

The New Commandment To Be Partakers of the Divine Nature

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To be partakers of the divine nature: these are terms that are very threatening to religious ideas and so they are finessed away. But in fact to be a partaker of the divine nature means whatever the divine nature *is*, we who are born again are born of that very nature. So the question is: Who is God? What is His nature? There is one answer that comes up to both questions: God is love and His nature is to love. (Inserted-actual verse-**“Whoever does not love does not know god, because God is love.” – I John 4:8**) Now exactly *how* does God love? The Bible said, **“God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”** (Inserted – **Romans 5:8**) That means that God the Father, and Christ Jesus the Son collaborated in a particular manner that caused the expression of their nature to be fully on display, that is: that they loved “another” *more* than they loved themselves. This is actually to plumb the depths of what it means to love. Now the 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**) and furthermore the command to: “Be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect,” (Inserted – actual verse-**“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”-Matthew 5:48**)—both relate to love, to loving in a particular manner. The *standard* is the same for God as it is for man—the standard of love. To be perfect in love means to love as God loves because the love of God *is* what is perfect love.

Now today we have heard and we are bombarded with every sort of pop-psychology on the subject of love. Whether it is Christians talking about love or whether it is secular people talking about love, love has been defined variously as either “tough” and it’s attached to such notions as being co-dependent, being enablers, etc. So love has been talked about in the alternatives of being “tough” or “tolerant” but these standards are irrelevant

when applied to God. The love of God is that which loves another more than God loves Himself. Now what people do is they rush ahead to try to give “form” to the meaning of loving another more than you love yourself. Those of the psychology of “tolerance” would suggest this means that you should accept and tolerate everyone else no matter how bizarre their points of view might be because that’s what it means to love another more than you love yourself—or at least *as much* as you love yourself. And those who are manipulators would consider loving by aggressively opposing others, in short, “tough love”; that is the appropriate standard.

I say according to the Scriptures *neither* standard is the standard of how God loves. Both standards are irrelevant and they constitute merely human popular psychological notions. We have to reach deeper than that in order to understand what exactly is it to be a partaker of the divine nature. Now the first threshold is that you love another more than you love yourself. There is no point at which this conflict becomes more clear and more apparent than the point at which your own life is at risk. If the choice is between *your* life and the life of another you can only love another “more” or “less” than you love yourself. You *cannot* love another *equally* if the choice is the life of another or your own life. If that is the balance there is no middle ground.

You cannot say that the answer is to love another as you love yourself because how do you resolve the question of the forfeiture of either your life or the life of another? How do you decide? Because if you say that you love “less” then you’ll save your own life; if you say you love “more” then you’ll *give* your own life but there’s no place here—when the issue is the forfeiture of your own life—there is no place for, “...as you love yourself.” That was the standard of the “old” commandment: “Love your neighbor as you love yourself.” (Inserted – actual verse-**“Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.” – Leviticus 19:18**) That never anticipated that you would have to make a decision about whether you, yourself, would live or not. It was presumed that it was too much to ask of *anyone* that they would give their lives so it said, “Love as you love yourself.”

The love of God is not like that. The love of God is not, “...as you love yourself.” The love of God is to love *more* than you love yourself. On the cross, God on the cross called out to God in heaven and asked that he be excused from this suffering. But God in heaven refused to hear the cry of God on the cross for relief and turned His back on Him.(Inserted – actual verse-**“About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’—which means, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’” – Matthew 27:46**) Why? Because of another... because of another; that “another” was us. If God in heaven applied the standard of, “...as you love yourself,” to this situation then God in heaven would have a dilemma because God on the cross loved

God in heaven *perfectly*. Therefore if the standard were, “Love me as I have loved you,” God in heaven would be *obligated* to save God on the cross. But that wasn’t the standard; the standard was to love another *more* than you love yourself. So God in heaven chose to reject the plea of God on the cross because there was “another” whom He loved more than He loved Himself.

