

THE LOVE FOR SOULS SERIES

THE VALUE OF SOULS

I would like to start a little series on the love or passion for souls. Lets turn to the gospel of Luke and start off from the story of the prodigal son. Very briefly, the younger son took all his inheritance, left the father, spent all his money and entered into such dire straits and terrible circumstances that he even wished he could have some of the pig's food. Finally, realization came into his life and he started the road back to the father. The father ran to meet him and embraced him. So, lets pick up the story when the father met the prodigal son.

Luke 15:20 And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. (His father really loves him.) And the son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son." But the father said to his servants, "Bring quickly the best robes, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet;

Now all these three areas are also symbolic. The best robe speaks about restoration of righteousness and praise. When we come back to God, God restores us, He cleanse us once again. When we have fallen into sin, He cleanses us and put on the robe of righteousness. And there is another garment He places on us the garment of praise. Once again, you can praise God; you can have a relationship with Him. Then the ring symbolizes a covenant. A covenant is renewed. The shoes are what contact the world. The shoes represent correct position in the world once again. You are in the world but not of the world.

So the father continue and said in verse 23 *And bring the fatted calf and kill it; and let us eat and make merry; (we do not know how many years he has missed the son. But he certainly was glad to see him again. And every one was happy.) For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost; and is found. And they began to make merry.*

His elder son was in the field. He had not heard about his younger brother coming back. So, he comes back and he sees a party going on. Incidentally, the fatted calf is specially set aside for auspicious occasions or joyous celebrations. Maybe the elder son could have been eyeing it for himself. So, the elder son came back and in this message, this story is the story of the elder son more than the younger son. The elder son came back from the hard work in the field.

In verse 25 *Now his elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what this meant. And he said to him, "Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound.*

His younger brother was back but there was no smile on his face. There was no pleasure in his heart. Instead, in verse 28 he felt angry and would not go in. I wonder what have happened if he had heard that his younger brother was dead. Probably such news would have gone around earlier because the father said he was once dead but now he is alive. But what would have happened if the news came back that the brother was confirmed dead. Would he have been happy any way? We do not know. Maybe he will say good riddance. Or maybe he would have some regret now that he is back. Sometimes, we don't realize how much we have loved those whom we know, who are around us because we take them for granted. But if at any moment they were to be taken home then we realize how little we have loved them. I am only guessing but maybe if the younger brother actually died the elder brother may say he is my brother I really miss him. But now that he is alive and he is around, I don't like him. We don't realize how little we have loved until we have no more chance to show our love. How many of you here have loved ones gone home to be with the Lord and you wished that you have loved more. There are a lot of things that we wish we could do more if we were to be taken home to be with the Lord. No. 1 many of you would probably wish that you had more time for the Word. No. 2 many of you would have wished you had spent more time with the

Lord in prayer. No. 3 many of us may not realize it but if you were to be taken out of your situation and separated from the people around you, you may have wished that you have loved more. Just a little bit more love, a little bit compassion, a little bit more time to give to those whom you got no more opportunity to love.

When the elder brother heard that the younger brother was alive, he was furious and angry. He said, "I am not coming in." What will you think if you were there? What would you have spoken to him if you were there? What would be your words to the elder brother? Would you come to him and said, "Are you not glad that he is alive? What do you want him to be? Dead or alive?"

But here is the father coming to him in verse 28 the father came out and pleaded with the older brother. Please take note of the word *plead*. Not demand but it says he pleaded with him. He says, "Come lets go please. Lets go in." Among his arguments in verse 29 *Lo, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command; yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends.*

Now look at the elder brother's argument. I didn't have what you gave him. I never had the opportunity that you have given him these things. His mind was clouded with what he did not have. I want a part too. And I never had a party.

The Value of Souls

No. 1 the party was more important than his brother. I am sure that was not really deep in his heart that the party was more important than his brother. But all his reactions proved it. All his arguments proved it. My friends, is the party more important than your loved ones? None of us should be like the younger brother in a sense of being a prodigal. But are we like the elder brother or are we like the father? Is the party more important to you than your mother, your brothers, your sisters, your family, and your children, those in the Lord? I know that we are to love Jesus above everything. But sometimes, we love our jobs, we love our homes, we love our

things more than we love people.

