

# Climbing the Spiritual Ladder

## Pt 8 – Love



# The Abundant Entrance into the Everlasting Kingdom

[We] have been given ...exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these [we] may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust.

But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.

For if these things are yours and abound, *you will be* neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble;

for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter I:4-11)

**Slide 2:**

The divine nature = love, the world is corrupted because of lust, which is inherently selfish and against love

So because we have been given these promises and God wants us to be loving as He is, we have to be diligent in those 8 things.

The person who loves is like a fire, contagious to other people, he/she will have many fruits.

The person who lacks these things is short sighted, he lives for now only...even to blindness – he cannot distinguish between good and evil and does not want anyone to tell him and even if they did he might not understand...

But if we do these things we will be welcomed to heaven with its gates wide open and with great joy

“If you do these things...  
an entrance  
will be supplied to you  
abundantly  
into the everlasting kingdom”  
(2 Peter 1:10,11)

## 8. Love



## 7. Brotherly Kindness

## 6. Godliness

## 5. Perseverance

## 4. Self – Control

## 3. Knowledge

## 2. Virtue

## 1. Faith

When is this reading read?

**Slide 3:**

The key is if we DO these things, so we want to talk about love from a practical, effective point of view

This reading is read the Sunday before Lent starts and in the first Wednesday of Lent, the church in her wisdom is calling us to look to heaven and do everything we can to enter.

# What is Love?

- Practical definitions
  1. Love for people
    - Strong affection based on family, personal ties, sexual attraction, admiration
    - Loyal, Benevolent concern for the person
  2. Love for things
    - Attachment, enthusiasm, devotion to something
- Both types of love matter because they dictate how we spend our time...

**Slide 4:**

I distinguished between love for people and things and love directs our time...

# Can Love lead to something evil?

- And the lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her, “Entice him, and find out where his great strength *lies*, and by what *means* we may overpower him, that we may bind him to afflict him; and every one of us will give you eleven hundred *pieces* of silver.”
- Then Amnon hated her exceedingly, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, “Arise, be gone!”
- 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...And not many days after, [he] journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living... and he began to be in want.... And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him *anything*.

Be Careful who/what you love...

## Slide 5:

Delilah – love of money

Amnon – uncontrolled sexual lust (see the story in 2 Samuel 13)

Prodigal Son – love of himself, This is us, if we want the good things from God but not God Himself, the life of selfish satisfaction ends in total degradation, and still the Father is overjoyed to have us back

I have a scary story to tell. I know this girl who was beautiful and from a good family. She went far away for school and it was hard to contact her parents and there was no church there. She became homesick and lonely...she became friends with a big group, she eventually started a relationship with a guy in the group. The relationship moved physically very fast. She was shocked at herself, when she went home she went to confess her father of confession was surprised he told her she had to cut off all communication with him, she tried, she failed, she tried again and again and every time she is getting worse and worse, finally she gave up, she said she is done feeling guilty, she is done talking to Abouna...she came home for break and it was Holy Week, all week she avoided Abouna...butr she decided to take Communion on Covenant Thursday and Easter so that her mother would not become suspicious about her...then she came to talk to Abouna before she goes back to school...he was in the Altar, the Holiest of holies,when he saw that she came in from the womens side he didn't say anything to her, he turned to the altar and put his hands on it like he is bracing himself, in that instant she was bowed down, and she could only see the bottom of Abounas clothes, she heard a Voice, not Abouna's, "You didn't want me, you only cared about her...she thought of things to say but she could not...she could feel God ascend and she could stand up again, Abouna said to her I don't know how to help you...she went back to school and tried again to leave him, and again she failed!!! She finally left him at the end of the semester, she left the school, Abouna told her if she is truly repentant she has to leave the school permanently and tell her parents...abouna asked her parents to come to church and bring her, in the car ride her parents asked her if she wanted to be a nun! That's how good she was! She was not allowed to take communion, for an unknown period of time which turned out to be the same amount of time she was in her relationship...The story ends happily, the girl has a much deeper relationship with God and she ends up getting married and having wonderful kids, but she suffered very much, she daily remembers the whole thing...BE CAREFUL who, what you love. By the way this story proves many things, that we have to approach communion worthily, that we are the temple of God like that priest, if we love even father or mother more than Him we are not worthy of Him, that He is a great King, that only the pure can see Him, He had that same small, still Voice that Elijah heard...

