

Renewing the Mind - Receiving God's Love
**Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and
with all your soul and with all your mind." Matthew 22:37**

2010

Prayer: John 17:23 – “I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.” NIV

John 15:9 - "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love." NIV

From the previous devotion where we looked at ways to set aside time to draw close to God, we saw the primary reason to spend this time is to change our mindset about God and His love. This change in mindset causes a fundamental change in our relationship with God. We come to understand it is not performance based, but position based, from *what we do* to *who we are* as God's child.

We want to avoid being trapped in a never-ending cycle of trying to please God by earning our way, doing things for the sake of keeping God happy, though works do have their place. Our time spent alone with God's word is part of being *with* God. Now, most of us, myself included, do not know fully what this means. I am talking about *knowing* how deep and wonderful is the love and mercy of the precious Jesus, and to know this by experience!

When Jesus died on that cross, all of us who believe in and by faith receive Him as taking our punishment for sin on Himself, we are then set right with God, forever. There is nothing more to do to earn love from God than He *already has for us*.

When Jesus prayed in John 17:23 it was to follow up on the declaration of His love earlier in John 15:9. These verses are what Jesus told those with Him just hours before His arrest and subsequent crucifixion.

What would you say to those close to you the night before your death? With so little time and so much to tell those we love, we would choose things most dear to us. Jesus did just that in chapters 14-17 of John's gospel. He poured His great heart of love out - for them and for us.

In John 15: 11 & 12 Jesus tells His reasons for what He requires of us. It is for His joy to be in us, so that our joy is complete. He then tells the way to have His joy is for us to love one another (in the social and moral sense). He then goes on to say the evidence of the highest love is when someone gives their life for us (this is deep love and affection). He gives us this knowledge of love and requires us to take action. The following day He died, living the last moment of His life loving us, deeply. My sins put Him there – His love kept Him there. (Matthew 26:53 & 54 / John 13:1 CEV)

Now, this is where renewing our mind comes in – to think differently about love.

If you will study with me the way love is *the* foundation on which to build a life with God, then all else that follows in renewing our mindset will result in our relationship deepening with the Lord. This process will result in joy coming into your life. Remember though – it takes time.

Our Lord and Savior is waiting to be wanted and loved rightly. Do you have someone you are far from emotionally, like a wayward child or spouse? All you want is for things to be right between you. Jesus is like this with us, longing for us to understand how much He gave at the cross. He gave it all, by the way, and fully paid the penalty for all sin. Past sin – Present sin – Future sin – All sin! If you by faith believe this, then you are free! Free to live. Free to love.

To help further understand and witness Jesus' love, in the next 2 devotions we'll look at times when suffering and sorrowing people encountered Jesus in their deepest pain.