

# *What Should Be Your Number One Aim in Life?*

*Part 9 2019*



Today we continue our message series on.....

LOVE!!!

*We have been progressively expanding the answer to this question – what is your greatest aim in life.*

- *First – Let love be your greatest aim....(1 Cor 14/1 TLB)*
- *Second – Let loving God and keeping His commandments be your greatest aim....(1 Cor 14/1, 1 Jn 4/8-9, Jn 14/15)*
- *Third – Let loving God, fearing Him, and keeping His commandments be your greatest aim.*
  - *Eccl 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter (Whole Duty of Man): Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all.*

## Our Greatest Aim in Life

“To love God, fear Him, and keep His commandments”.

If all of our life decisions were made with this dominant life principle as our greatest aim in life, the results would not only be a better life for us with multiple life-enhancing benefits...but also, and more importantly, a better life so that we can better meet the needs of God to carry out His Plan of Salvation for mankind.

*We want to grow from  
Being “Needy for God” to Being “Needed by God”*

*Our pursuit is not one of  
“Love from God” BUT “Love for God”*

*We want to grow from  
“What’s in it for me” to “What’s in it for God”.*

*That God loves us is a given....we know that.*

*That there are rewards/blessing for obeying Him is also a given....we know that too.*

*But the real focus is not....*

*“Being Needy but Being Needed”*

*So This is Our Focus in this Series on*  
*LOVE*

*“To love God, fear Him, and keep His commandments”.*

*Now for today's message – Part 9*



## *Does it take Effort to Obey this Command?*

- *In the secular world, it makes sense that “to achieve anything worthwhile...anything important takes effort”.*
- *Simple Dictionary Definition of effort: “conscious exertion of power, serious attempt, something produced by exertion or trying”*
- *“No pain – No gain”...makes perfect sense in exercising your body.*
- *It takes effort to exercise, it takes effort to learn how to play an musical instrument or learn a new foreign language, it takes effort to get up in the morning and go to work, etc.*

## *Does it take Effort to Obey this Command?*

- *We could wish this were not so...* that we could achieve worthwhile things in life without the pain of putting forth effort or some self-control (i.e. that we could eat all the junk food we wanted and still have healthy-slim bodies) but we know that it takes “effort” if we want to have healthy-slim bodies.
- *If we can easily understand that “effort” applies in the secular,* why would it not apply when it comes to the most important commandment cited in Scripture... “to love God and love others” (Matt 22/37... Great Commandment).

## *Does it take Effort to Obey this Command?*

- *It takes effort to follow the commandments we find in the “love chapter”:*
  - *1 Cor 13:4-7* *Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*
  - *Takes effort to* *1) to suffer long, 2) to be kind, 3) to not envy, 4) to not parade itself, 5) to not to be puffed up, 6) to not to behave rudely, 7) to not seek your own, 8) not to be provoked, 9) to bear all things, etc.*

It takes effort to....

Build character, to Overcome life challenges, and to Grow in  
Christ-likeness!!!

*Unfortunately, many in main-line Christianity teach an  
“Effortless Christianity”*

*Jesus had done it all for you....just abide in Him and  
Him in you....no need to put forth any effort.*

*Is this true that no effort is required.*

*If you were to tell your wife, “I’m not going to try to love you any more; I’m just going to let go and let God; He lives in me and I in Him, so I don’t have any longer put forth effort in showing you love...He now does it all for me”.*

*How would that go over with your wife?*

*Scripture is replete with the message that the Christian life is not meant to be effortless.*

*There is an over abundance of Scriptures we could cite to show that although we cannot live our Christian life without God, we must do our part.*

*“We can’t do it without God and God will not do it for us”.*

*God expects us to put our faith into action, which takes effort!*

- Eccl 9:10 *Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.*
  - *We need to put forth our best “effort” while we are alive.*
- James 2:26 *For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*
  - We can be “Believers intellectually” but “Unbelievers behaviorally”
  - James 2:19 *19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe — and tremble!*



*I believe in God* can mean two things:

- 1) I believe God exists.*
- 2) I trust/have faith in God.*

*It takes action/effort when one says he/she trusts God.*

*Motto on our dollar bill...the words were carefully  
chosen...*

*“In God We Trust” NOT “In God We Believe”*

## Parables Teach Effort

*They teach cooperative effort....God does His part but you must also do your part....we can't do it without God and God won't do it for us.*

## *Wise and Foolish Virgins*

- *Matt 25:1-13* *"Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3 Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, 4 but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. 5 But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. 6 "And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!'"*

## *Wise and Foolish Virgins*

- *7 Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' 9 But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' 10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. 11 "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!'*

## *Wise and Foolish Virgins*

- 12 *But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.'* 13 *"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.*
  - The wise virgins *put forth the effort to keep their lamps lit.*
  - The foolish ones *did not put forth the effort to provide enough oil to keep their lamps lit.*

## Talents

- Matt 25:14-30 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. 15 And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. 16 Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. 17 And likewise he who had received two gained two more also.

## Talents

- 18 But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. 19 After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. 20 "So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' 21 His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'



## Talents

- 22 He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' 23 His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' 24 'Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed.'

