

## **Being In Love With God**

Scripture says we are to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30, a quote from Deuteronomy 6:5). Israel was not able to do this. The church has had a hard time with it as well. Now God says that the bride is not only to love God, but also be in love with Him. This calls for a more intimate relationship which is difficult to understand, especially if you have difficulty just grasping what loving Him means.

Love is a very large and complex subject. Philosophers, poets, theologians, and lovers have written much and spoken much about it yet none have come up with a satisfactory comprehensive conclusion. We all have some understanding of love but, if we are honest, also some doubt about what it really is. God says that love is simply too big to be defined. He says it can be described, but any attempt to define love limits it. Love is too big to put a fence (definition) around.

What we offer here is a framework for looking at love and the idea of being in love with God. It is not the only view, but hopefully will help you get a handle on a complex subject. For this discussion love will be considered to have three elements – friendship, commitment, and desire.

### **Friendship**

Friendship involves mutual affection and respect, common interests, and comfortable companionship. Friends like each other, enjoy each other, and support each another. Yet, like love, definitions can be hard to pin down. We all have some understanding, including the difference between friendship and acquaintance. Scripture says a friend can be closer than a brother (Pro 18:24), calls Abraham and Moses friends of God (Exodus 33:11, Isa 41:8), and calls us no longer servants but friends (John 15:13-15). Good as friendship may be, friendship by itself is just friendship.

### **Commitment**

The second component in love is commitment. God calls on the body to have total and absolute commitment to purity and to Him. Commitment contains the concepts of duty and honor without compromise. Commitment by itself is obligation, which can degenerate and become obedience for the sake of obedience. Christians call this legalism, and we sometimes call it the “shoulds”. Commitment coupled with friendship is the type of love God is speaking about when He says to love God.

### **Desire**

However, He now wants to add a third component – desire. Desire is not just a want; it involves passion or strong emotion. Passion by itself is an unattached emotion and generally harmful. It is spice, but spice by itself is not food and not nourishing. Passion needs to be connected with something to reach its powerful potential.

## Summary

- Friendship alone is friendship.
- Commitment alone is obligation or “shoulds”.
- Desire alone is infatuation or lust.
- Friendship and commitment together is companionable love.
- Friendship and desire together is romance.
- Commitment and desire together is just silly and nonsensical.
- Put all three elements together and you have total love, complete love, hardcore love. It says, I want you with all my being, you make my heart sing, or however you choose to express it.
- Companionable love can be lasting, but this kind of love has zing!
- This is what God wants.