

Episode 102: Love, Part 3

This is the third part of a special series on Love, where Denver teaches us how we can live according to the two great commandments: Love God, and Love One Another.

DENVER: Think about what it means to have the power of God. Think about what it means for God to be able to do all things, including sustaining you from moment to moment by lending you breath. And then for God to say, *you* are free to choose to do—with what He's lending to you—whatever it is that *you* choose to do. Think of the patience of our God. Think of the meekness of our God. And think about the test that you are presently taking to prove who and what you are, and whether or not, in the circumstances of this test, you are proving that you can be trusted to have the meekness, to have the patience, to endure in humility what will be done; to endure the abuses that God allows to take place in order to permit His children to gain experience so that, in the long run, they can ultimately know the difference between good and evil and, on their own, choose to love the good and to stay away from the evil.

Think about that. And think about this record, and think about the test that is currently underway. And think about what it is that you, in your life, should be choosing and doing, desiring and holding to your breast.

Your kids are going to make mistakes. It's not your job to force them to not make the mistake. It's your job to counsel them, and to let them have the experience by which your counsel makes sense, and is vindicated. You hope the mistakes that they make are not too serious, but even if they're serious and they involve lifelong struggles, it's their right to choose. And it's your obligation to teach and to persuade, and then to rejoice when they return after they're tired of filling their bellies with the husks that the pigs are fed. It's your job to go and greet them and put a robe on their shoulder and put a ring on their hand and to the kill the fatted calf. It's not your job to beat them and to chain them to the farm so they can't go away and behave foolishly. They need to know that your bonds of love towards them are stronger than death itself. They need to know that they will endure in your heart into eternity. And not only your children, but one another, because we all make mistakes. Do not exercise dominion, do not exercise compulsion; exercise long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, and kindness. Some of the biggest disasters come when you do not give people the right to choose freely, and you attempt to coerce them. Be wise, be prudent, be someone that they would respect and they would listen to.

God doesn't judge righteousness the way we do. If you've read the 10th parable, what was it that attracted the attention of the angels? They looked at the marriage, and they said, "This! This looks like what we come from! This, This relationship, this marriage, the man and the woman, this is what heaven itself consists of. And look! Look! It's on the earth!" And the angels go and they bring the Lord. And they say, "Behold the man and the woman!" And the Lord sets in motion everything that was needed.

What more do you need to see from the theme of the Book of Mormon than *this* passage, in order to realize that when it comes to the relationship of marriage, *this* is the image of God. *This* is what God would like to preserve into eternity. It is so much easier to take people, who have this kind of a marriage, and to preserve them into eternity, than it is to take someone, who may know all mysteries but whose marriage is a tattered ruin, and attempt to preserve them.

Look at the example of your first parents. Moses 3, the last two verses: 23 and 24. Excuse me, the next... There's one other verse after that. *And Adam said: This I know now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh.* (Moses 3:23-24; see also Genesis 2:14 RE)

You may have a spouse who is Catholic, Lutheran, Presbyterian, or Mormon. You may have a spouse who is Community of Christ Mormon. You may have a spouse who believes in dancing naked at Wiccan ceremonies while high on peyote. You and your spouse need to love one another. You and your spouse have something far, far greater, potentially, between you and your children, than all of the distractions of this world. You and your spouse face the challenge of becoming one. And if you are one... The Lamanites were condemned, consistently, in the Book of Mormon. It came to blows. But they were praised because of their marriages, because of the love of the spouses.

Now, if you claim that you have enough love for two or more women, then I'd ask you, can you not love your one wife enough to give her your full attention?

Every day my wife and I get up. We have a 4 mile hike that we do every morning before we come back and get ready for work and the day. We spend about an hour doing that—that is filled with conversation—every day; about what's going on in my life, what's going on in her life, what's going on in this big problem, or what's going on with our children. Every day.

I come home for lunch very frequently and we spend the noon hour talking. We probably call each other, I don't know, four or five times during the day. I drive down to Utah County a couple of times. Driving down I'm on the phone talking to my wife. Driving back I'm on the phone talking with my wife. We have a lot to talk about.