You must understand that in all of the reality surrounding God this dilemma had never presented itself... not until now. It was normal for God to be in *perfect* fellowship with himself and the thought of rejecting himself—being estranged and alienated from himself—was inconceivable. The perfect harmony of God, God with God, on *every* matter for endless ages—for age upon age and for the age of man—all of the meanings of the term “eternal” was that God was in *perfect harmony* with God. So for God to accept separation from himself on the cross was for God to pay a price hithertofore uncalled for and, arguably, unimaginable. *That God would prefer another more than He preferred himself was what the cross is about.*

Now that doesn’t answer the question: why would Jesus say, “As I have loved you, so love one another” *before* the cross? Jesus was already walking in this perfection of love *before* the cross and the cross of course represented the final act that definitively characterized the life of Jesus—one of loving us more than He loved himself. But the question that will remain for a later answer, the question of why would Jesus have said, prior to the cross in the **13th chapter** of the book of **John** and again in the **15th chapter**, “Love one another as I have loved you (past perfect tense). In all of my life previously there has been this consistency: *I have always loved you more than I have loved myself.*” Now that was before the cross and it doesn’t disannul the cross or diminish the cross. The cross becomes then the final expression of this *life* of having preferred “the other” to himself. So we’ve talked about how the Father loved us; how did Jesus himself love us and how is that consistent with “more than he loved himself”? Now that will be the subject of another broadcast but we are noticing that the standard, “love one another as *I have loved you*” is not “love one another as you love *yourself*”. It is a greater standard, a higher standard; it is to love another more than you love yourself.

Now let’s add some additional wrinkles to this so that we might see the perfection of this standard. At the time that Jesus was dying on the cross and therefore God was preferring us over himself and over the Lord Jesus Christ—at that *same* time *we* hated God, we rejected God. We did not consider Jesus as God. Now with all these things being so, this is in fact the perfect expression of what “love” actually means because this *is* love. You prefer another to yourself, when at the time that you are doing that, the “other” whom you prefer more than yourself hates you. Now I want to assure you that when we speak of unconditional love it goes well beyond anything we think about in terms of unconditional love because the human aggressively hated God and hates God

even now while God loves him. So it means that there is *nothing* about the human being that inspires God to love him based upon some act or activity or action that the human generates. This is purely a definition of the nature of God's love and *the standard* of this is so vastly different from the standard in the "old" commandment (as "love your neighbor as you love yourself") as to be incomparable. There cannot be a comparison made between the new standard and the old, because the new standard reaches the *depths* of how love might be tested.

At this juncture I'd like to suggest to you that we are observing a phenomenon without much understanding of "why". It's almost like someone walking past a lighted window observing a family—say at a time like Thanksgiving or Christmas—going through the activities of being a family and they cannot hear the sound but they can watch the motion of the family in the house. When we talk about the "new" commandment and these standards being different it's almost like we are passing by the window looking in but not understanding what we are looking in *upon*. So why is there this "new" commandment? What is behind it all? Why is this standard like it is: that God loves us more than He loves himself, so that He puts himself at risk for us while at the time He does it, we hate God? Why does God accept separation from himself so that we—who are "the other"—might, in fact be benefited by the love of God? What is going on here? I would like to suggest two very basic considerations: the first is that the creation of man was designed to test God's capability of loving and the second is that the choice of man as God's heirs is behind this standard. It's behind why God loves us as God loves us and why we have to have the same standard of love as God has for us.

As we have been loved, so we are to love one another, which means that we are to lay down our lives for one another... or even the world; we're to lay down our lives for the world, whether or not at the time the world loves us. Now let me again say that we have not come to the practical applications of what is meant by these things so do not infer that you understand the practical applications because if you do, it is certain that you will simply find yourself in one of two camps. [You will find yourself in either] the camp of those who advocate something known as "tough love"—popular in Christian circles—or "tolerant love"—popular in geopolitical circles, neither of which has any relevance to this question because of the graphic limitations of both standards and their inherent inadequacy in portraying the much more substantial love of God. So don't go yet to the application of what you are hearing because you do not have enough information to make that decision. One of the things we said early on was that in every generation it is necessary to teach again the foundations of the truth and when these foundations of the truth are taught it will not simply be the rehashing of previous revelation but it will be the continuation of the unfolding of the plan and the purpose of God, together with the wisdom and revelation of the Spirit of God, complete with the knowledge and the understanding sufficient for every age. Because the thing that God is doing in the revelation of these things is that He is preparing us for an inevitable conflict between the evil

one and the Body of Christ and this is where this inquiry needs to begin. I will devote additional programs to this discussion so if you want to know about these things it is imperative that you continue to follow this discussion as it's presented.