The elder brother continues his argument in verse 30 *But when this son of yours came.* What a statement. You only talk that way when you are angry. Instead of saying, "My brother," he said, "This son of yours." It is a case of am-I-my-brother's-keeper or Cain's Syndrome. If I were the father I would say, "This son of mine is also your brother." Sometimes when a child is doing well, scoring high grades and making the parents proud, the mother would be beaming and say, "That's my son." The father would be grinning and say, "That's my boy." But when he does something wrong, either one would say to the other, "Please go and discipline your son." They changed the *mine* to *your*.

But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fattened calf. In other words, the elder brother is saying, "I don't understand your philosophy." Jesus left the story hanging. He didn't tell us what happened to the elder brother as if to imply that story is something that is irrelevant to us.

The father says in verse 31 *Son you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.* Now that statement is correct. Because earlier on in Luke 15:12 *The younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the share of property that falls to me." And he divided his living between them.* In other words, the younger brother has no more inheritance. Everything that was left behind belongs to the elder brother as his inheritance. So legally, he had a point there. The father was right. He says, "All that I have is yours." You could have as many parties as you wish. But to the elder brother things were quite precious to him.

Now there are two extremes you can fall into. Either we are spendthrift or we are miserly. We should not be at either extreme. Some people are misers and they keep aside every cent that they collect. Its not just being economical I mean this is the extreme. Being economical is fair and fine. But they have gone to the extreme. Why, maybe the family never ever took a break together. They are always tightfisted even with five cents and putting everything aside without enjoying a holiday. No extra ice cream or circus show. And they say, "One day, one day we will enjoy all these

things.” In the teaching on prosperity, I talked about being balanced. When God started blessing your life you have to have a very balanced approach. Some people put aside every cent they earn and they really never enjoy life. They really worked hard, working 18 hours a day and they never really enjoy life at all.

The other extreme is where you enjoy every bit of money you have. By the time you reach your retirement you look into your bank account there is five cents. What happened to all the money? There is nothing planned for the future. It's a bad life also. I believe in being balanced. We got to be somewhere in between. We have to plan in spite of Jesus' coming. We still have to live our life with a budget and plan everything and at the same time, we need to take breaks and understand that there are some things you probably enjoy more when you are in your 30s than when you are in your 70s. So, you take a balanced view of that.

The elder son was probably way on the extreme end. He was always keeping and saving. Things mean a lot to people like that. One additional cent means a lot. One extra calf means a lot. And the father said, “You could actually have your own party.” I don't know why he was postponing the party. He could actually have his own party anytime. He didn't have any party at all. That is why a party means so much to him.

But the father said in verse 32 *It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.* The second problem with the elder brother was his attitude towards things in life. What's the basic root problem here? Somehow, in his life the elder brother did not develop what I call a true value of what is important in life. It is sad but true that in the society we live that the value of our life is based on our ability to earn money.

Many years ago, there was an accident in a factory in India and many were killed. The people filed a claim but the value of each of the lives of the people who died was so little. They value it in dollars and cents based on their earning power. But if that same person in the States had lost their arm or leg, they may be able to sue for many million of dollars. But over in India, the family received very little for the life

of their lost loved ones. People in society value lives according to our status, according to our earning power. And we put that sub-consciously into our mind. This teaching is to remove that because there is something more in value than money. There are things that are more valuable and we need to be able to see it and inculcate that into our lives. It doesn't mean that we move to the extreme of being careless about things. But it does mean that there has to be a new attitude in our life. It just like for example if your little child breaks your expensive porcelain vase, not purposely but accidentally, you could be so angry that you lose your temper and let out a blast of words or maybe you discipline your child in anger. Some parents do that. They will hit the child, slap the child, kick the child, just because the child broke something of material value. But they forgot that a porcelain vase may be broken but they have destroyed a soul in the process. The child's psyche, soul and mind may be broken. At least you still can buy back a porcelain vase or get some equivalent. But you can never get back the same soul of your child once it is broken. I see it too often that in the materialistic pursuits of society and among Christians many times that the value of material things have sucked out the love for souls.

