

For Love of a Soul

“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.”
Proverbs 11:30

Introduction:

1. The text is simple: righteous persons have the effect and result in lives of others by building them up in an abundant life with God; and wise men win souls from folly and ignorance to truth and wisdom.
2. A measure of great Christians is their love for the souls of others, which they pursue with wise zeal; a measure of carnal Christians is their selfish lack of interest in the souls and godly progress of others.
3. A measure of our own hearts is our love for the souls of others, for God sent His Son for our souls.
4. The human heart is very selfish by nature, which can be measured or corrected by loving other souls.
5. The most blessed and happy lives are those who love others, but the selfish are dry and miserable.
6. God gave you existence first for His glory and service and second for love and service of others – you have no other purpose for your existence, and you pervert your existence seeking anything else.
7. Who deserves the epitaph, “*He delighted in God above all others; he was a tree of life to all others?*”
8. Or do you have just about zero impact on the souls around you? Or worse yet, encourage carnality?
9. Our spheres of influence begin at home and extend out through our church and to God’s providence.
10. Does each person you meet represent a soul deserving your affection, prayers, example, and labors?
11. Each person in this assembly, from youngest to oldest, is a soul worthy of your sacrificial interest.
12. When the Lord called me out of banking at the age of 27, I was willing to do so for only one soul; and this sacrificial ambition was only by God’s pure and superabundant grace, for I am as selfish as any!
13. The highest definition of love minimizes bodies and earthly lives to prepare souls to live for Christ!
14. The marriages and births we have recently had should bring desire for souls of spouses and children.
15. Of course, we do not waste time on fools or scorners (Pr 9:7-8; 23:9; 26:4-5; Matt 7:6; II Thes 3:1-2).
16. Of course, we seek conversion, not election, justification, regeneration, or glorification (II Tim 2:10).

Our Lord’s Example

- A. If you read the preparation chapters, Mark 5 and John 4, you saw our Lord’s love for others.
- B. Let us begin by learning to love others as our Lord Christ loved us (Jn 13:34-35; 15:12-13).
- C. Jesus came to be a ministering servant, so are the great ones in His kingdom (Matt 20:20-28).
- D. We want to have the same mind as Jesus Christ, one that esteemed others higher (Phil 2:3-5).
- E. Jesus viewed multitudes different than most Christians (Matt 9:35-38; 14:14-21; 15:29-39).
- F. Our Lord is compared to a Good Shepherd, which seeks out His sheep (John 10:10-16).
- G. The Lord Jesus taught that a good shepherd will leave 99 to seek a lost one (Luke 15:1-7).
- H. Jesus considered it His meat to testify to the woman of Samaria and her city (John 4:27-42).
- I. Consider just a few examples of our Lord’s efforts after individual souls (Mark 5:1-20; Luke 7:36-50; 13:10-17; 19:1-10; John 3:1-21; 8:1-11; Acts 8:26-40; 10:1-48)!
- J. Jesus prayed fervently to His Father before His crucifixion for us believers (John 17:20-23).
- K. Consider how Jesus tenderly pursued the souls of Mary Magdalene and Peter (Mark 16:7,9).

Our Brother Paul’s Example

- A. Paul had great heaviness and could wish himself accursed for his brethren, which had to be the elect Israel of God, lest Paul be found to be grieving against God’s decrees (Rom 9:1-8).
- B. Paul’s heart’s desire and prayer was for elect Israel to learn the gospel truth (Romans 10:1-4).
- C. Paul’s sacrificial life backs up these two declarations above as being fervent and sincere.
- D. Like wonderful parents, Paul spent and was spent for ungrateful Corinth (II Cor 12:14-15).
- E. Knowing Paul’s godly desire and zeal, Jesus told of much people in Corinth (Acts 18:7-11).

- F. He defined his best ministerial understudy, Timothy, as likeminded for souls (Phil 2:19-23).
- G. Paul's great crown and rejoicing were obedient souls to Jesus Christ (I Thess 2:19-20).
- H. Paul became all things to all men to save as many as possible by all means (I Cor 9:19-22).
- I. He labored mightily to present every individual man perfect in Christ Jesus (Col 1:28-29).