I do think that marriage can be something that is godlike, and two people can, in fact, become one.

There's so much left to be done! Right now the only thing that can be done is to remind you of the Restoration, and that is available to all. Everyone's invited. Everyone. But don't expect the Lord to give us anything further, or permit us to move one inch further, until we first remember what we've been given. And even if you are in a fallen world,

among a fallen people, who are proud, and who are arrogant, and who think themselves more than they really are; if *you* will love your wife, and if your wife will love you, *you* are in the image of God and that will be preserved unto all eternity. No matter what else you may have to go through between now and then, that's what He's trying to preserve. That is the image of God.

DENVER: You know! The fact of the matter is that the freedom...

AUDIENCE: What was the question?

DENVER: The question was a comment on how disjointed or octoploid that is having eight separate folks vying for primacy at how disjointed the fellowships can be. That is not a bad thing. That is a normal thing. Try to envision yourselves as a temporary family. A temporary gathering together of members of a family. If you don't have some wonky aunts and some curious uncles, in fact, maybe an uncle or two that you want to keep the kids away from, I mean, every family has some strange folks in it. Consider the fellowships nothing more than an extension of that and try and love one another. The fact is that there are going to be those who, through their behavior in fellowships, are going to disqualify themselves from being able to be gathered because they're just not the kind of people that can live in peace one with another. That also is a good thing. And then there are others who come to the fellowships and their primary interest is in what they can take; what they can get. And there are others who come with the only idea in their heart being what can I give, how can I serve. And even though they may not be able to give or serve much, that's what's in their heart. And you all recognize that, you can all see that in people. And those are the kinds of people from which the Lord is going to gather and build Zion.

No one in Zion is going to be a threat to someone else. Can't be. It defeats the purpose of it all. To be able to live in peace with one another means that you literally are harmless to one another. And the diversity in which you find yourselves, and the ability to bump the corners off one another in fellowships, those are healthy, good, normal things. And hopefully, they run their course and eventually result in people becoming smoother and becoming easier with one another. There are some people I admire immensely, and they're tough personalities, and they're difficult to deal with. And there are other people who are hard to deal with because they are too easy going and they really need to speak up more. They have more to add but they won't do it until you coax it patiently out of them. If you don't figure out that you have to coax it patiently out of them, you're missing the treasure that this person represents. In your fellowships think of one another as members of a family and then work out your issues, cause that's how you grow into being a community. You may really prize the more difficult members if you take that approach.

So far as I can tell, Joseph Smith greatly respected women, in what he said, and what he taught, and how he taught it. And I know all the arguments. I've read all the histories. I've read what the people say. I've read what the accusations are. The fact of the matter

is that they are not accurate. And the histories that they're based upon, and much of the information was ginned up in consequence of litigation, in which Joseph F. Smith went around gathering affidavits, in the two affidavit books, from which we draw most of the information to redefine what Joseph Smith was doing in Nauvoo, and earlier with plural marriage.

Plural marriage was denounced by him as an abomination. And he got up and said before a crowd, "I hear all the time that I have wives, I've got seven wives. I'm looking out in the audience and can only see one" —meaning Emma. If you read the letters that Joseph sent to Emma and you read the letters that Emma sent back to Joseph, (and they are preserved in the correspondence and the documents of the Joseph Smith History,) you realize that those two, whatever else was going on around them, those two were in love with one another. And Joseph relied on her, respected her, and she loved him. They had a fabulous relationship between the two of them. And I don't care what *In Sacred Loneliness* wants to portray otherwise. A fair reading of Joseph's life was that he was a man who was faithful to his wife.

God's hand is moving again. This is going somewhere. It will eventually culminate in the fulfillment of the prophecies. The trouble is whether we do it, or whether it is left for another generation, depends upon what we do. And I don't think religious enthusiasm or religious fanaticism produces it. It's kindness to one another. It's taking seriously the things that God asked us to do, and then in a meaningful way being self sacrificing, and trying to help and lift other people. Because at the end of the day, Christ summarized all the law and all the prophets in loving God and loving your fellow man—which goes back to the question that Louis asked, about all you quirky people liking one another. Well, that's the challenge. If you want to see Zion get a little closer, then love one another.

