

Vocabulary Word #8 – LOVE

Vocabulary for Our Times

March 10, 2019

Malachi 1:1-4 ...Not Feeling the Love

*When God said in verse 2, "I have loved you, says the Lord," the Israelites respond skeptically, "How hast thou loved us?" ...Now test yourselves here. How would you answer that question in your own life? How would you describe God's love to you. Is your life and family in such a shambles that you feel as skeptical about it as the Israelites did? Do you want to say, "How hast thou loved me?" I don't doubt that there is a little of that in all of us. And so it will do us all good to listen to God's answer which is almost never heard today." **John Piper**, "The Greatness of God's Electing Love"*

...At some point in our life journey, we are asking some form of this question—"How have you loved us?" "Where is the Love of God in THIS?" "Why does God feel so distant and unengaged?"

*But the people had not learned their lesson from the exile. They had grown skeptical of God's love (1:2), careless in worship (1:7), indifferent to the truth (2:6-7), disobedient to the covenant (2:10), faithless in their marriages (2:15; 3:5), and stingy in their offerings (3:8). To this carnal and rebellious people God sent his messenger (Malachi means "my messenger"), and the first message he put on his lips was, "I have loved you, says the Lord!" **John Piper**, "The Greatness of God's Electing Love"*

...When our lives are not relating well to God or walking in our own priorities rather than in His—Do Not be Surprised that we Lack an Experience of God's Love!

Critical to Life's Journey into the Purposes of God is an Encounter with and Awareness of the Love of God! ...We will need this Vocabulary Word this year!

INTRO ...the 'TOP' vocabulary word of all time?

Today's word is perhaps the most necessary word, as well as the most misplaced and misapplied and underappreciated word on our list.

"If people believe in God at all today, the overwhelming majority hold that this God—however he, she, or it may be understood—is a loving being. ...this widely disseminated belief in the love of God is set with increasing frequency in some matrix other than biblical theology. ...we live in a culture in which many other and complementary truths about God are widely disbelieved. ...The result, of course, is that the love of God in our culture has been purged of anything the culture finds uncomfortable. The love of God has been sanitized, democratized, and above all sentimentalized. This process has been going on for some time. My generation was taught to sing, 'What the world needs now is love, sweet love,' in which we robustly instruct the Almighty that we do not need another mountain (we have enough of them), but we could do with some more love." D.A. Carson, "The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God," p. 9, 11

The Feeling & Experience of Love

*...as people, we are not merely looking to 'know that we are loved'—we are looking to feel that love, to experience that love. ...But, **What Does Love FEEL Like?***

ILLUST: "Feeling Love is Like TASTING Food"

When Do You Feel Loved by God? ...What Does Love FEEL LIKE...

1) When God loves us as a Father who disciplines—What does that love feel like?

Heb 12:3-11

2) When God loves us through His provision—What does that love feel like?

Luke 12:22-24

3) When God loves us as a Friend who makes Himself known to us—What Does That Feel Like?

John 15:12-15

4) When God's love is not affirming but reveals our lack... What does that Feel Like?

Prov 27:6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.

Mark 10:21-22

5) When God loves us with Longing Affection

Zephaniah 3:15-17

Hosea 11:1-4, 7-9

Luke 15:17-23

6) When God's Love is experienced via Our Obedience or Actions—What does that love feel like?

Jude 1:20-21

John 15:9-10

7) When God's Love is our inward Motivation—What does that love feel like?

2 Cor 5:14-15

- Gk. *synechō*; to hold together, i.e. to compress, to compel, preoccupy

Jn 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son...

John 13:34 "...love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another."

8) When God loves us with His Covenant Love (Heb. 'Hesed' = lovingkindness, steadfast love; Gk. 'Agape' = His unconditional love)

Deut 7:6-8

- v. 7 ... ḥāšaq; a primitive root; to cling, i.e. join, to love, delight in;
- v. 8 ... 'ahāḇâ
- v. 9 ... ḥesed [God's Covenant Love ...A love that forever messes with our own sense of 'pressure to preform'!]

Rom 9:10-13

Romans 5:8

Ephesians 2:4-5

? - How Have You Loved Us?

WARNING: TODAY our Culture Has Taught us to Value and Treasure the Narrowest Sense of Experiencing Love—to be treated as “uniquely special”. [**God's love is expressed and received in a great variety of ways, we must be careful that we don't ignore or invalidate all other expressions of God's love for us, except the 2 or 3 that we prize the most!**]

"I love you, because you're Special" (You have Special Features, Talents, Achievements, etc.)

- **God loved Israel that way—but the 'Special Status' came from inside of God!** (Deut 7, Rom 9)
- **The Prodigal was NOT Special Because of Something He Had Done!!** He knew that! ...But He WAS LOVED—Because Fathers Set Their Love on Their Sons!!! ...The Older Brother WAS SPECIAL (Listen to His Resume: faithful, responsible, well-performed all these years)—but He Didn't Feel Loved!!

This idea DEMANDS PERFORMANCE!

"God does not 'fall in Love' with the elect; he does not 'fall in Love' with us; he sets his affection on us. ...So now God comes to us and says, 'I love you.' What does that mean? Does he mean something like this? 'You mean everything to

me. I can't live without you. Your personality, your witty conversation, your beauty, your smile—everything about you transfixed me. Heaven would be boring without you. I love you! That, after all, is pretty close to what some therapeutic approaches to the love of God spell out. We must be pretty wonderful because God loves us. And dear old God is pretty vulnerable, finding himself in a dreadful state unless we say yes.” D.A. Carson, “The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God”, p. 61-62

“There are thus two critical points. First, God exercises this love in conjunction with all his other perfections, but his love is no less love for all that. Second, his love emanates from his own character, it is not dependent on the loveliness of the loved, external to himself.” D.A. Carson, “The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God”, p. 63

“It is easy to see what will happen if any one of these five biblical ways of talking about the love of God is absolutized and made exclusive, or made the controlling grid by which the other ways of talking about the love of God are relativized. ...we need all that Scripture says on this subject, or the doctrinal and pastoral ramifications will prove disastrous.” D.A. Carson, “The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God”, p. 21, 23

2 Thess 3:5 May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ.

Do Not Be AMATEURS at Exploring the Love of God!!

Psalms 103:8-17

...Oh, don't make the mistake of treasuring the “Flourishing of a Flower” over Experiencing of God's Love!!