

CHAPTER 5: A CREED OF SACRED LOVE

GOSPEL READINGS: Matthew 6:9–15; Luke 7:36–50; 19:1–10

Read the account in Luke 7:36-50

Jesus takes the gift of the woman (which is sacred to her) and makes the clarification that *her love* is sacred.

1. Why do you think our expression of love matters to God?
2. What is most sacred to you? Who or what are you giving it to?
3. What are some *sacred things* that have been twisted (by your culture or by you) and lost their *sacredness*?

McKnight writes that the sacred love of God is really about how “*Abba* is impeccably pure, majestically marvelous, and embarrassingly faithful in his love for us. It is this good sense of embarrassment that evokes repentance from us, and helps us to see our violations of love against God and others as sin.”

4. How can our embarrassment become a healthy precursor to repentance?
5. How is it dangerous for us to think that God *requires* our demonstrations of love and affection for him? (McKnight calls this “divine scorekeeping”)
6. Through the story of *Hosea*, God demonstrates a *divine jealousy* for his people. He declares that he will pursue Israel—his beloved wife—with an intensity and bring her back. How have you *personally* experienced God’s pursuit of your love and affection?
7. How might your love of God reshape the way you think, act, and worship?

Next week: Chapter 6, A *Creed* for Others

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How am I like...

Simon? (Luke 7)

A law keeper & rule follower;
unaware of my debt

Or like the woman?

A law breaker & rule bender;
embarrassment to repentance

Or Zacchaeus? (Luke 19)

An outsider and unexpectant
host; ready to repent and
demonstrate my commitment
to God’s sacred love