I mentioned the idea of "kingship" in Moab. Remember the great King, Christ, came not to be served, but to serve. He did not *lord it over* others, but *He* knelt to elevate them. He came as a meek and lowly servant, and went about doing good. He died to save the lives of others. When He arose from the dead, He went to the Father and advocated forgiveness for those who despised and abused Him.

What kind of king would God send? Even if his bowels are a fountain of light and truth, and even if he were to hold *the scepter of power in his hand* (T&C 83:4 RE), I doubt a king sent by the Lord would be markedly different than our *true* King. He would endure the abuse of misunderstanding, criticism, and mockery from those who refuse to understand. He would serve patiently, never asserting any claim to greatness. Joseph said, in this world "the more a man is exalted, the more humble he will be, if actuated by the Spirit of the Lord" (*JS Papers, Documents*, Vol. 4, p. 198).

When such a king dies, and returns to God to report, he will have only kindness for those who opposed him as he served God. *We* should *all* be like that. We should all be like our Lord.

Christ's greatest commandments were simple, and given to every one of us: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.* (see Matt. 22:37, 39; 7:12; see also: T&C Matt.10:23; 3:44 RE)

If we do these things, there is no time to proclaim our greatness, to assert the right to be a leader, or to command others. Servants do not strut, but behave meekly. They only take such acts as the *true* Master commands.

Take courage! Life was meant to be a living sacrifice, to be lost in the service to God. Only by losing your life will you find it. Saving faith is so rare precisely because it requires courage to engage the opposition in this world, and to cheerfully endure the abuse, lies, threats and fiery darts sent by those who fear your faith above everything. Faith in God will save you through his grace. It can render every weapon of this world and hell powerless, but it takes courage. When friends betray you, and fear overtakes your associates, and causes the knees to buckle under the weight of the burdens God allows to be imposed upon you; remember the Lord descended below it all. And when He cried out asking for the bitter cup to be removed, there was no relief. He is the prototype of the saved man and the Father loved him for his sacrifice. It was the Lord's sacrifice for us that perfected His love for us. He values us because of the great price He paid for each one of us. If you love God, you will be given the opportunity to prove your love. You will be proven by the things you endure for His name's sake. Do not fail.

I, the Lord say to you: You have asked of me concerning the scriptures prepared on behalf of all those who seek to become my covenant people, ...therefore I answer you on behalf of all the people, and not as to any individual. For there are those who are humble, patient, and easily persuaded. Nevertheless, people who are quarrelsome and proud are also among you, and since you seek to unite to become one people, I answer you as one.

I covenanted with Adam at the beginning, which covenant was broken by mankind. Since the days of Adam I have always sought to reestablish people of covenant among the living, and therefore have desired that man should love one another, not begrudgingly, but as brothers and sisters indeed, that I may establish my covenant and provide them with light and truth.

For you to unite I must admonish and instruct you, for my will is to have you love one another. As people, you lack the ability to respectfully disagree among one another. You are as Paul and Peter, whose disagreements resulted in jarring and sharp contentions. Nevertheless, they both loved me and I loved them. You must do better.

I commend your diligent labor, and your desire to repent and recover the scriptures containing the covenant I offer for the last days. For this purpose I

caused the Book of Mormon to come forth. I commend those who have participated, as well as those who have offered words of caution, for I weigh the hearts of men and many have intended well, although they have spoken poorly. Wisdom counsels mankind to align their words with their hearts, but mankind refuses to take counsel from Wisdom.

Nevertheless, there have been sharp disputes between you that should have been avoided. I speak these words to reprove you that you may learn, not to upbraid you so that you mourn. I want my people to have understanding.

There is great reason to rejoice because of the work that has been done. There is little reason for any to be angry or to harshly criticize the labor to recover the scriptures, and so my answer to you concerning the scriptures is to guide you in other work to be done hereafter; for recovering the scriptures does not conclude the work to be accomplished by those who will be my people: it is but a beginning.