Our Responsibility

- A. A righteous man is a tree of life to others; a wise man wins the souls of others (Prov 11:30).
- B. John the Baptist and our Lord's apostles turned many to righteousness (Dan 12:3; John 5:35).
- C. Even the Old Testament Law of Moses bound men to save souls of neighbors (Lev 19:17).
- D. The love of neighbor is the second commandment, which requires saving souls (Mark 12:31).
- E. If the angels rejoice over one sinner than repents, it should be important to us (Luke 15:7,10).
- F. Job was an example of a righteous man who saved souls by his speech (Job 4:3-4; 29:21-25).
- G. When Andrew heard John identify Jesus, he went to get his brother Simon Peter (Jn 1:40-42).
- H. When Jesus called Philip to follow Him, he immediately went to get Nathanael (Jn 1:43-46).
- I. The Gadarene sought to be with Jesus, but He told him to go tell his friends (Mark 5:18-20).
- J. Cornelius gathered all his kinsmen and near friends together to hear Peter (Acts 10:24,27).
- K. Aquila and Priscilla pursued and converted the gifted Apollos (Acts 18:24-26; Rom 16:3-5).
- L. The beloved John desired prosperity for Gaius in at least three righteous ways (III Jn 1:1-2).
- M. Converting a sinning brother from his erroneous way saves a soul (Jas 5:19-20; I Thess 5:14).
- N. It is the high calling of spiritual men to despise themselves and to save others (Gal 6:1-5).
- O. Parents must train children's souls to fear the Lord (Ps 34:11; Pr 22:6; Isaiah 38:19; Eph 6:4).
- P. Parents must train children to love the souls of others and serve them, for it is true religion.
- Q. Paul identified the house of Stephanas and others as exceptional Christians (I Cor 16:14-18).
- R. All the many "one another" duties in the New Testament define and require our love of souls, just as Jesus commanded the apostles (John 13:34-35; 15:12-13). See Romans 15:7, etc.

Our Application

- A. Your mouth must use wholesome words to be a tree of life to men (Pr 13:14; 15:4; Col 4:6).
- B. Your mouth must use wisdom righteously to feed men (Pr 10:11,21; 12:18; 15:23; Ps 37:30).
- C. How well do you sharpen those around you by hearty counsel, and how many (Pr 27:17,9)?
- D. Being a tree of life and winning souls is more than friendliness. It is pursuing souls for God.
- E. It is our solemn duty to exalt God in our hearts and prepare answers (Pr 22:17-21; I Pet 3:15).
- F. You must consider your brethren to see errors and correct them (Heb 3:12-13; 10:23-25).
- G. You must condescend to others to be like Christ (Rom 12:16; Luk 14:12-14; I Cor 12:22-26).
- H. You must make constant repetitions to train your children properly (Prov 22:15; 29:15).
- I. Where do you fail? At the first stage of desire? Or of prayer? Or of example? Or of effort?
- J. We are not content with meeting a "good Christian brother." We convert him like Apollos!
- K. Do you sincerely and actually rejoice and weep with others (Romans 12:15; I Cor 12:26)?
- L. What keeps us from loving others like Jesus and Paul? Fear, laziness, pride, or selfishness.
- M. Can you think of a small effort that would strengthen another's soul in God (I Sam 23:16)?
- N. You should seek your harvest in spouse, children, siblings, brethren, friends, and providence.
- O. Rather than anger at your efforts being rebuffed, look elsewhere (Luke 9:51-56; Acts 13:46).
- P. If you love souls, it is your duty to pray for God-called laborers in His harvest (Luke 10:1-2).
- Q. Eunice and Lois were a mother and grandmother with right priorities (II Timothy 1:5; 3:15).
- R. We must learn the difference between compassion and intervention to save (Jude 1:22-23).
- S. Righteous men save souls; the socially dysfunctional or lazy hide; the carnal sow carnality.

T. You can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make it drink; men will bear their own burden.

Conclusion:

1. If you have been fearful, lazy, proud, or selfish, confess these sins to God and trust His forgiveness.
2. If you have ever criticized others for not loving or serving you enough, put your hand on your mouth!
3. Stop preserving your life for yourself; choose rather to lose your life for God and others (Mat 10:39).
4. Get out of your comfort zone and into Christ's loving zone! Do not claim Christ and neglect others!
5. Who, beginning with those closest to you, should you be pursuing to win their souls for Jesus Christ?
6. What soul will you pray for today? And labor for today? Which soul tomorrow? And the next day?
7. Can you grasp at all the compound effect of loving others to love others, as in the church (Eph 4:16)?
8. The Lord Christ will remember and praise with great detail the love you show others (Matt 25:34-40).

For Further Study:

1. The Proverb Commentary, "Proverbs 11:30," ... http://www.letgodbettrue.com/proverbs/11_30.htm.
2. The Proverb Commentary, "Proverbs 15:4," ... http://www.letgodbettrue.com/proverbs/15_04.htm.
3. The sermon outline, "James 5," for 5:19-20, ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/james-five.pdf>.
4. The sermon outline, "Galatians 6," for 6:1-5, ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/galatians-six.pdf>.
5. The sermon, "Bear Your Own Burden," ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/bear-your-own-burden.pdf>.
6. The sermon, "Why Preach the Gospel?" ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/why-preach-the-gospel.pdf>.
7. The sermon, "Why No Invitation?" ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/why-no-invitation.pdf>.
8. The sermon, "The Definition of Love," ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/definition-of-love.pdf>.
9. The sermon, "Am I My Brother's Keeper," ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/am-i-my-brothers-keeper.pdf>.
10. The sermon, "Love Is the Greatest," ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/love-is-the-greatest.pdf>.
11. Sermon, "Blood Is Thicker than Blood," ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/blood-is-thicker-than-blood.pdf>.
12. The sermon outline, "Investment in Souls," is not available in e-format.
13. The sermon outline, "Caring Enough to Confront," is not available in e-format.
14. The sermon outline, "Body Building," is not available in e-format.
15. The sermon outline, "One Another," is not available in e-format.