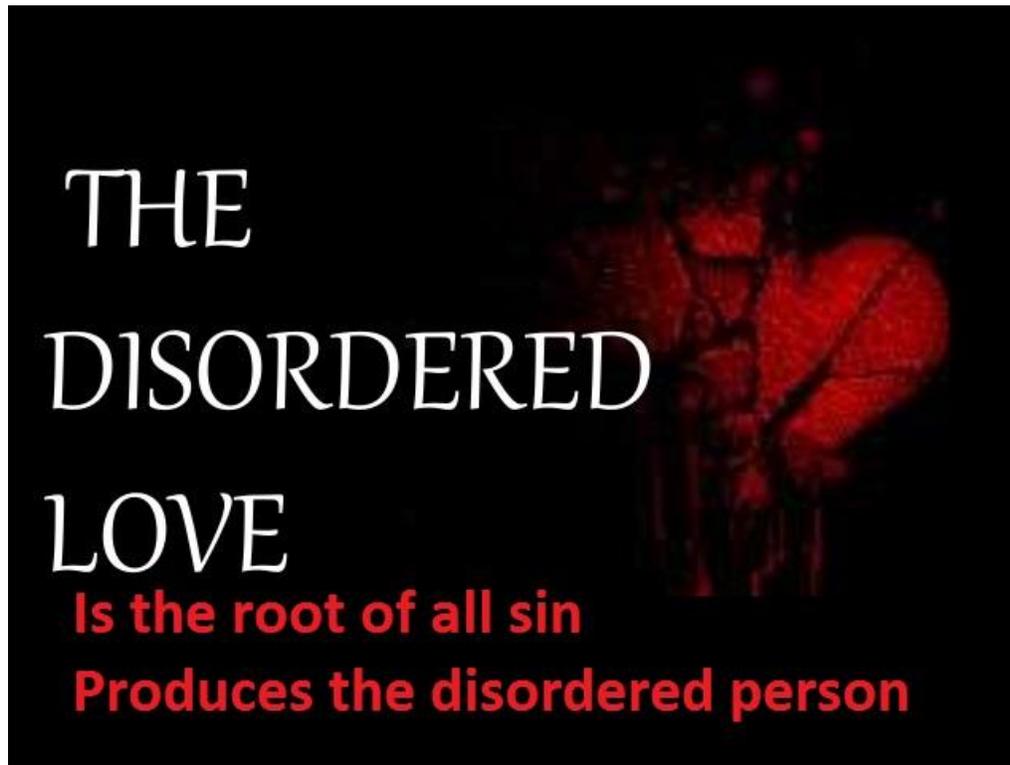


**Daily Life with Christ. Love-31: Understanding the objective, universal, unchanging, eternal nature of love: Disordered love is the root of all sin and evil.**



(Pdf copy at <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/041118.pdf>; for background and complete series, see <http://www.fbcweb.org/doctrines.html>).

**George:** You mentioned that the only thing standing in the way of our progressive sanctification and deepening love relationship with the Lord is our preference for our own power and pleasure over God, His presence, love, and grace . . . that we prefer sin over purity . . . we prefer sense desires over spiritual and intellectual desires . . . we prefer the world over God.

**Stephen:** That's right. But God's grace is available to all who want it. But He is not going to force anyone to love Him and live for Him – a forced love is no love at all.

**George:** So, the solution is love?

**Stephen:** Proper love, properly ordered love! Not just any love. Every human being loves. This is universal and undeniable. Man is always seeking what he views as a good. He is literally loving all the time. Man loves as birds fly and fish swim. He cannot help it. Everything he does is out of love for something. The issue is whether the love is proper or improper, pure or corrupt, ordered or disordered. Even when man sins, he does so because he loves that sin, sees some good in that sin.

**George:** But the Bible says in 1 Cor 13 that love is the greatest virtue.

**Stephen:** Yes, proper love. The Bible also says that unregenerate man (and even some believers) love darkness (John 3:19), love the world, “lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life” (1 John 2:15-17), and have an inordinate love of self (2 Tim 3:2).

**George:** But I thought that you said that we are to love ourselves.

**Stephen:** Yes, but a proper love for self, which is natural (‘no one ever hated himself,’ Eph 5:29).

**George:** So, what is the difference between proper love for self and improper love for self?

**Stephen:** As Augustine noted, there are two loves: the well-ordered love that builds up the city of God, and the disordered love that builds the city of Babylon. They are both loves, it is just that one is proper and good, and the other is improper and corrupt.

**George:** Yes, but what is improper love for self? Too much love for self? If so, what is too much? How does one measure improper love.

**Stephen:** Improper or disordered love for self is a love that is directed to the self as its end. In other words, improper love for self is a love that sees self as the ultimate goal. It rejects God as the greatest good. A disordered love is one that sets itself up as god—all goodness and value in life is primarily about self. A disordered love rejects God as his end, his goal. In disordered love, the person only thinks about God instrumentally, in what God can do for him—without realizing it, he actually attempts to elicit God to help make himself the greatest good, a god (e.g., as seen in prosperity movements where well-known preachers have chanted “I am a god because I am a son of God”).