

3. Passion for Jesus and Intimacy with Him

Core DNA Trait: A church passionate for Jesus and intimate with Him.

The Greatest and First Commandment

Matthew 22:37–38 in the ESV states: “And he said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment.’”

a. The Question Jesus Answered

- “Which is the great commandment in the Law?”
- Jesus responded without hesitation.
- Loving God with all your heart is not only the greatest commandment—it’s the *first*.

b. The Real Issue in the Church

- Losing first love is the first issue Jesus addressed in Revelation 2–3.
- Even before Jesus addressed:
 - False doctrine
 - False prophecy
 - Cultural compromise
 - Distraction
- His first correction was the first commandment not in first place.
- If you lose your first love, you lose everything else.

Alignment Begins with First Love

a. The Starting Point of God’s Purpose

- Everything begins here
- The first commandment restored to first place
- Ephesus experienced a city-shaking revival.
 - Lasted 2–3 years
 - Spread across all of Asia Minor
 - Marked by extraordinary miracles, deep repentance, and revelatory teaching
- Forty years later they left their first love.
- Revival is only a catalyst for God’s eternal purpose to be accomplished. It is never the fulfillment of it.

- Only maintaining first love for decades without waning can accomplish what God original intended.

b. The Flow of the Christian Life

- “The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.”
- Everything flows from loving God first.
- The Great Commission → flows from the Great Commandment
- Ministry to others → flows from ministry to the Lord
- Obedience → fueled by affection
- Holiness → the byproduct of passion for Jesus
- God’s original intention: Not merely servants but lovers.

Loving God with Totality—Not Partiality

a. Loving God with All Your Heart

- Your desires, affections, beliefs, and motivations
- He becomes your supreme affection, greatest treasure, and deepest delight.
- Practical expression
 - Guard your heart from rivals
 - Repent quickly when love cools
 - Return again and again
- Wholehearted love for Jesus is not just emotion—it is allegiance.

b. Loving God with All Your Mind

- Your thoughts, reasoning, meditations, and imagination
- Pursue truth about God
- Reject lies about His nature
- Devote yourself to Scripture
- Meditate until your mind is renewed
- The result: alignment with the mind of Christ
- The Tension
 - Passion without truth → emotionalism
 - Truth without affection → cold religion

- God desires both together

c. Loving God with All Your Soul

- Your will, identity, personality, and emotions
- Exchange your ambitions for His
- Root your identity in being His beloved
- Yield your choices to Him
- “Not my will, but Yours be done”
- Embraces the cross
- Allows brokenness to refine devotion

d. The True Standard

- Not perfection but wholeness
- Undivided love with no rival loyalties

The Commandment Can’t Produce First Love

a. The Honest Reality

- No one has fully lived this out
- No one loves God perfectly

b. The Limitation of the Law

- The law commands and dictates
- It can’t ignite and empower
- Reveals the requirement but cannot produce the reality

The True Source of Love

a. Divine Order

- We love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19).
- Love for God is always a response to His love for you.
- You cannot give what you have not received.
- Your love is the overflow of His love.
- God loves you into loving Him.

b. The Prayer for Revelation

- Ephesians 3:16–19
- The progression: Strength → Revelation → Experience → Fullness
- You cannot love God fully until you experience His love deeply.

c. Feeling Unloved

- When the heart feels unloved: it withdraws, guards itself, and love grows cold.
- Root issue: wounds, rejection, and emotional pain

d. The Solution

- Go deeper into God's love until your heart is healed and awakened.
- Sink your roots deep
- Continue pressing in
- Know His love in its: width, length, height, and depth
- The cross is the eternal declaration of God's love.
- When Jesus stretched out His arms, He declared forever the infinite depth of His love for you.

The Challenge of the First Commandment

a. The Obstacles

- The reality: sounds simple but it's not easy.
- Fight against distractions, busyness, anxieties, sin, and selfishness
- Many things compete for first place in the heart

The Source of True Passion

a. Passion for Jesus Is Ignited

- Not manufactured by willpower or emotionalism
- Not produced by effort
- Not sustained by emotion
- But birthed and sustained by God Himself

b. Song of Songs 8:6

- "Put me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm. For love is as strong as death, jealousy is as severe as Sheol; its flashes are flashes of fire, the very flame of the LORD."

- “The very flame of the LORD” (flame of Yah)
- The only place in the Song of Songs where God’s name appears.
- Jewish and Christian scholars throughout history view the Song of Solomon in two ways:
 1. Human marital love
 2. God as the Bridegroom of His people (Yahweh and Israel | Jesus and the church)
- Scripture reveals a covenant love story between God and His people.
- The flame of the Lord is not merely human love.
- It is divine love, all-consuming love, God-initiated love

God’s Jealous Love

a. God’s Love Is Fire

- God’s love is not passive—it is a consuming fire.
- Stronger than death, unrelenting, all-consuming
- God is love (1 John 4:8).
- God is a consuming fire (Heb. 12:29).
- God’s love is a consuming fire.

b. God’s Jealous Love

- He is not jealous because of insecurity or selfishness.
- He is jealous because of perfect love and holy desire for your wholehearted devotion.
- He knows:
 - Only He can satisfy your heart
 - Every rival leads to emptiness
- God’s jealousy protects your highest joy—Himself.

c. What God’s Fire Does

- Burns away idols, sin, selfishness, and competing affections
- Produces undivided devotion and wholehearted love
- It rejects lukewarmness, apathy, heart-hearted devotion, and mental agreement without affection.
- The fire of God’s love will not settle for partial surrender.