In your language you use the name Lucifer for an angel who was in authority before God, who rebelled, fought against the work of the Father and was cast down to the earth. His name means holder of light, or light bearer, for he...gathered light by his heed and diligence before he rebelled. He has become a vessel containing only wrath and seeks to destroy all who will hearken to him. He is now enslaved to his own hatred.

Satan is a title and means accuser, opponent, and adversary; hence once he fell, Lucifer became, or in other words was called, Satan, because he accuses others and opposes the Father. I rebuked Peter and called him Satan because he was wrong in opposing the Father's will for me, and Peter understood and repented.

In the work you have performed there are those who have been Satan, accusing one another, wounding hearts, and causing jarring, contention, and strife by their accusations. Rather than loving one another, even among you who desire a good thing, some have dealt unkindly as if they were...opponents, accusers, and adversaries. In this they were wrong.

You have sought to recover the scriptures because you hope to obtain the covenant for my protective hand to be over you, but you cannot be Satan and be mine. If you take upon you my covenant, you must abide it as a people to gain what I promise. You think Satan will be bound a thousand years, and it will be so, but do not understand your own duty to bind that spirit within you so that you give no heed to accuse others. It is not enough to say you love God; you must also love your fellow man. Nor is it enough to say you love your fellow man while you, as Satan, divide, contend, and dispute against any person who labors on an errand seeking to do my will. How you proceed must be as noble as the cause you seek. [You've] become your own adversaries, and you cannot be Satan and

also be mine. Repent, therefore, like Peter and end your unkind and untrue accusations against one another, and make peace. How shall there ever come a thousand years of peace if the people who are mine do not love one another? How shall Satan be bound if there are no people of one heart and one mind? (T&C 157:1-10 RE)

It is not enough to receive my covenant, but you must also abide it. And all who abide it, whether on this land or any other land, will be mine, and I will watch over them and protect them in the day of harvest, and gather them in as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. I will number you among the remnant of Jacob, no longer outcasts, and you will inherit the promises of Israel. You shall be my people and I will be your God, and the sword will not devour you. And unto those who will receive will more be given, until they know the mysteries of God in full.

But remember that without the fruit of repentance, and a broken heart and a contrite spirit, you cannot keep my covenant; for I, your Lord, am meek and lowly of heart. Be like me. You have all been wounded, your hearts pierced through with sorrows because of how the world has treated you. But you have also scarred one another by your unkind treatment of each other, and you do not notice your misconduct toward others because you think yourself justified in this. You bear the scars on your countenances, from the soles of your feet to the head, and every heart is faint. Your visages have been so marred that your hardness, mistrust, suspicions, resentments, fear, jealousies, and anger toward your fellow man bear outward witness of your inner self; you cannot hide it. When I appear to you, instead of confidence, you feel shame. You fear and withdraw from me because you bear the blood and sins of your treatment of brothers and sisters. Come to me and I will make sins as scarlet become white as snow, and I will make you stand boldly before me, confident of my love.

I descended below it all, and know the sorrows of you all, and have borne the grief of it all, and I say to you, Forgive one another. Be tender with one another, pursue judgment, bless the oppressed, care for the orphan, and uplift the widow in her need, for I have redeemed you from being orphaned and taken you that you are no longer a widowed people. Rejoice in me, and rejoice with your brethren and sisters who are mine also. Be one.

You pray each time you partake of the sacrament to always have my Spirit to be with you. And what is my Spirit? It is to love one another as I have loved you. Do my works and you will know my doctrine, for you will uncover hidden mysteries by obedience to these things that can be uncovered in no other way. This is the way I will restore knowledge to my people. If you return good for evil, you will cleanse yourself and know the joy of your Master. You call me Lord, and do well to regard me so, but to know your Lord is to love one another. Flee from the cares and longings that belong to Babylon, obtain a new heart, for you have all

been wounded. In me you will find peace, and through me will come Zion, a place of peace and safety.