# Who to Love?

- God
  - He loved me first
  - He created me and loves me the way I am
  - He wants me to be joyful and to give me every good thing
  - He is beneficent, kind to the wicked and unthankful
  - He is fairer than the sons of men
  - He wants to give us His glory, riches, love
  - He wants us to be united to Himself and to each other
  - He sacrificed Himself to pay my debts

# How to Show God your love

## 1. Give Him your heart

- “My son give me your heart” (Proverbs 23:26)

## 2. Keep His commandments

- If you love me, keep my commandments (John 14:15)
- They are for our sake

## 3. Offer Him sacrifices

- Fasting, tithing, “the firsts,” come to church early, serve (not just in church)

## 4. Spend time with Him

- Read the Bible, Pray, Pray, Pray
- Attend Liturgy, Vespers, Tasbeha, Youth Meeting, Alhan lessons, Prayer meetings, Nahda . . .you get the idea

# Is Your Love to Others Consistent?

| What Love Is/Does         | What Love is not/does not do     |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Suffers Long           | 3. Does not envy                 |
| 2. Kind                   | 4. Does not parade itself        |
| 11. Rejoices in the truth | 5. Is not puffed up              |
| 12. Bears all things      | 6. Does not behave rudely        |
| 13. Believes all things   | 7. Does not seek its own         |
| 14. Hopes all things      | 8. Is not provoked               |
| 15. Endures all things    | 9. Thinks no evil                |
|                           | 10. Does not rejoice in iniquity |
|                           | 16. Never fails                  |

Examine yourself have your actions contradicted your love?

- Are you rude: to your parents, siblings, strangers (road rage)?
- Do you rejoice with your friends in harmful activities?
- Have you told yourself, your friends, siblings the truth hard to hear?
- Do you like dirty jokes?
- Do you spread gossip, or believe the gossip you hear?
- Do you sacrifice your comfort to help others?
- Have you given up on someone?

# How to come to love someone you don't

- God

1. Try to get to know Him

1. Go to places where you can find Him

- Come to church very often, especially if none of your friends will be there
- Go on retreats, service trips

2. Read the Bible – try to understand God's point of view

2. Confess/Repent – one of the major reasons we don't know God deeply is we are holding on to sins that we love more than Him

3. Spend time with people who do love Him

4. Think of the awesome things God has done for you, and don't attribute them to chance or other people

# A Beautiful Video

- The Story of how an atheist man became not only a monk but an anchorite who lives in a cave outside the monastery of St. Anthony in Egypt.

Follow the link below for the story:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yd-cCOouv-0&feature=player\\_detailpage](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yd-cCOouv-0&feature=player_detailpage)

**Slide 10:**

He was raised by a Protestant father and Catholic mother and growing up he was beaten up by other kids at school, at 11 he started to doubt God exists and by 16 he firmly didn't believe in the existence of God, he became a professor of philosophy and literature he read Freud and Marx and believed them when they wrote that God is an escape for people. He went on like this till his mother died, after grieving for her for a whole year he still was devastated, so he wanted to go back to the room where she died, it was in a catholic hospital, so the nuns told him the room is being used, he can see it later, so he went to the library to read. Look how God dealt with him, there he read a book about a man just like him, atheist, devastated by his mother's death, and that he found peace in a monastery, so he ignored the parts of the book about the man's faith but just took that the man found peace in the monastery. So he went to a Serbian monastery and he wanting to fit in with the people tried to make 3 metanias in front of the icon of St. Mary, and this is where his conversion took place, here is his amazing story.

# How to come to love someone you don't

- Someone who hurt you – parents, friends (now enemies)
  1. Acknowledge what specifically caused the hurt, Don't vilify the person as a whole
  2. Don't entertain thoughts of punishment or revenge
  3. Consider the offender's perspective
  4. Make a commitment to forgive without a catch
  5. Extend compassion and good will to the person
  6. Pray to the Lord to Help you

**Slide 11:**

These are researched steps in successfully forgiving, but without God it is not easy...