We need to place value for each soul. And that's the problem with the elder brother. There are a lot of elder brothers Christian who have placed more value on things and money than on souls. How do I know whether I am in that category? No. 1, if your car or your household things got scratched, broken or lost, will you get angry with the person who was responsible? Do you know that if Jesus were in your shoes He would not feel angry? So checklist No. 1 if somebody scratched your car; somebody breaks something in your home would you feel angry? Where is the anger coming from? That's is our question. It's coming from the fact that the value you placed on material things is higher than the value of the soul.

Checklist No.2, do we struggle to let go of physical things? Do you struggle when God deals with your life and love flows in your heart and soul? Do you struggle to let go of things maybe to let somebody else have those things? Do you struggle to give them away? If there is a struggle, we can be too closely tied up and attached to things.

So now lets go to some points that we want to bring from God's Word. In the

parable of the prodigal son, we see that the elder brother seems to place a higher value on material things than on the life and soul of his own younger brother. What value should we then place on a soul? In Mark 8, this is the value that Jesus places on soul. Verse 36 *For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what would a man give in exchange for his soul. What would it profit a man if he were to gain the whole world but loses his soul?* Society at large today though humanistic in its form does not value souls as greatly as God does. But Jesus said in economic terms, if you put the world on one side of a scale and put just one soul on the other side, that one soul would be heavier in value than the whole world. So Jesus said if you were to gain the whole world and all the money and gold and silver and lose your soul its still not worth it.

I like to state it in a more personal sense. If you could just win one soul, it is more important than getting another raise of a thousand dollars in your job or ten thousand dollars in your job. I hope that strikes hard. Because for many people may be in the business world to get another ten thousand dollars profit at the expense of a soul or hurting one more soul, stepping over one more soul, crushing another soul, they would still do it. The philosophy of the world is in direct contradiction to the philosophy of Christianity. My friends it's not worth it. By all means, be prosperous. But don't do it at the expense of your soul and the souls around you. That is why it is impossible for a Christian to really say that it's God who got them a job to be a salesman for cigarettes or to work in a cigarette company, knowing that smoking cigarette destroys life and destroy homes. It is the same with selling alcohol. If you have been in a family where there is an alcoholic, you know how the alcoholic can destroy the home. The father who is an alcoholic doesn't care about the home. He doesn't have love for his children or for his wife. All he cares for is the next drink. If you understand what is valuable it will affect the choices you make in your life dramatically. We cannot run away from our conscience in our life unless what we do is legitimate and doesn't destroy souls, then its fine. But we have to have a conscience greater and deeper than what the world has. I mean some unscrupulous people don't care as long as they get the money.

Jesus is saying that just one soul is worth more than the world and it's not worth that exchange. What profit did Jesus say? There is no profit. So, He says what profit do you have if you gain the whole world but loses your own soul. I hope that thinking sinks into your life. So, the next time when you make a decision; if you are

going to get another thousand dollars in your job and cause another soul to be lost I hope you learn to make the right choice. Choose rather that that soul may be won. Because the souls that we win are the true value that heaven has. Not a single part of our money is going to be of any use unless it affects souls in some way. And the things and the way we use our money should help souls rather than hinder souls.

There are more stories of this kind in the bible. You know the story of Martha and Mary. They both welcomed Jesus in the house. But Mary sat at Jesus' feet while Martha was busy serving. And Jesus made a statement and said that Mary has chosen the good part because it has relevance to the soul of a person. She was receiving the teaching of Jesus. Martha was concerned about material things. And she was so frustrated that she came to Jesus and said, "Please send Mary away from you and get her to help me." And Jesus told her, "Martha, Martha, why are you troubled about many things? Mary has chosen the good part."

What about the rich man who came to Jesus? In Mark 10:17 *And as He was setting out on His journey, a man ran up and knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"* Jesus said do these commandments. And he said in verse 20 *"Teacher, all these I have observed from my youth."* In verse 21 Jesus said, *"You lack one thing; go, sell what you have, give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."* But he could not do it. He was too materialistic. He couldn't do it because souls were not in his heart.

