choosing the _____ born male children (Abel, Isaac & Jacob) God shows that it is not those who are naturally strong but the weakest that depends upon God and therefore have the most intimate relationship with Him.
- Spiritual rebirth is necessary in order enter relationship with God. God's irresistible grace enables us to love and obey God as we should.
- Just as we had no part to play in our _____ we can only receive the regeneration of the "second birth" as a gracious gift from God. However, we must now learn how to correctly respond to God just as a child learns how to love & obey parents.

* Ready for Relationship (Matthew 5:8)

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God." (Matthew 5:8)

- By being "born again" our corrupt hearts are enabled to respond in love once again.

~ *"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh." (Ezekiel 36:26)*

~ *"A person is not a Jew who is one only outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a person's praise is not from other people, but from God." (Romans 2:28-29)*

* Loving Relationship (Mat 22:34-40)

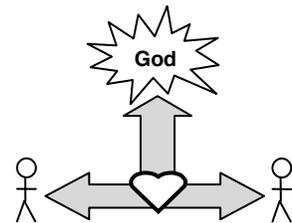
"Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: 'Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?' Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." (Matthew 22:34-40)

- Loving God is a matter of _____. It encompasses both our vertical and horizontal relationships. We must live in dynamic loving relationship with God and with people at the same time.

~ *"Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased." (Hebrews 13:15-16)*

~ *"As for other matters, brothers and sisters, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more." (1 Thes. 4:1)*

- Living in relationship with God is a continuous submission to his will, as revealed in scripture. We must reject the path of selfishness and choose to imitate the love we have received.



Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

~ 1 John 4:7-12

Conclusion

The work of Jesus allows us to relate to God in the way He wants us to – by loving Him! This is so that we might rightly respond to God in obedience and enjoy our relationship with Him now and forever.

Discussion questions:

- 1) In what areas do you struggle to love God? How have you seen your attitudes and actions change as you mature?
- 2) How are love and obedience interconnected?
- 3) How does God's one-way love impact the way you relate to others? What makes for a good relationship? What is one relationship in which you have experienced brokenness?

**The New International Version is used for all scripture references*