



Daily Devotionals

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PHILIPPIANS 2:1-4 LIVING THE LIFE

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¹ If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. ³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴ Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Real human life – life as God created it to be – was demonstrated by our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a life of which love is the hallmark. And that love is no mere feeling or rush of emotional adrenalin, to be experienced by the individual, but is an essential characteristic of his very being. Jesus taught this when he summarized the Law and the Prophets by joining Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18 into the Great Commandment:

³⁷ Jesus replied: “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” (Matthew 22:37-39)

Jesus also taught us the centrality of love to the God-willed life by the compassion he had for those in need – both physically and spiritually. Of course, there has never been a greater demonstration of this other-centered love than his death on the cross.

True love always has as its object someone beyond the lover. While emotion and sentimentality might be the means by which our hardened hearts are tenderized, love itself is a learned attitude and behavior. C.S. Lewis wrote this about love in *Mere Christianity*:

The rule for all of us is perfectly simple. Do not waste time bothering whether you “love” your neighbor; act as if you did. As soon as we do this we find one of the great secrets. When you are behaving as if you loved someone, you will presently come to love him. If you injure someone you dislike, you will find yourself disliking him more. If you do him a

good turn, you will find yourself disliking him less. (Mere Christianity, book III, chapter 9, p. 116)

Looking to Jesus and training ourselves to love is how we become like-minded with him and begin to have the same love for others. Such a love commands our lives even at the level of motives and ambitions. When they are submitted to love, then we are living a God-willed life.

As I look upon your cross and meditate on your Word, Lord Jesus, may my heart be more than strangely warmed. Create a new heart within me, Lord, so that I might love you and my neighbor with a love that only comes from you – a perfect love that is so focused on the other that even rejection cannot turn it into bitterness and fear of rejection subdue it. Amen.

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