

Abiding Fruit



John 15:16

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Reciprocal Love Song of Solomon 6:3

We are probably familiar with that great hymn, “*I am his, and He is mine*” by George Robinson. It goes like this: *Loved with everlasting love; led by grace that love to know; Gracious Spirit from above, Thou hast taught me it is so. O this full and perfect peace! O this transport all divine! In a love which cannot cease, I am His and He is mine.* These words seem certainly to be inspired by the bride’s voice echoing her love for her bridegroom in Song of Solomon 6:3. Solomon records the bride’s words like this: “*I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine.*” Anne Cousin’s (1824 – 1906) hymn “*The Sands of Time are Sinking*”, inspired by the letters of Samuel Rutherford (1600 – 1661) echoes the same sentiments: “*O I am my Beloved’s, And my Belov’d is mine; He brings a poor vile sinner, into his house of wine. I stand upon his merit; I know no other stand, Not e’en where glory dwelleth, In Immanuel’s land.*”

The bride of Solomon is stating her belonging to Solomon and his belonging to her. They are lovers together. Both go to great lengths in the Song to praise and uphold the virtues of each other. This is true of our relationship with Jesus Christ. He is our Beloved and we are his. In Solomon’s case as the great king of Israel he could have any woman he desired simply because he was the king, and she would probably have been pleased to accept his attentions, as this would give her prestige and elevate her to a position of splendor. The point is this: the Bride’s position is dependent upon the Bridegroom, both in Solomon’s case and in the case of Jesus as husband of the Church. We are his Bride because He loved the church and gave himself for her (Eph. 5:25). If Jesus did not love the Church there would of course be no Church.

Reciprocal love means a mutual love between husband and wife. A husband and wife are bound to love each not because they have determined they are compatible or it may work for a time and if it doesn’t, “*I’ll go my way and you’ll go your way*”, but because they have agreed to this relationship and have willingly placed themselves under obligation covenantally to love each other. Circumstances are not cause for dissolution, only death is. In the case of our relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ, he has voluntarily placed himself under divine obligation to love us. This obligation is simply his relationship to the covenant of the Triune God made in eternity. We cannot comprehend the depths or real meaning of this except to take Scripture at face value. He loved us, the Father loved us and the Spirit loved us, and this continues presently and on into eternity. Obligation from our perspective is one thing, but God expects a mutual reciprocation between husbands and their wives, because they want to and not necessarily because they must (although they must).

This brings me to my point. Reciprocal love for our Lord Jesus means that I love him and I treasure him. My love is demonstrated by fulfilling what Scripture says I must do. If I love my brethren, that is a demonstration that I love Christ (1 John 3:10, 14 – 18; 4:7, 11, 21). If I keep his word, I demonstrate that I love him (1 John 2:5). If love for God and others characterizes my life, then I love God (1 John 4:16; cf. 5:2 also).

Reciprocal love means that I love Christ because I belong to Christ. I cannot love him if I do not know him. Husbands and wives find that their love grows for each other as they get to know each other. Our love for Christ will increase and deepen as we get to know him.

Reciprocal love means that I can have great contentment in my circumstances because *“all things work together for good to them that love God”* (Rom. 8:28). The love of Christ controls us and motivates us. We cannot be separated from his love (Rom. 8:35, 39). We are to keep ourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life (Jude 21).

The most important point that I want to make is this: I am his and he is mine. I love Christ because I belong to Christ and he belongs to me. He has made this possible, not me. As sinners, it is not possible to love God, unless God transforms us by saving us and by giving us a new nature that loves God and desires God. The old nature hates God and everything to do with Christ. So the change that is needed to bring me to a teachable loving frame is the grace of God in Christ Jesus. Without this divine work of the Holy Spirit, I cannot love God or choose spiritual things (1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1 - 5). In view of this gracious work in my heart, I can now respond to Christ with love and affection. I now comprehend what it means to know God and to love God.

“the love of Christ what it is, none but his loved ones know...” goes the hymn and it’s true. Only the believer can love Christ. Only the believer can say that Jesus is Lord because he says it by the Spirit within him (1 Cor. 12:3). There is nothing more wonderful than knowing that I belong to Christ and He belongs to me. We are bound by “love’s strong cord”. Safety and security for time and eternity are ours (John 6:37, 39; 10:27 – 29).

How can we improve our love for Christ. Certainly his love never changes for us; it does not deepen for it is already at the sublimest depth imaginable (if we can say it like that). His banner over us is love (S of S 2:4). It is true that we wander from him whom our souls love. How can we prevent this or what steps can we take to stay with the bridegroom of our hearts? When the Bride (the Church, the Christian) is unfaithful, the Bridegroom (Jesus) remains faithful. He searches for us, he looks for us, he seeks us wooing us again and again by his love. Is this our experience with our Lord Jesus Christ?

Just as we would seek the coolest water on a hot humid day; just as we would rest under the shade of a great tree to get away from the sun’s fierce heat, so too, we seek Christ to drink of him who promises that we shall never thirst again (John 4:14), and to rest in him who gives rest to the weary soul (Matt. 11:28). Jesus is the Savior who protects us and provides for us. He is our shelter from wrath without and weariness within. He gives us his rest from our corruptions, our temptations, our troubles, our many distresses. He is our peace.

Reciprocal love happens because I am his and he is mine. We must work at our relationship with Christ – it does not just happen. We must seek him, we must pursue him, we must fight sin, we must pray and read his Word. Delight in Christ leads to deep fellowship with Christ. When he appears to have vanished away for awhile, we must go and find him, searching for him as Solomon’s bride did (S of S 3:1 - .4), and when we have found, let us cling to him as Jacob did so long ago (Gen. 32:24 – 31). Can you say, I know I am his and he is mine?

Clinging to and loving Christ with you,
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