Brethren, if there is one thing that we need to do if we want to grow spiritually is to be able to love souls more and more. In 10 years' time, we should love souls more than we love souls today. And we should have a love for souls more than we have 5 years ago. As Christians, we need to develop a compassion for souls, a desire to see souls born again, souls being touched and transformed into the image of God. Why did Jesus Christ come to die for our sins and save us? Why did He save us? Because one soul is valuable to Him and there were many at stake. There is something about the value of a human soul that is deep in Jesus' heart, deep in God's heart.

The Image of God in Souls

I wrestled with it and asked, "Lord why is it so and how?" The Lord said from Genesis 1:26 when He gave Adam the authority He also said in verse 26 let us make man in our image. Man was created in the image of God. When God created man, He made man different. There was something about the soul of a man and woman that He has created. He sees something valuable. Just like some of you ladies, you may have some thing valuable to you. For ladies who love porcelain, a valuable thing to you would be a porcelain bowl or vase. Likewise, for a woman who loves jewelry, a piece of jewelry would be precious and valuable to her. But what is valuable to God when He created man is His image and likeness imprinted on the soul. Notice all the things that He created He only said it was good. When He made man, He said it was very good. All the gold and all the silver have always been there. Prosperity has always been there. All material needs have always been there. But it's the soul that is most valuable to God.

I want to change your life. I want to change your vision. Let the scales drop from your eyes so that when you walk out of this place this morning you will not see those buildings that are worth millions and millions of dollars. You would not see those things in the shopping or supermarket that could be worth thousands of dollars. But you will see those human beings all along the road as precious souls. More precious than ten thousand buildings. Something must change in our lives. So that when you go down the road even that one precious little beggar that you see as you walk along the street downtown sitting there with just a little hat in front of him, you know that one soul is worth more than the whole world. We need that love for souls. We need to see the value of souls. So that at least if you cannot win them and bring them to Jesus and you cannot bring the gospel to them at least your heart feels for them. At least your heart feels so much for them that you began to pray for them. The love for souls is what we need to have.

And I want you to know that if Jesus were to walk down the streets of Kuala Lumpur or any one of the cities He would not be looking at the buildings. He would be looking at souls. I mean there was a time when the disciples were captivated by the works of man. They said, "Jesus look at this great temple, the stones, and the architecture." And Jesus says not one of these stones shall remain.

Because Jesus was looking at souls. He was not looking at things. We are to love people and use things, not love things and use people. Jesus sees every soul. And I could see Jesus reaching out to every soul, so that if He has any opportunity to win one more soul to God He goes for it.

Some of His disciples and some of the Pharisees and Sadducees didn't understand. In fact, the story of the prodigal son was told to the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The background of the story is in Luke 15. They were all looking at Jesus and saying, "Why does Jesus spend time with all these sinners and outcasts of society? These people have no economic value, no social value and even no religious value. Why should Jesus waste His time? Jesus told a few parables. And each one of those parables has only one basic statement: souls are more valuable to Him than any substance on this planet earth. Just look very carefully at the gospel of Luke 15 that each of those parables that He told includes the prodigal son. And He actually compares the Pharisees and the Sadducees to the elder brother. The context is Luke 15: 1 and 2. *Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear Him. And the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them.* They say what a waste of these people. They value people according to finances and position. But Jesus values each soul. The first parable Jesus told them is in verse 4 the parable of the man with a hundred sheep. If he loses just one sheep, he will go all the way to look for it. You know why, because one soul lost causes grief to God. And in verse 8 *Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it?* Then He talked about the parable of the lost son. What do all the parable speaks about? The love for souls. He passionately loves each soul. So point one we have determined the value of souls.

In point two, we see that each soul is created in the image of God. And if that creation of God doesn't grow and become like God the person that is most hurt is Almighty God. It is just like if you read in the newspaper about someone being a murderer, a thief, a robber, or some outcast in society, you do feel sad that such person has become like that. But it becomes more acute if that person is your son or daughter. How do you feel if that's your son or daughter in the headlines? You feel a personal loss greater than any others. Can you imagine how God feels when one soul is lost? God never intended for a single human soul to be lost.