Now why is the standard of the “new” commandment what it in fact, *is*—a similar standard for God as it is for man? The answer begins in God's choice when God chose His heirs. Now God could have chosen either humans or angels. Instead of making the more likely choice of angels because angels are—by definition, they are a superior creation—instead of choosing angels as His heirs, God chose humans. Now this choice was not uniformly approved by the angels because all of the angels immediately understood that in the choice of humans as the heirs of God that they would ultimately be relegated to serving human beings. But God's choice of humans as His heirs was a choice that would both test the nature of God to love and it would be the proper and appropriate choice if God were going to have children who, in kind and in nature, were like God.

Now at the beginning of this discussion I would like to state certain facts about the nature of humans. Humans were created with a soul, with a spirit and they were placed in a body in time and space. This body, in time and space, put them at a substantial disadvantage in relationship to the angels because the angels were invisible creatures... at least when you consider their appearance within time and space. Sometimes angels can materialize but for the most part they do not. In this respect, the angels enjoy a substantial advantage over humans. They are stronger for example; they can *move* apart from the requirements of gravity so they have a sense of omnipresence when they are in time and space and in these things they enjoy an enormous advantage over humans.

Beyond that, they come from the realms of heaven where they have knowledge of things that will affect the earth before people in the linear progression of time could possibly know about these things unless they are given so prophetic revelation or an experience that takes them out of “time”. So the angels were far superior to humans as a created being. Even the Scriptures refer to the comparison between angels and humans as, “humans being made a little lower than the angels.” (Inserted – actual verse—**“You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.” – Psalm 8:5**) A third of the angels revolted against God's decision and they were put out of heaven when this occurred. Michael and his angels suppressed the rebellion of Satan and his angels. But the rebellion was over the question of whether or not God had chosen wisely.

Did God choose the right heirs? Obviously, the way that the angels who fell—led by Satan in their rebellion subsequent fall and now ruled over by Satan and certain councils of the demonic—their point of view was that God had made an incredibly stupid mistake because they judged the matter purely on the basis of the competence

of the angelic as compared to the competence of the human. And when weighed in *that* fashion they would appear to be right. But the distinction and the secret of God in the matter was this: God could not have chosen the angels because the angels were not created with the capacity to love. They were only created with the capacity to serve. Angels are ministering spirits; they have no capability of loving.

In spite of allegations to the contrary that might be heard and in spite of the affection that many Hollywood types profess for their guardian angels, angels have no capability of loving and there could be only one possible outcome for romantic intentions on the part of humans towards angels and that is: unrequited love. Humans simply are different from the angels because humans can love and were made to be able to love. There's not a single incident, Old or New Testament that implies that the angels are capable of loving. For you to be a Son of God it was not a matter of your physical competence or your abilities and power. For anyone considered to be a Son of God, the mark of sonship was always going to be whether or not you could love as God loves. This is the critical fact and on this point we will build as we come to the next broadcast. I think you could see that as the window opens to us we are now having greater and greater understanding of what is behind the scene. Why is there a "new" commandment? As the unfolding of this drama takes place we are beginning to have understanding and insight. The fact that God put down the rebellion against Him only proved that God was more powerful than the enemy. It did not prove whether or not He was right. Human beings are the proof of whether or not God was right. We will go *here* and we'll see how it ties in with the "new" command and we will understand the inevitable conflict that is our destiny between the Children of God and the children of the evil one. So I hope you'll join me as we continue this discussion. I'm Sam Soleyn, God bless you.

Scripture References:

I John 4:8

Romans 5:8

John 13:34

Matthew 5:48

Leviticus 19:18

Matthew 27:46

Psalm 8:5