



bits from bob....

Falling in Love

June 1, 2020

I have lived over 3500 weeks, 3500 Sundays. When I left home for the university, I had to decide what I would do on Sunday, about 53 years times 52 weeks, 2500+. Add Sunday nights and Wednesday nights – 7500+. Never wavering. Then came the coronavirus. Around the world, Christians have been encouraged to stay home, some have been required to stay home in quarantine, with curfews and severe penalties.

Terry Hackworth, my former coworker in ministry, now serving as an elder, recently shared some helpful thoughts. Do you know what it is like to fall in love? Do you remember? Have you seen someone fall in love? Life is changed, priorities, activities, where you go, what you do? A favorite song that has fallen out of favor, “I keep falling in love with Him, over and over...”

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 speaks about following God wholeheartedly. Put God’s words in your heart, tell everyone, tell your family, have God’s words with you always, accessible, ready, in your back pocket? Dwell in the Word, let the Word dwell, reside, live in you.

Many Christians, during this time of being less active socially, have reflected upon life. Opportunities, more family time, time with God’s word. What does Deuteronomy 6 mean? How much do I love God? Have I fallen in love with him? Does my relationship with God change everything about me? Every minute of every hour of every day? I can’t stop thinking about him. Everyone notices.

In the New Testament, Jesus reflects the teaching of Deuteronomy 6 in his response to a questioner in Matthew 22:34-40 and the parallel text in Mark 12. Jesus affirms it – loving God with all one’s heart, soul, mind, and strength is #1. Love God, and love neighbor as yourself. Of all the commandments, possible actions, what matters most? Love God!

I share something many people, even many Christians, have not recognized. You cannot genuinely love others without loving God first. John says in 1 John 5 that the measurement of your love for God’s children is your love for God. Terry concluded his words about falling in love with a reminder that it is possible to fall out of love. In Rev. 2:4, the letter to Ephesus: “You have abandoned the love you had at first.... Remember, repent, do the works you did at first.” At Ephesus, Christians had departed from love, they had departed from the fervor of their “at first” love. The messenger does not urge them to restore the love they had at first, rather he urges them to restore the works they did at first, since their love will follow their actions.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said that our hearts follow our treasure. Our love follows our actions. You can fall out of love with God! How will you know? Little prayer, little time with God’s Word, little thinking about spiritual matters, little time together. How I act, how I think, how I talk, what I talk about, priorities, actions – these show my love for God. This would be a good week to fall in love with God again.