

## The New Commandment Love and Our Destiny

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As we have been pursuing this matter we've been considering what is behind these categories because it is obvious they *are* categories inasmuch as when he is talking about "what love is" he is simply talking about what love is. When he is talking about "what it is not", that's all he talks about and when he is talking about "what love is always" that's also all he talks about and he doesn't mix and match these categories which tells us that there is a great orderliness to the passage. When you see that in Scripture it is appropriate to enquire into what is behind this categorization.

In the first place, we've observed that when he speaks about "what love is" he is looking at the eternal destiny of a person and when you see a person's destiny and you begin to understand who the person is, you know where they are in the process of fulfilling their destiny. In the Old Testament, when David was a young man, things happened to him that normally would happen to a young man. As he became older and his destiny unfolded all the more, the things that happened to him in his youth began to be the training exercises and you could see how these concepts and these experiences from his youth began to shape him and make him ready for his time and his place as king. This is true of everyone. When you are young you go through the training exercises and you experience the things that happen to you in good measure to prepare you for the future. If you suddenly arrive at the future without having learned the things that would have prepared you for the future, you are obligated to fail.

Someone has said that there is nothing worse for a young person than an unbroken string of success and I think that there is real truth to that statement—I think that it was maybe Bob Mumford who said that—that there was nothing worse for a young person than an unbroken string of success because the person doesn't know how to live. If you see a person going through their difficulties but you *know* who they are, you will help them come through the difficulties but you will do nothing to keep them from experiencing these things. Love is patient and love is kind and it means that when you see them going through what they're going through—even if they are the ones creating their own turmoil, if they are the ones creating their own turbulence—you will still be patient with

them and you will still be kind to them because that's what they do when they are at a certain stage.

You see, the foundation of modern psychology is to test rats in a laboratory and extrapolate the behavior of rats in a laboratory to human beings. What utter rubbish... and to think that so much of Christian counseling is influenced by these roots of psychology is to see how far the advice and the counsel that is commonly given to believers today—how far from the mark it is. You have to be able to hear the Spirit of God and determine by the counsel of the Holy Spirit what your response is. In this way it is the Spirit who is living in you who is doing the work of God and you then provide this body and He acts and lives through you. The counsel that you give, the interaction that you have with people, the way that you relate to people based upon listening to the Holy Spirit and responding will be totally redemptive and beneficial to the people. If you, however, practice the modern psychological things that are given to the Body of Christ, relationships are going to be fractured and often irretrievably lost simply because this is the wrong information. It's wrong because it does not contemplate an eternal point of view; it only considers a linear reaction to present circumstances.

So **“Love is patient, love is kind”** allows you to see a person in their present stage and see the relationship of that present stage to the destinies of their future. This is a point of view that you can only have when you walk with God, when God shows you what this point of view is and—even though their present behavior is offensive, even though their present behavior is immature, even though their present behavior is not really a reflection of that value that they will come to in the Lord later—if you see what this present behavior is and what is first being exposed in them and worked out then you can readily see how God is going to fit this to the future and their destinies. When you can stand on that platform and observe these things then it is not hard for you to be patient and kind if those are the circumstances.

Paul put it this way: he said in the book of **Philippians**, **“I want to know Christ and I want to be conformed to the likeness of His death and somehow to obtain to the resurrection of the dead.”** Now his concept of the resurrection of the dead—and this is from **Philippians**—his concept of the resurrection of the dead is a thing called the **“exanastasis”**. Let me read it to you. This is from **Philippians, chapter 3**, beginning at **verse 10**, **“I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that**

**too God will make clear to you. Only let us live up to what we have already attained.”** (Inserted – **Philippians 3:10-16**)

Now what is he saying here? He’s saying that if you are mature you will see things from an eternal point of view. The “out resurrection” that he speaks of is the term “exanastasis”. The normal term for resurrection is the term “anastasis” but “exanastasis” means “*out* resurrection” and what he is saying is that he could *see* that in his progression of faith and maturity that there was a time and a place when he was going to come to a place of being seated in the heavenly realm, seated on the Father’s throne and he—from that place—would see himself as an actor in the earth. That’s my earlier analogy of you being out of yourself, looking at yourself interacting with other people.