# How to come to love someone you don't

- People you don't know
  - Our church teaches us to pray for people everywhere and in every condition, especially for people who don't know God yet
  - Be in the habit of being courteous to strangers



We were created for Love!

Love is the purpose of our life!

Let all that you do  
be done with love  
(1 Cor 16:14)

**Slide 13:**

Don't think we were created to work, to be spouses and parents, and that's it, those are opportunities to prove our love and faithfulness but the real purpose of life is to love God and others, and if we have loved faithfully we have accomplished the goals of this life.

# Love

1. Be careful who/what you love
2. God should be our first love for many many reasons
3. We will love God when we know Him, and we have to use the known ways to get to know Him
4. Love is pure, humble, puts others first, and it endures — show God and people you love them with your actions
5. The first step to loving someone who hurt us is to forgive them
6. We are called on to love strangers, treat them well, and pray for them

# A Beautiful Video

- A Coptic Fraction for the Son to be said anytime:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DtyBMI5bUis&feature=player\\_detailpage](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DtyBMI5bUis&feature=player_detailpage)

**Slide 15:**

This is a beautiful fraction to the son that can be said any almost any time in the year.

# Faith



**Slide 16:**

1. Your faith actually starts with your parents, they brought you, they baptized you, and you in grow in faith by continuing to come. Remember Jacob's ladder, he called the place where he met God, Beth-El, House of God, The Church is God's house, it is where you come to be one with Him, to praise Him with the language of love that the church is full of, where you can praise Him individually and together as a community. Where you learn all the details of faith,
2. I can't imagine a spiritual life without reading the Bible, the Book that God gave us to know Him by
3. The Father of Confession is extremely important in guiding the person in all these aspects of getting close to God
4. When you have a relationship with anyone, if you hurt them and you care to save your relationship then you will do your best to make it up to them, to correct whatever mistake you made
5. This is so important, all the apostles even though they had the Holy Spirit and many of them saw God, and they knew Him physically, God still sent them 2 by 2 so there will be someone else there who believes in God who loves Him, so they can support each other, you also need friends who are going in the same path...

# Virtue

+ Prayer is both the mother and daughter of virtue



**Slide 17:**

To be a virtuous person, a person who does only good, you have to be in constant prayer. I can't emphasize enough how powerful the Agbeya is in starting a serious prayer life.

# Knowing God

We want to know God because

- He wants us to know Him – It is the purpose of our life
- Knowing Him will make us like Him
- Knowing God will continue forever, To live eternally is to know God

We know God through

- The Bible, The Church, Prayer, Father of Confession

We keep the knowledge of God by

- ↑ Time w/people & things that increase our knowledge of God
- ↓ Time w/people & things that don't help us to know God

We share knowledge of Him by

- Gaining knowledge of Him, Making it attractive to others by our lifestyle, and Praying for God to enlighten others