Do you know that hell was never created for human beings? In Matthew chapter 25:41 *Then He will say to those at his left hand, "Depart from Me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.* I want you to know that God never created man to be lost. He created man to be in His image. And God has a great sense of personal loss than what we feel. I mean we will feel sad if anyone of our family is lost. But God's feeling and sense of loss is a billion times more. Because it is His creation. And the souls of lost man can become so perverted until they are no more in God's image when they die and are lost forever.

See the bible speaks about how in the hell fires there is the gnashing of teeth and the worms that never die. Those worms it talks about are not the worms we are thinking about, earthworms or some supernatural worms that torments people. If you look at the book of Isaiah when he talks about hell fire in chapter 66:24 *And they shall go forth and look on the dead bodies of the men that have rebelled against me; for their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.* Do you notice a personal pronoun there? It's not just a worm; it's *their* worm. The Lord gave me to understand that its not some supernatural worm but the souls of lost men that were originally created in the image of God. Through sin and unrighteousness, their souls slowly turned into the image of the enemy until it reaches a point where their souls became like worms. They don't look like God any more. Sometimes, you look at some human beings that are so wasted away by sin and wickedness that they don't really look like humans any more. Think about the diseases that afflict mankind. Some of the diseases that afflict mankind make a human being not look like a human any more. They look like a creature from outer space. If that can be what we see happening in the physical area by the ravages of sickness and disease, think about what happen to the soul of the person. When wickedness and sin gets into the heart of a person and remains permanently, what does the person's soul looks like? The bible said they just look like worms. They don't even look human any more. I want you to know everyone of those high angelic powers that have fallen when Satan fell they don't look glorious any more. Demons may try to look lovely and beautiful but it is only a forgery. The real image of every demon is horrifying. They never look like that before they fell. Satan himself although he can appear as an angel of light his true image is now one of horror. Something has changed when wickedness becomes a part of the nature.

So, you could imagine why God loves souls. It is because He created souls in His image. And He wants so much that each soul grows up to be like Him. That's the most important thing in life to win souls. And some times it so happens that a soul doesn't grow up to be like Him. Some become worse. In John 8: 44, He calls the Pharisees children of the devil. He says you are like your father the devil. Let me point to you some scriptures here. I want you to know how they became like the devil, not just in their opposition to Jesus. In John 8:44 *You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desire.* He calls them the devil's children. In John 6, He calls Judas Iscariot a devil because he has become devilish. Now that is not God's original purpose. Let me show you how they slowly became like the devil because the metamorphosis doesn't take place overnight. I want to warn you of the dangers of not being holy and righteous because you don't become like a devil overnight although we are born of the nature of God. We need to understand how to yield to God and be transformed to the image of Christ. There is no halfway point. We are becoming more like Jesus or we are becoming more like the devil. Some of you say you are born again. Yes thank God and please grow.

In the gospel of Matthew, we see the story of the Lord Jesus Christ and His ministry and all those people including the Pharisees and the Sadducees and the scribes. But Jesus reaches a point when I call it a cut off point when He no longer speaks any nice things about the Pharisees. Matt. 23 He began to speak woes to them. Among some of the things He said in verse 5-6 *They do all their deeds to be seen by men; for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, and they love the place of honour at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues.* Verse 13 -14 *But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrite! Because you shut the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither enter yourselves, nor allow those who would enter to go in.* So, it tells us there that they actually are greedy and they are covetous. You do a research on covetousness in a concordance and you will find that the most covetous people are the Pharisees and the Sadducees. In the scriptures, in the gospel calls them covetous. What's the problem here? People who value things more than people will slowly develop a nature that is devilish. It is a danger point that we want to point to. We must at all cost develop the love for souls and place a value for souls above things.