Paul puts it plainly in **Philippians** when he says he wants to be permanently seated in the out resurrection and from that place, observing himself as one of the actors in life interacting with other people. It was somewhat similar with John in the **4<sup>th</sup> chapter** of the **Revelation** when he said that he heard a voice calling to him saying, “Come up here and sit with me and I will show you what is to come.” And he said, “I saw a door open into heaven and immediately I was before the throne.” (Inserted – actual verse—“**After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, ‘Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.’ At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.” – Revelation 4:1,2**) So it is the intention of God, as you mature, to call you up to a place of vision that is out of yourself and seated on the throne. Now what you will see from that point of view is not only the future as it relates to apocalyptic issues and prophetic issues but you will also see people. You’ll see *all* things, including people. You’ll see them in their present states but you will see who they are to become and when you see them in their present states they will typically not be who they are to become, but the value to you of being able to see them in terms of who they are to become is that you understand what they are going through in their present circumstance.

Now the sacrifice that you present to God when you give your body as a living sacrifice is that you sacrifice your right to react in a linear way... your right to tell them off, your right to tell them how you’ve been hurt, your right to tell them how you’ve been disappointed and your right to expect or to demand anything from them. What you gain in response is a proper vision of who they are, who God made them to be and you gain a perspective that allows you to see where they are in relationship to the whole matter. You see where they are but you also see who they will become. It was somewhat like that with Jesus and Peter and John. Jesus—at the end of the life of Jesus as He was about to go back to heaven—He spoke to Peter and John and He said to Peter, “Peter, when you were young you went where *you* wanted to go but when you are old you will be lead where you don’t want to go.” (Inserted – actual verse—“**I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when**

**you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.” – John 21:18)** Now He was telling Peter his future. He saw Peter as a young man—impulsive, rash, effusive and also one who was disloyal and treacherous, one who was self-preserving—He saw all of that. But He also saw who Peter would become... “When you are old you will be lead where you don’t want to go; you will sacrifice yourself.” And this was exactly what happened to Peter in the course of his own maturing.

So how did Jesus deal with Peter when Peter betrayed Jesus? Well, Jesus saw that the stage at which Peter betrayed Jesus was the stage of Peter doing what Peter wanted to do. Jesus clearly knew of Peter’s self-preserving man-pleasing ways. He [Peter] didn’t want the Jews to think badly of him so on one occasion he wouldn’t associate with the Gentiles and Paul had to call him down. (Inserted – **Galatians 2:11-14**) So Peter didn’t go immediately from where he was in three years of being a disciple of Jesus, from a rough fisherman to this one who will say, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female. We’re all the sons of God.” (Inserted – actual verse—**“There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” – Galatians 3:28,29**) For a long time in Peter’s life he thought that it was the best thing to be a Jewish male—a free Jewish male. So when Peter turns and helps his brothers, the value that he brings is the value that all of our destinies bring when we have come to the place of maturity. Now we who are believers—and especially we who are leaders—we have this duty to each other to see where the other is and to speak and to act in relationship to *that* so that we assist others to become who God made them to be. Sometimes that will require us to be patient and kind even when you are being betrayed by a close friend as Jesus was with Peter.

Now, in the second category—the first was **“Love is patient, love is kind.”**—the second category says, **“It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.”** (Inserted – **I Corinthians 13:4b-7**) Now let us go back to “what it is not”. In all of the references to “what love is not” there is an inherent connection. Look at it. He says, “Love does not envy, love does not boast.” Now what is this talking about? This means that when you see as God sees you do not see yourself so much as an individual, independent and removed from everybody else. This is a vision that begins to appreciate others who are of the Body of Christ. It is also a vision that allows you to appreciate the gift of God and the grace of God that is in somebody else and the benefit of that gift and that grace to you. So in a sense this concept of love that speaks about “what love is not” very much values and treasures what is in another.