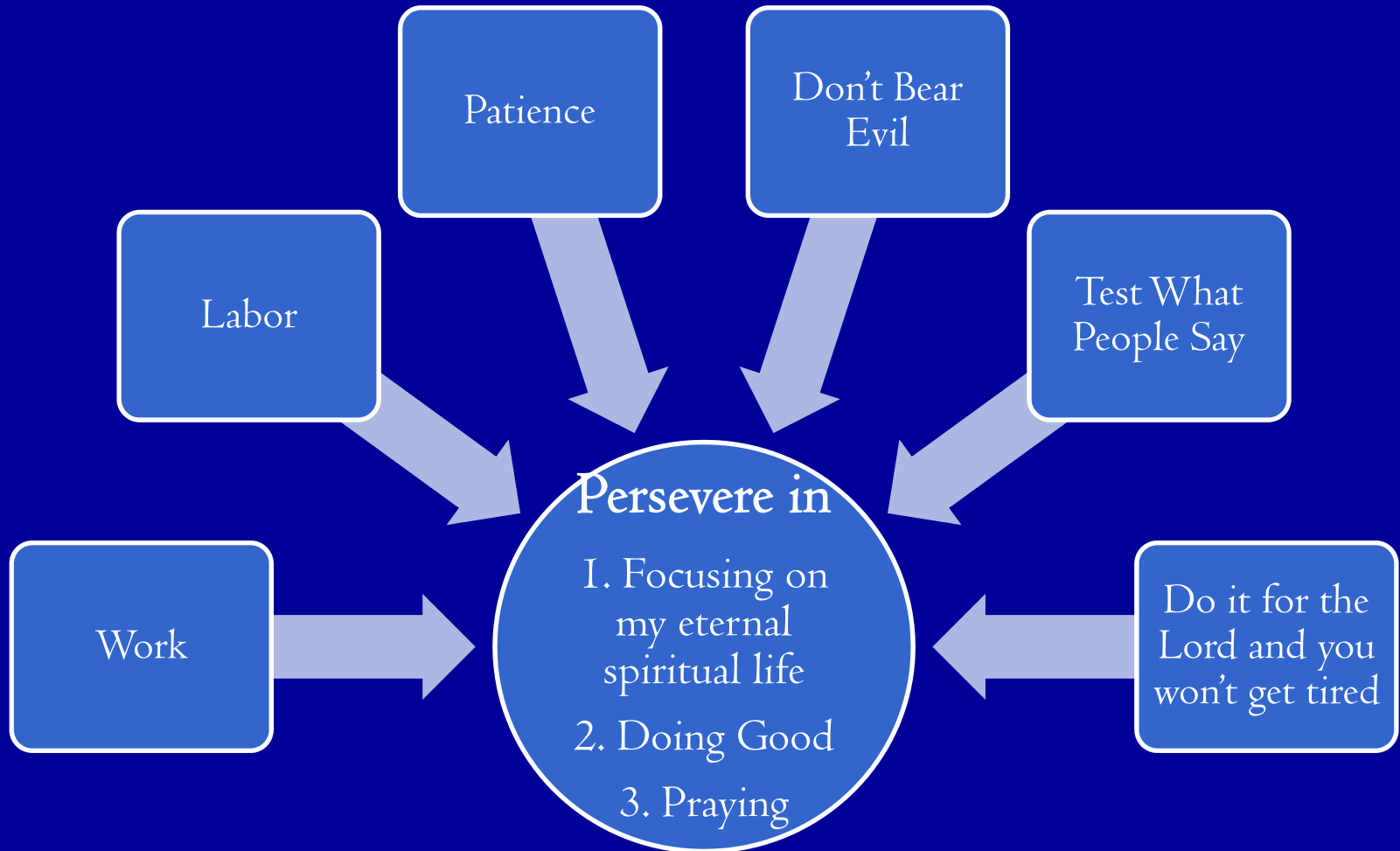
**Slide 18:**

If you think about it the Prodigal Son lost the knowledge of his Father when he decided he wanted to spend time enjoying his inheritance...so be careful in what is enjoyable to you, spend your time wisely.

# Self-Control

1. Use the Word of God to Defeat Evil Thoughts
2. Remove the Opportunity for Sin
3. Confess
4. Ask the Lord for Help
5. NEVER GIVE UP!!!