Your family will be a better place. Think about your family life. Problems and challenges may arise in the house but yet the love for one another will help them to overcome the difficulties. Why? It is because the love for souls is always greater

than anything. You can break a cup accidentally yet you won't be angry because you know the value of souls. Lets look at what the apostle John says in the book of I John verse 15 *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If any one loves the world, the love for the Father is not in him.* If you don't have the love of the Father in you, you won't love souls. It is because you love things more than people. We have to have that dealt in our life so that we place a high value for souls. There are many things that Jesus spoke about the Pharisees. But basically, this is the main problem. They don't love souls. They love positions; they love money; they love a lot of other things but they don't love souls. Do you remember the time when Jesus healed a person and they got angry? Now if they love souls would they get angry? Of course not. Someone is healed; someone's daddy can now earn a living.

The root problem of a person backsliding is when they fail to love people. The greatest things in life come when we develop a yearning, a passion and a love for people. I believe there is one key area in the church of Jesus Christ that we need to develop. When we look at people, we need to love them more than any thing. We have to develop a passion for souls, a desire. Sometimes, it may cause us things to love souls. But we will choose to pay the price and suffer the loss of these things rather than suffer the loss of souls. If we could increase our love for souls at the expense of some things in our lives, let's do it because the value of souls is greater than the value of things. I mean many of us will be willing to give up something, to work harder to maybe be able to earn another one thousand or two thousand dollars more. Now why don't we work harder and why don't we be willing to give up some things in order to increase our love for souls? It is because we don't value the love for souls so we don't place a sacrifice. The things that you value you are willing to sacrifice for. And the things you don't value you don't sacrifice. But we value souls even though it may cost us great inconvenience. Sometimes, it may mean driving 500 miles to see your mummy and your daddy so that they know that you love them and you could win them to Jesus. You will do it. Do you love souls? - that is the question we ask.

In point two, we see that all souls were created in the image of God. And high purpose of God is for all souls to be conformed to His image. Why it doesn't conform to His image is because of the things of this world and when the love of the world comes into our life the love for souls disappears.

The Reward

Now point three the reward. In Daniel 12, he pronounced a special blessing in verse 3 *And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.* I have a few books about people who have gone to heaven. Among them is the book "Within the Gates" by Mariette Davis published by Christ for the Nations. It talks about people who have gone to heaven and who has a mansion and on their mansion, there are stars on it. And every time you win a soul to Jesus, you have a star on your mansion. Jesus marks our life by how many souls we win for Him and how many souls we develop for Him. Winning is one side and developing a soul is another. That is all based on our love for souls.

The world marks their life by how much they progress economically. If you are now able to purchase a flat, you felt that you are now better off. If last time you earn five hundred now you earn one thousand five you felt you are better off. The world marks progress in life in terms of economic growth and power. It is the rat race. But my friends while on the world graph, you are getting higher and higher the ladder by growing richer materially but if your love for human beings lessens, your heavenly graph is actually going downwards. And if it progresses that way and you began to love things more and more, somewhere along the line, you become more like the devil. Whose graph are we following? The world's or God's? But the most important question is, whose graph are you using to measure your own life? Now it doesn't mean that you are going to lose out on the world when you love souls. It doesn't mean that economically, prosperity wise you are going lose out when you love souls. It never. *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you.* The most important thing in life is that we measure our life based on the love for souls and the souls that we have helped. Whether you have helped one more soul to be more like God, transform one more soul, you won one more soul these are the important marks in your life. Instead of measuring them by the hundred of dollars that increase in your salary and your living ability from a flat to a better housing you measure it by the number of souls you have won. Praise God, if your life could win one soul now you could win many more souls. And you could begin to transform more souls to Jesus. You

began to pray for more souls. Your life and progress in God's sight is based on souls.

Now who are the wise? Turn to Proverbs 11. In Daniel 12, we speak about the wise in the Lord. In Proverbs 11:30 *the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life and he who win souls is wise*. You compare that to Daniel 12 you realize that it is winning souls that is important. We see loving souls now we see winning souls. Before we can win souls we must love souls. There are a lot of people who win souls because they feel obligated since it's the Great Commission and because they have a guilty conscience. But it doesn't start there. This is why in our church we don't push you to go out. We would rather teach you how you must develop a love for souls. Until more and more every time you go out you begin to see souls, you begin to pray, you begin to cry out to God for souls. You began to love souls. You began to hunger for more souls. Then one day you will be out winning those souls. Because it's no point trying to win them when you don't love them. They know that is fake. We must love them first. The love for souls must be strong in our life. And it starts with those around you your loved ones.