## Talents

- 25 *And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.* 26 *"But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. 27 So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. 28 So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents.*

## Talents

- 29 'For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. 30 And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'
- The faithful servants put forth the effort to invest their talents.
- The unfaithful servant put forth no effort and hid his talent.

## *Prodigal Son*

- *Luke 15:11-32* *Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. 12 And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' So he divided to them his livelihood. 13 And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. 14 But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want.*

## *Prodigal Son*

- *15 Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. 17 "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you,*

## *Prodigal Son*

- *19 and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.” 20 "And he arose and came to his father.... 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 "But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. 23 And bring the fattened calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry;*

## *Prodigal Son*

- *24 for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry.....*
- *The Prodigal son had to put forth the effort to get up and return home. Had he not put forth the effort, he would have stayed with the pigs and eating their food.*

## *All of the Parables Teach Effort*

- *Persistent Widow* (Luke 18/1-8) – The widow had to put forth the effort in being persistent instead of giving up.
- *Narrow Way* (Mat 7:14) – To strive takes effort to enter the narrow gate that leads to life.
- *All of these parables describe* what a believer must do to be a follower of Jesus the Messiah...effort required, not just belief that God exists.



*If you were to make a “T Column”: On one side you would list the many prayers you made for God to resolve your problem and on the other side, you would list all of the actions you took to resolve the problem, how would your “T Column” look like. Would it show a list of diligent efforts or merely a list of effortless prayers.*

*Remember the “Dave Ramsey Financial Peace University” course we took about 20 years ago....where would we now be if we had implemented, step-by-step and inch-by-inch, all that Biblically based advise.*

## *All the Apostles Preached Effort*

- Peter

- 1 Peter 2:11-12 *Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, 12 having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.*

- John

- 1 John 3:18 *My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.*

## *All the Apostles Preached Effort*

### ● Paul

- 2 Tim 2:1-7 *You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. 3 You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 4 No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. 5 And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. 6 The hardworking farmer must be first to partake of the crops.*

## *All the Apostles Preached Effort*

### ● Paul

- Titus 2:11-14 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.
- Effort required...good works...behavioral not just believe.

*Grace does not cancel obedience....it continues to give us opportunities to obey.*

*Although these Scriptures I've given you show that "effort" is required of a Believer, I will give you three more examples for you to study in more detail.*

## *“Effort” required of Israel in crossing the Red Sea*

- *Ex 14:10-18 And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the Lord (they prayed to God). 11 Then they said to Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt?"*

## *“Effort” required of Israel in crossing the Red Sea*

- *12 Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness." 13 And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. 14 The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace."*



## *“Effort” required of Israel in crossing the Red Sea*

- *15 And the Lord said to Moses, “Why do you cry to Me?” (God is telling Moses and the people to stop crying out in prayer, but to take action/put forth effort and move forward) Tell the children of Israel to go forward. 16 But lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. 17 And I indeed will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them. So I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, his chariots, and his horsemen.*

## *“Effort” required of Israel in crossing the Red Sea*

- *18 Then the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gained honor for Myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.”*
- *God told the Israelites and Moses to stop crying out (stop praying) and trust God by putting forth effort in moving forward through the Red Sea that God would part so that they could cross it on dry ground.*

*“Effort” required in crossing the Jordan river.*

- *Josh 3:12-17 Now therefore, take for yourselves twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one man from every tribe. 13 And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, that the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off, the waters that come down from upstream, and they shall stand as a heap." 14 So it was, when the people set out from their camp to cross over the Jordan, with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people,*

*“Effort” required in crossing the Jordan river.*

- *15 and as those who bore the ark came to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests who bore the ark dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest), 16 that the waters which came down from upstream stood still,.....So the waters....were cut off; and the people crossed over opposite Jericho.*

## *“Effort” required in crossing the Jordan river.*

- *17 Then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel crossed over on dry ground, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan.*
  - *The priests first had to put forth the “effort” to step into the water before the waters stood still so that Israel could cross over on dry ground.*
  - *No effort, no splitting of the Jordan river.*

*“Effort” required of the poor to glean the harvest.*

- *Lev 23:22-23 “When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleaning from your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I am the Lord your God.”*
- *The poor and the stranger had to put forth the “effort” in going into the fields to harvest the gleanings.*
- *The gleanings were to be collected and given to the poor and the stranger...they had to go out and work to get the gleanings.*

*After we have done what we can, God does what we  
can't*

- *Luke 5:4-7 When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."  
5 But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net." 6 And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking.*
- *We do our part and God does His part....this is the kind of loving relationship we have between us and God.*

*“Pray as if everything depends on God. Work as if everything depends on you.”*



*We must rely on God's strength, not our own.*

- *Ps 20:7 Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; But we will remember the name of the Lord our God.*
- *Zech 4:6 So he answered and said to me: 'This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the Lord of hosts.*
- *Ps 127:1 Unless the Lord builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the Lord guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain.*

Bottom Line Is

*We need to put forth “effort”....we need to practice over and over again God’s command:*

*“Love God, fear Him, and keep His commandments”*