

What God Wants Most

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What does God want most? What matters most to Him? Are we giving Him good things but neglecting what matters most?

Isaiah 1:13-17 (NLT) - ¹³ Stop bringing me your meaningless gifts; the incense of your offerings disgusts me! As for your celebrations of the new moon and the Sabbath and your special days for fasting— they are all sinful and false. I want no more of your pious meetings. ¹⁴ I hate your new moon celebrations and your annual festivals. They are a burden to me. I cannot stand them! ¹⁵ When you lift up your hands in prayer, I will not look. Though you offer many prayers, I will not listen, for your hands are covered with the blood of innocent victims. ¹⁶ Wash yourselves and be clean! Get your sins out of my sight. Give up your evil ways. ¹⁷ Learn to do good. Seek justice. Help the oppressed. Defend the cause of orphans. Fight for the rights of widows.

Could it be that God wants the oppressed helped, the orphans' cause defended, and the widows' rights fought for more than church attendance, prayer, and singing songs of praise/worship? But isn't what God wants most is for us to love Him?

Matthew 25:31-40 (NLT) - ³¹ "But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit upon his glorious throne. ³² All the nations will be gathered in his presence, and he will separate the people as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will place the sheep at his right hand and the goats at his left. ³⁴ "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. ³⁶ I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me. ³⁷ "Then these righteous ones will reply, 'Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing?' ³⁹ When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?'

⁴⁰ “And the King will say, ‘I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!’

How can I love God? Feed the hungry, give the thirsty a drink, welcome guests, provide clothing for those in need, care for the sick, and visit those in prison. We see value by what people are willing to give.

John 3:16-17 (NLT) - ¹⁶ “For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.

So how do we love well?

1 John 4:7-8 (ESV) - ⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

Loving others is not a feeling we feel or actions we do. It's a nature we reflect. Love works like a mirror. The world loves by reflecting people's behaviors. We are called to love by changing our perspective. We don't reflect people's behaviors. We reflect God's nature.

Matthew 18:12-14 (NLT) - ¹² “If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them wanders away, what will he do? Won't he leave the ninety-nine others on the hills and go out to search for the one that is lost? ¹³ And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he will rejoice over it more than over the ninety-nine that didn't wander away! ¹⁴ In the same way, it is not my heavenly Father's will that even one of these little ones should perish.