
Heart and Soul ... A Weekly Meditation

February 23, 2014

What Loves Requires

*“Don’t love the world or the things in the world.
If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in them.” 1 John 2:15*

Initially, this sentence of scripture unsettled me. There is much in this world that I love. Professional football is right up there, particularly the Philadelphia Eagles. This love for the Eagles is demonstrated in the time and resources I have given to the Eagles franchise. Hours and hours are given each season to watching the Eagles play. Often I watch the games wearing Eagles apparel that over the years has cost me a small fortune. During the workweek I show my love for the Eagles by wearing one of two neckties emblazoned with the Eagles logo. Taken at face value, it seems God is offering me a choice, the Eagles or God. I can’t love both.

Yet, I was suspicious. Why would God have trouble with the Eagles football team? In the first book of the Bible, the Book of Genesis, God creates everything on the earth and everything above the earth. Then God looked at all of it and said it was good. True, there may be a little self-aggrandizement going on here but nonetheless God admits to being pleased with the world – and even the things of the world. Isn’t it fair for me to love football and still love God? Perhaps initial impressions of this sentence of scripture require a little more scrutiny.

I once had a wise professor say that if I had difficulty understanding a sentence of scripture then I was to read more scripture. Prayer and paying attention to what I knew about the character of God was also helpful. As I have already demonstrated, there seemed no reason for God not to like the Eagles or for objecting to my love for this NFL team. So I prayed and read more scripture. In the very next sentence of scripture Paul explains what he means. Paul is speaking about cravings and appetites and ambitions that are contrary to God’s purposes for us. In this world there are values and systems that run counter to God’s perfect desire for us. And Paul’s concern is that we are becoming too cozy with those values and systems. These things of the world hate God and seek to disfigure God’s perfect creation.

Then what are we to do? There is really only one answer – continue to grow in our knowledge and love for God. That is how we can tell the difference between those things that God calls good and those things that work against God. Consider this. When we fall in love and marry we continue a quest to know and please our spouse. It would be ridiculous to say to our true love that we don’t have the time or interest in learning their favorite activity or food. Our spouse would be speechless if we say that there are other things we would rather be occupied with than paying attention to them and pleasing them. A relationship with God is no different.

By Your Holy Spirit, O God, stir such a deep love within me for Jesus Christ that I continually seek to know Him and honor Him with my life. Amen.

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