First, it requires you to be able to see what is in another and then the additional step is it requires you to appreciate what that value is either potentially or actually. Look, when is

it that you do not envy? When is it that you do not boast? What are envy and boasting (and all of the things that are in this category have this element to it)? What do these things point to? What door are they opening up to you? They are opening up the category of non-competition, of cooperativeness, of valuing what the other brings. For so long our entire perspective on the Body of Christ has been “congregational”. In other words, “How many people come to *my* church? How many people come and follow what I am doing, what I am saying?” In that framework you have to be greater than somebody else. There is no possibility of recognizing someone else’s value when you are involved in a model that is inherently competitive. The church has not been able—in this competitive model that’s congregational—to properly disabuse people of the false value of envy, boasting, strife and these other things. And the funny thing is that this leaven translates itself into all forms of relational poison. It poisons every form of relationship.

Here: let’s look at it again: **“It [love] does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.”** You can see that these are the descriptions of competitiveness. **“It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil** (that is when something bad befalls the other party) **but rejoices with the truth.”** What is meant by this? This is love of a very different depth. The first part—**“Love is patient, love is kind.”**—that requires that you have an eternal vision of who a person is. This that has to do with “what love is not” sees you as integrated with others. You are not a whole all by yourself. You are not independent of the other.

I began to learn this particular message in my marriage and with my wife. My wife is an administrator and she makes lists. Now to me, her list-making was an insult. I remember thinking that I could remember four items on a list. One occasion she asked me to run an errand and she gave me a list of probably three or four things. I remember thinking, “This woman thinks that I am mentally unsound. If you want me to run an errand to get three or four things at the grocery store I can remember three or four things.” She handed me this list when she asked me to run the errand. I stuffed the list in my pocket fully intending not to look at it. Sometimes you don’t say what you are thinking and this is one occasion on which I didn’t. I drove out of the driveway down to the grocery store—it was a grocery errand—and somebody cut me off in traffic. Well immediately I could see that that person was not necessarily going to Heaven because who would cut you off in traffic and go to Heaven? So I prophesied where the person was going to go and I got involved in the whole traffic incident. I got to the store and I couldn’t remember what my name was, let alone why I was there and at that moment the Lord reminded me of my list but as I reached for my list in my pocket the Lord showed me something that changed my relationship with my wife in respect to the matter of list-making. I went from seeing it as an attack upon my ability to remember things to a necessary help to me because I get distracted in traffic...I get distracted with other things and I *need* somebody to make lists for me. It keeps me from having to remember

everything. I do keep a number of things going on in my head at any moment in time and many important things slip.

Now if my idea was that this list-making was not appropriate then I could readily see how I would reject that gift and my actions in rejecting that gift would show a certain boastfulness, pridefulness, non-acceptance of the help that God had given me. It is a very small matter in the overall scheme of things but it illustrates very quickly what happens when we do not see the other the way they are and therefore we do not appreciate what the Body of Christ has for us. This example of something that arose within my own home and marriage shows that before we could actually get to the place of appreciating our brothers and sisters whom we do not know, God will typically begin with us with those relationships that are right close to our hearts, right under our noses.

I want to pick up and deal with this all the more because I believe that we are breaking some very new ground in talking about “what love is”. In short, when you see yourself as a member of the Body of Christ, the value of the other parts of the Body is not discretionary. The value of the other parts of the Body is the way you value yourself in extension. Who *you* are is as much who *they* are and their ability to function being who they are. Love allows us to move out of this sense of isolation and independence and begin to move into an acceptance of who we are as the total Body of Christ extended through the gifts, the callings, the experiences, the lives of all of the rest of the Body of Christ and particularly those members with whom our lives are immediately intertwined. I’d like for us to pursue this matter then as we continue to examine the new commandment: “Love one another as I have loved you.” (Inserted – actual verse—“**A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.**” – **John 13:34**) It’s the Lord living through us and loving through us. It requires, therefore, His point of view on every relationship and that’s what we’re looking at. I’m Sam Soleyn and I’ll see you again. God bless you.

### Scripture References:

I Corinthians 13:4a

Philippians 3:10-16

Revelation 4:1,2

John 21:18

Galatians 2:11-14

Galatians 3:28,29

I Corinthians 13:4b-7

John 13:34