The Seal of Devotion

a. The Divine Exchange

- We love Jesus with His love, not ours.
- As we surrender, God supplies the love to love Him.
- The Father pours His love into your heart through the Spirit.

b. The Meaning of the Seal

- "Put me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm."
- In ancient culture, a seal represented ownership, authority, and permanent identification.

c. The Twofold Surrender

- Seal on your heart (inward life)
 - Desires, affections, motivations
 - "My heart belongs entirely to You."
- Seal on your arm (outward life)
 - Actions, strength, choices
 - "My life belongs entirely to You."
- A Sacred Vow
 - Like a Jewish betrothal
 - A covenant of devotion
- The Result
 - Total surrender invites supernatural transformation.
 - Inward devotion and outward obedience
 - God's love ignites within you.

Loving Jesus with God's Love

a. Jesus's Prayer in John 17:26

- "I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."
- Jesus didn't ask that you try harder.
- He wanted the Father's love for Him to burn in us.
- God desires His eternal and perfect love for His Son to burn in your heart.

b. The Spirit Empowering Love

- Romans 5:5: "The love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."
- The Holy Spirit pours God's love into your heart.
- There's a connection between Song 8:6 and Rom. 5:5
 - Song 8:6 -> Fire of love
 - Romans 5:5 -> Love poured out
- The Spirit's poured-out love becomes a burning fire within your heart as you surrender everything to Him.

Intimacy with Christ

a. The Call to Fellowship

- "God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:9).
- Fellowship is the Greek word *koinonia*.
 - Participation
 - Communion
 - Sharing life together
- Christianity is not merely believing truth—it is sharing life with God.

b. The Pattern in Scripture

- God has always desired intimate friendship with His people.
 - Adam → fellowshiped with God
 - Enoch → walked so closely he pleased God
 - Abraham → called God's friend
 - David → delighted in the Lord
 - Daniel → beloved
 - Prophets → entrusted with God's secrets
 - Apostles → called friends, not just servants
 - John → "the one whom Jesus loves"
 - Mary of Bethany → chose intimacy over activity
- Across every covenant and generation, God draws near to those who draw near to Him.

c. Your Highest Calling

- Not primarily ministry success, influence, or recognition.
- Your greatest calling is intimacy with God.
- Everything else flows from this: ministry, calling, fruitfulness
- Christianity is not merely informational; it is relational.
- Christianity is about knowing a Person.
- John 17:3: knowing Him
- Phil. 3:10: experiential knowing

d. John 14:23: The Astonishing Invitation

- “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.”
- God is not offering visits—He is offering habitation.
- You are invited into the fellowship of the Trinity.
- The same love, the same communion, the same relational life
- Obedience does not earn love—it deepens experience.
- All believers are loved. But intimacy is experienced more deeply through love, trust, and obedience.

e. Indwelling Versus Awareness

- Objective reality: the Spirit dwells in every believer
- Subjective experience: many live unaware and disconnected; others live aware, engaged, and in communion.
- God dwells in you, but you must learn to enjoy, encounter, and experience Him.
- What God desires
 - Prayer → ongoing conversation
 - Scripture → immersive communion
 - Worship → shared delight
- Intimacy with God satisfies the deepest longing of the soul.

From Union to Communion

a. The Pressures, Cares, and Distractions of This Age

- Noise, busyness, hurry, constant stimulation

- Distraction dulls awareness of Christ's presence.
- We miss His voice; we overlook His nearness.
- Constant notifications, scrolls, like and shares

b. Union versus Communion

- 1 Cor. 6:17: "One spirit with Him."
- Your spirit has been fused to the Holy Spirit.
- You are inseparably connected to Christ right now.
- Union is constant, unchanging, and an objective reality.
- Communion is experiential, relational, and dependent on awareness.
- Union is your connection with Christ.
- Communion is your experience of that connection.
- Christ is in your spirit but not automatically dwelling in your heart (Eph. 3:17).

c. Be Still and Know (Ps. 46:10)

- Communion requires quieting the heart.
- It requires letting go, turning the heart inward to Christ.
- "Be still" means to let go, release striving, and quiet the heart.
- Slow down, remove distractions, quiet your thoughts, turn inward

d. Jesus Knocking to Come In (Rev. 3:20)

- Rev. 3:20: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me."
- Jesus is speaking to lukewarm believers, not unbelievers.
- Jesus is knocking in your spirit, wanting to come dwell in your heart.
- "Dine": the main evening meal, marked by unhurried conversation.
- Jesus is inviting us into conversational intimacy.
- Jesus is offering us deep, unhurried, relational fellowship. Not rush, mechanical, but real and personal.
- Jesus doesn't want to just direct your life from heaven; He wants to walk with you, speak with you, and share His life with you.
- If you don't slow down, you will miss His voice.

e. Practical Ways to Move from Union to Communion

- Open the door and invite Him in.
- Turn your heart toward Him.
- Slow down. Turn off the devices.
- Be still and listen.

The One Thing Needed

a. Mary Versus Martha

- Luke 10:41-42: "But the Lord answered and said to her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.'"
- Martha was busy serving, engaged in ministry, and distracted by activity.
- Mary was sitting at Jesus's feet, listening to Him, focused entirely on Him.
- Jesus commends devotion over distraction.
- Ministry is not wrong; it's just not primary.
- Ministry matters but only one thing is necessary.

b. Confronting the Church's Wrong Mindset

- You can do many things for Jesus and still miss what matters most.
- You can have a life full of activity but lack intimacy.
- You can be busy but not close.
- The world prizes productivity, activity, results, and performance.
- We think the busiest person is the most spiritual person.

c. The Power of Intimacy

- Both sisters said: "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."
- Martha → received a teaching about the resurrection.
- Mary → received a resurrection.
- Intimacy positions you for breakthroughs, miracles, and answers to prayer you wouldn't get otherwise.
- John 15:7: Abide, ask, and it will be done.
- Intimacy with Christ is the one thing needed.