# Perseverance

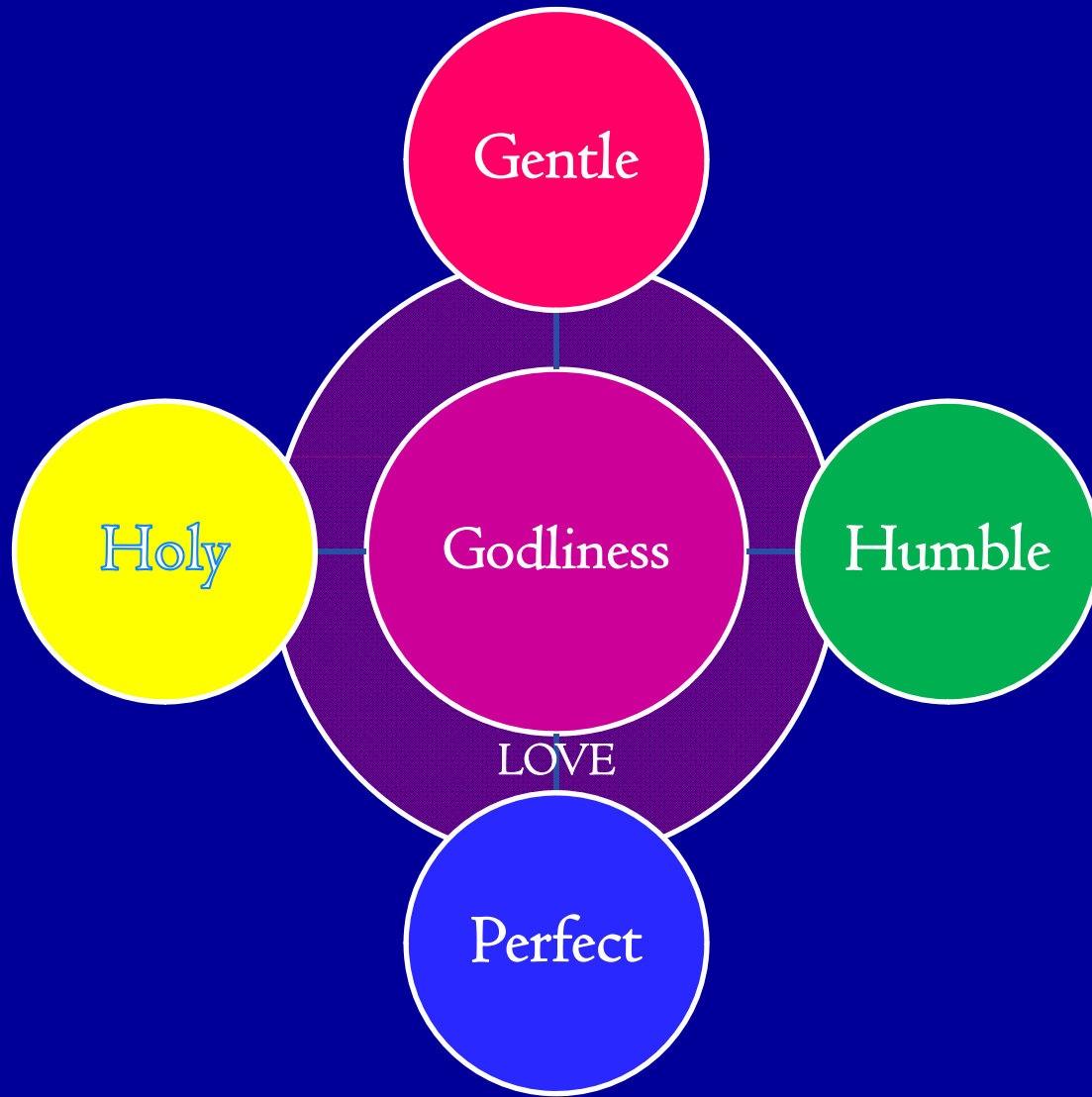


## Slide 20:

It is extremely important to **not bear evil**, we said that all the righteous people of the past were tricked in some way or another by the devil who is extremely smart and knows how to make you bear a lot of evil if you will bear a little. So to escape him don't bare a little evil, don't say to yourself I will have a boyfriend or girlfriend but I won't kiss, you kiss then you say, ok I won't do anything below the belt...and it is a losing battle...so don't bear evil and the devil cannot dissuade you from persevering.

Also **test what people say**, many people have stopped doing good things or started doing bad things based on things that people said which they took at face value and did not evaluate why did this person say it, are they really right or are they trying to justify something wrong...

And have a great motivation, anything without a strong motivation will end, **if you are motivated by Love for God you will never get tired**



Kindness  
from God



Kindness  
from Others



Kindness We Give

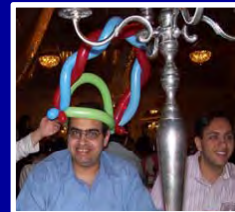
Affection  
Sympathy  
Help  
Forbearance



Parents



Siblings



Friends



Strangers



Enemies

# Love

1. Be careful who/what you love
2. God should be our first love for many reasons
3. We will love God when we know Him, and we have to use the known ways to get to know Him
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