There are only two ways: the way I lead [which] goes upward in light and truth unto Eternal lives — and if you turn from it, you follow the way of darkness and the deaths. Those who want to come where I am must be able to abide the conditions established for my Father's Kingdom. I have given to you the means to understand the conditions you must abide. I came and lived in the world to be the light of the world. I have sent others who have testified...me and taught you. I have sent my light into the world. Let not your hearts remain divided from one another and divided from me.

Be of one heart, and regard one another with charity. Measure your words before giving voice to them, and consider the hearts of others. Although a man may err in understanding concerning many things, yet he can view his brother with charity and come unto me, and through me he can with patience overcome the world. I can bring him to understanding and knowledge. Therefore, if you regard one another with charity, then your brother's error in understanding will not divide you. I lead to all truth. I will lead all who come to me to the truth of all things. The fullness is to receive the truth of all things, and this too from me, in power, by my word, and in very deed. For I will come unto you if you will come unto me.

Study to learn how to respect your brothers and sisters and to come together by precept, reason, and persuasion, rather than sharply disputing and wrongly condemning each other, causing anger. Take care how you invoke my name. Mankind has been controlled by the adversary through anger and jealousy, which has led to bloodshed and the misery of many souls. Even strong disagreements should not provoke anger, nor to invoke my name in vain as if I had part in your every dispute. Pray together in humility and together meekly present your dispute to me, and if you are contrite before me, I will tell you my part. (T&C 157:48-54 RE)

Now, hear the words of the Lord to those who receive this covenant this day:

All you who have turned from your wicked ways and repented of your evil doings, of lying and deceiving, and of all whoredoms, and of secret abominations, idolatries, murders, priestcrafts, envying, and strife, and from all wickedness and abominations, and have come unto me, and been baptized in my name, and have received a remission of your sins, and received the holy ghost, are now numbered with my people who are of the house of Israel. I say to you:

Teach your children to honor me. Seek to recover the lost sheep remnant of this land and of Israel and no longer forsake them. Bring them unto me and teach them of my ways, to walk in them.

And I, the Lord your God, will be with you and will never forsake you, and I will lead you in the path which will bring peace to you in the troubling season now fast approaching.

I will raise you up and protect you, abide with you, and gather you in due time, and this shall be a land of promise to you as your inheritance from me.

The Earth will yield her increase, and you will flourish upon the mountains and upon the hills, and the wicked will not come against you because of the fear of the Lord will be with you.

I will visit my house, which the remnant of my people shall build, and I will dwell therein, to be among you, and no one need say, Know ye the Lord, for you [shall all] know me, from the least to the greatest.

I will teach you things that have been hidden from the foundation of the world and your understanding will reach unto Heaven.

And you shall be called the children of the Most High God, and I will preserve you against the harvest.

And the angels sent to harvest the world will gather the wicked into bundles to be burned, but will pass over you as my peculiar treasure.

But if you do not honor me, nor seek to recover my people Israel, nor teach your children to honor me, nor care for the poor among you, nor help lighten one another's burdens, then you have no promise from me and I will raise up other people who will honor and serve me, and give unto them this land, and if they repent, I will abide with them.

The time is now far spent, therefore labor with me and do not forsake my covenant to perform it; study my words and let them be the standard for your faith, and I will add thereto many treasures. Love one another and you will be mine, and I will preserve you, and raise you up, and abide with you for ever [and ever]. AMEN. (T&C 158:9-20 RE)

The foregoing excerpts are taken from:

- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #8 entitled "A Broken Heart," given in Las Vegas, NV on July 25th, 2014;
- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #9 entitled "Marriage and Family," given in St. George, UT on July 26th, 2014

- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #10 entitled "Preserving the Restoration," given in Mesa, AZ on September 9th, 2014
- A regional conference Q&A session held at Big Cottonwood Canyon, UT on September 20, 2015
- His conference talk entitled "The Doctrine of Christ," given in Boise, ID on September 11th, 2016
- His Opening Remarks given at the Covenant of Christ Conference in Boise, Idaho on September 3rd, 2017
- The presentation of "Answer and Covenant," given at the Covenant of Christ Conference in Boise, ID on September 3rd, 2017