

Equipped to Love

- 1. What difference do you think it would have made in your marriage and family if you had been equipped to love before you took on the responsibilities of a wife and children?
- 2. Love is arguably the most important quality needed by any human being.
 - A. We may overlook the importance of this quality in a person's life, and put the emphasis on education and knowledge, service, skill, or experience.
 - B. The gifts of communication, knowledge, miracles, and sacrificial service are nothing without love.
- 3. Not only has love been an overlooked quality, it is one of the most abused and perhaps overused words in our vocabulary.
 - A. We may apply the word love to most anything:
 - B. Satan's scheme may be compared to an expert counterfeiter who seeks to flood the market with cheap imitations.
- Three Suggestions Regarding Love
 - Learn to distinguish between God's love and the world's love.
 - Learn the love principle.
 - 1. The love principle is: Love can only take place where a relationship is free from idolatry and a person recognizes God as the source of everything.
 - 2. Love comes from God, and one can only be equipped to love by looking to God as the source--of all things.
 - Learn to recognize the spirit of idolatry and its antithesis to Jesus Christ. "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before Me" (Deut. 5:6-7).
 - 1. The spirit of idolatry does not believe all things come from one God, but that there is more than one source of supply.
 - A. There is no other god. Is. 45:5
 - B. The spirit of idolatry does not believe that God is the only source of supply.
 - 1. Is. 45:7,9
 - 2. Job 2:10
 - 3. Amos 3:6
 - 4. 1 Cor. 5:5
 - C. The spirit of idolatry affects our view of God and scales Him down to something we can comprehend.
 - D. But if there are no other gods and there isn't, then what we have is what God has seen that we need--not so that you and I can be happy and comfortable, but so Jesus Christ may be glorified!
 - E. Jesus' love for His Father was based on such a faith. If we're to love, we must recognize and repent of not worshipping God as the only God and Father from whom are all things.
 - 2. The spirit of idolatry manipulates or controls people and situations. "You shall not make for yourself an idol..." (Deut. 5:8a).
 - A. Someone under the influence of the spirit of idolatry seeks to fashion the person or situation to supply self-centered desires and expectations.
 - B. The spirit of idolatry has an assortment of carving tools
 - 1. Positive tools.
 - Smile and look cute, Compliments, Service, Gifts
 - Perhaps my own testimony may help illustrate this point.
 - 2. Negative tools: Col. 3:5-9
 - We use these when our idols don't supply when we want like we want.

- Anger, wrath, malice, slander, abusive speech, and lying.
 - C. One area the spirit of idolatry most affects is our love relationship to God.
 - 1. The spirit of idolatry takes the good things of God and carves with them--turns them into positive carving tools.
 - 2. The Bible teaches us that we are all born sinners with hearts which pervert the truth of God until God's Spirit converts our hearts.
 - 3. What does an idolater conclude when he hears, "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life?" God has the same vision in life as I do--making me comfortable and happy.
 - 4. When the preacher asks him to pray a prayer of invitation to Christ to enter his life so that he can begin to experience this wonderful plan, what is occurring if the Holy Spirit isn't at work? Carving on God.
 - 5. How does he now try to live the Christian life? Why does he read his Bible, pray, serve, reform bad habits? Same as he did before--he expects God to reward his efforts and to work for him.
 - 6. What happens when life doesn't become happy and comfortable (which it doesn't--converted or not)?
 - D. Jesus never carved on anyone because He trusted His Father. Every relationship was an opportunity to love and every situation an opportunity to trust.
- 3. The spirit of idolatry makes an idol for self. "You shall not make for yourself an idol..." (Deut. 5:8a).
- 4. The spirit of idolatry looks to the creature rather than the Creator to supply happiness which only God can supply. "You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth" (Deut. 5:8).
- 5. The spirit of idolatry worships and serves many idols. "You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, and on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me," (Deut. 5:9).
 - A. When you worship something or someone as an idol, you serve it or them.
 - B. For instance, when a husband serves or worships his wife, he does it because he wants something from her.
 - C. In serving or worship her, you actually give her the power to make you miserable--you give her the power to aggravate hatred and bitterness.
 - D. This spirit also worships and serves many idols. Ourselves-parents-peers-friends-girlfriends-wife/wives-children-jobs-a god of our own making-on and on...
 - E. Jesus when tempted to look to Satan to supply his inheritance responded, "You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only."
- 6. The spirit of idolatry reproduces itself. "...visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, and on the third and the fourth generations..." (Deut. 5:9).
 - A. The iniquity of idolatry is that iniquity which has passed down through every seed and offspring of Adam.
 - B. The spirit of idolatry also reproduces itself by example.

