



Heart Love

Luke 7:36-47

Welcome to **Soulmind**. Did you know that God is a community? The Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) are a community of love – one in which we have been invited to participate.

For a long time, I puzzled over what loving God looks and feels like. The word “love” is all over in the Bible. Our cultural definition of love, especially romantic love, is most often about a warm, fuzzy feeling.

I have lots to learn about loving God, and I’m glad you’re on the journey with me.



~Jeannie

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Be sure to check out the **SOUL PRACTICE** suggestion for this week (*see below*).

Topic Overview

Do you *love* God? What does this mean to you? Jesus told us: “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.” And he caps it off by saying: “This is *the* most important, the first on any list.”

For a long time, I puzzled over what loving God means, what loving Him looks and feels like. The word “love” is all over in the Bible. Our cultural definition of love, especially romantic love, is most often about a warm, fuzzy feeling.

By personality and upbringing, I tend to be pretty reserved in my emotional expressions of love for the people I care about. I used to feel pressured to raise my hands in a worship service at church; it felt fake for me to do that – I just wasn’t feelin’ it! Is *that* what loving God looks like, I wondered? Are they feeling something that I don’t? Maybe, maybe not.

Loving God with my mind is easy for me – to be awed and amazed by what I learn about Him through the Bible, from other people’s insights, through Jesus, and through creation. And yes, I

know that unselfish caring for and serving others is how loving God is tangibly lived out. But there's an emotional heart piece to what Jesus says about our relationship with God that really can't be overlooked or denied.

There is a story told in the gospels about an immoral woman who broke into a dinner party. Kneeling in front of Jesus, she wept all over His feet, wiped them with her hair, repeatedly kissing His feet while she poured out a very expensive perfume on them. Can you picture this? Her actions seemed ridiculously passionate and over the top to the Pharisees and disciples – and, honestly, to me, too. I would never do that! But, she seemed oblivious to the fact that everyone there was looking down on her, with a judgment attitude. They were scornful of her because of her reputation *and* for wasting all that expensive perfume. However, Jesus commended her for loving Him so openly and extravagantly – so passionately. Is this what loving God looks like?

I think that loving God with our heart will look differently for each of us. But it seems clear that external religious performance and looking good on the outside won't get us there.

Daily Scriptures

MONDAY

Matthew 22:37-38 (MSG)

Jesus said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the most important, the first on any list."

TUESDAY

John 11:33-35 (NLT)

When Jesus saw her weeping and saw the other people wailing with her, a deep anger welled up within him, and he was deeply troubled. "Where have you put him?" he asked them. They told him, "Lord, come and see." Then Jesus wept.

WEDNESDAY

Luke 7:47-48 (NLT)

"I tell you, her sins—and they are many—have been forgiven, so she has shown me much love. But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love."

THURSDAY

1 John 2:15-16 (MSG)

Don't love the world's ways. Don't love the world's goods. Love of the world squeezes out love for the Father. Practically everything that goes on in the world—wanting your own way, wanting everything for yourself, wanting to appear important—has nothing to do with the Father. It just isolates you from him.

FRIDAY

Ephesians 3:18-19 (NLT)

And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

Doing Your Part

SOUL PRACTICE

Feeling the Story

Instead of reading the Bible to gain information, try entering into a biblical story emotionally by imagining that you are there. Use this week's Scripture from Luke, and listen to the Scripture on the audio devotional. Now read the same verses, slowly, one or two more times. Imagine the experience of the characters in the story—what might they have been feeling? Which character do you relate to most? What does this story tell you about the heart of Jesus? What does this story tell you about the Father who sent Him to rescue you?

Some other Biblical stories to read in this way:

Mark 6:30-44 – Sheep without a shepherd

John 11:1-44 – Lazarus

Mark 10:17-22 – Rich Young Ruler

Wise Words

The truth of the gospel is intended to free us to love God and others with our whole heart. When we ignore this heart aspect of our faith and try to live out our religion solely as correct doctrine or ethics, our passion is crippled or perverted, and the divorce of our soul from the heart purposes of God toward us is deepened.

Curtis & Eldridge *The Sacred Romance*

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