Lets look at I John if there is any book that speaks much about loving souls, it would be I John. We look at things now that begin and start in our life. The practical application on how to start developing love for souls is found here. I Jn. 2:9 *He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in darkness still. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and in it, there is no cause for stumbling*. Remember in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says if a person has anger against somebody else, he is in danger of hell fire. Because the influence starts coming in. So the practical application of loving souls is to first examine the root of all anger and hate. Do you know that we must reach a point where we do not have hatred and anger against any human beings? You cannot be angry with one human being or hate one human being and be able to love the rest. Your anger against one will diminish your love for the rest. So, you got to get rid of that hatred and anger in your life against any one until no matter what people do to you there is no anger left in your life. Then only can the love for souls develop in our life. So whatever people do to you, you never feel hurt. You only feel the love for souls coming out.

Then John also gives us another point here on how to develop the love for souls. In

verse 15 *do not love the world*. Separate yourself from the things of this world then only will love be able to grow in your life for souls. Point 1 is getting rid of all hate and anger in your life against anyone. Point 2 is being separated from the things of this world the cares, the anxiety. Do you know that when Martha went to Jesus to get Him to send Mary to help her, she was actually angry with Mary and upset with her? Doesn't that tell you that she don't love souls? She loves things; she wants things to be proper. She would not have felt the anger against Mary because if her love for soul is greater than her love for things her outburst would never have happened.

Then we see in I Jn. 4:12 *No man has ever seen God, if we love one another, God abides in us and His love is perfected in us*. That is point three. If you want the love of God, which is also the love and passion for souls to be perfected start loving those you can see. Start right where you are with those people around you. Start right there and practice the love of God. Don't wait for some invisible things to happen. Because those people are visible around you. Your loved ones, your close friends that love for them must be there. In our personal life, we sometimes spend a lot of our savings in order to do things that we felt was right. Like for example, my family were all scattered all over in the sense that we were never closed to them. We were not able to bring the family together because basically we could not afford to bring the family together. So, after my father went to be with the Lord, I realized that we must gather all my family together with all my brothers and sisters. I know how precious it will be to my mother to see all of us together. It's easy together but it cost money. So for the past years I think we have spent about thirty thousand dollars. We could have used it to buy a new car. We could use it to put a deposit on our house. We only started doing that only last year. But before that we spent the money for the family gathering when we could have put the money for down payment for a house and then slowly paying off. For ten years, we lived in a rented house, took our savings, and used it to bring our families together. I am glad I did it because if my mother who is born again is going to die and going to be with God I may live to regret that I have not loved her enough. But I am willing to spend that money because I know that it is important to her. It is important to us that we have to start right with our family. It is not that we did it because we have lots of money. It dug deep into our savings. But we did it because we valued our family above money, things and convenience. I don't know what it will cost you to love people. It may cost you very dearly. But there is no such thing as loving souls that don't cost you anything. Our priorities are different. Do we have any regret that we did

it? No, one day when we get back to heaven we would be glad we did it.

I am sharing this because some of us here are living with hatred and anger. And you are cutting the compassion for souls out of your life because you are not able to love another person. Maybe because you are just unwilling to make some sacrifices to love another soul. Maybe your car is more important to you than loving your parents. I know a lot of so-called Christian people who will spend all their money for their family and yet neglect their own father, and mother who may be in need. They would spend all their money on themselves but they have not developed love in their lives for their own brothers and sisters who are in need. And that's not true Christianity. The love and compassion for souls start right where we are. We got to love those whom we can see. Although we can see them, you may not want to start there. You want to start with a stranger. Don't try to cross the ocean to love a stranger when you can't love your own neighbor. Some long term and short term missionaries are prepared to travel thousands of miles at great expense and win strangers on foreign soil, but when they come back home, they won't even talk to their immigrant neighbors. We use things and love people. Let us not love things and use people.