LOVE AND HOLINESS IN RECIPROCAL ENTAILMENT: LOVE AS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF HOLINESS IN MATTHEW'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT

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LOVE AND HOLINESS IN RECIPROCAL ENTAILMENT:

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IN MATTHEW'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT

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For the glory of the love and holiness of God and his church.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANE	Ancient Near East
BDAG	Bauer, Walter. A, F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.
HALOT	Koehler, Ludwig, Walter Baumgartner and Johann Jakob Stamm. *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament (HALOT)*. Translated and edited by M. E. J. Richardson. Leiden, NL: Koninklijke Brill, 1994.
LSJ	Liddell, Henry George, Robert Scott, Henry Stuart Jones, and Roderick McKenzie. *The Online Liddell-Scott-Jones Greek-English Lexicon*. Irvine, CA: University of California, 2011. http://www.tlg.uci.edu/lsj.
LXX	Septuagint

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PREFACE

I have been helped in my thinking on holiness and love by many scholars. Peter J. Gentry has been a great help in sharing insights and early research and revitalizing a positive understanding of holiness. Jonathan T. Pennington is a formative influence in my theological journey, guiding me years ago to appreciate the contribution Matthew makes to the Scriptures. John Piper's positive view of the Christian life is refreshing. His works introduced me to Jonathan Edwards and his writings on love and holiness. Finally, I have deep gratitude for my friend Tom Cottrell. He has offered years of encouragement as a model of academic intellectual integrity and Christ-centeredness, spurring me to think with clarity and to keep the Scriptures in view always.

And save for the Lord himself, I reserve the most gratitude for my wife, Kimberly, for her tireless enablement of my studies, even while tending to our growing family. Her contributions are too many to name. She has freed me without complaint to study for years. She has tirelessly endured the complex verbiage of my papers as she has worked long hours to track sources, catch grammatical errors (all mistakes remain my own, of course!), and kindly let me know when what I have written is borderline indecipherable. I am deeply blessed to have such a unique treasure in a wife. And indeed, Jesus is good. He is not a hard master. I want people to see this, and that has made writing a worthy journey. *Love, so that you are holy.*

Michael Jones

Calgary, Alberta, Canada

May 2019

CHAPTER 1

REFRAMING HOLINESS AND LOVE

Introduction

At face value, the Gospel of Matthew speaks little of holiness.[1] On the other hand, Matthew speaks a great deal of discipleship. T. A. Noble is right: Holiness—and the question of how one becomes holy—is a "core concept of the Christian faith" and unavoidable theologically.[2] Differences over practical holiness have fundamentally divided those who identify as Christians. Not only is Noble's Wesleyan tradition at odds with other Reformed traditions in this respect, but for hundreds of years, the theological maelstrom around legalism, antinomianism, justification, and sanctification has rent Protestants even within close circles.[3] In terms of collateral damage, the so-called "crisis of assurance" of centuries past, contemporaneous to Puritan Calvinism, illustrates that

[1] The word ἅγιος appears 10 times in Matthew, in similar proportion to the other synoptics. Its usages are more to the point: 5 appear in the veritable proper name "Holy Spirit" (1:18, 1:20, 3:11, 12:32, and 28:19), 2 refer to Jerusalem as "the holy city" (4:5; 27:35), and 1 refers to the temple (24:15). The thesis discusses the remaining 2: Matt 27:52 ("saints") and 7:6 ("what is holy"). The verb ἁγιάζω ("I sanctify") is still less frequent, at 3 occurrences. Matt 23:17, 19 speak of the "temple/altar that sanctifies the gold/gift" in a cultic context. Matt 6:9 is more significant and will be discussed later.

[2] T. A. Noble, *Holy Trinity: Holy People: The Historic Doctrine of Christian Perfecting* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013), 1.

[3] For example, consider Mark Jones's response to what he sees as contemporary antinomianism, where he seeks to articulate the deep complexities of the issue through the lens of post-reformation controversies: "Antinomianism is a system of thought that has to be carefully understood in its historical context, rather than simply according to its etymology" (Mark Jones, *Antinomianism: Reformed Theology's Unwelcome Guest?* [Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Pub., 2013], xiii). Notably, these issues are deeply relevant to the Sermon on the Mount: "Within the Reformation, many of the differences between the Calvinist/Reformed tradition and that of the Lutherans also rest on different renderings of the relationship between the law and New Covenant" Jonathan T. Pennington, *The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 170.

these matters take their toll on average believers.[4] Surely any clarity on holiness and discipleship is helpful.

This thesis does not aim to solve these deep fractures, but rather invites consideration of another way forward by examining the relationship of holiness and love through the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew. Based on the Sermon's vision of discipleship in the context of the Torah and the contemporary first century Jewish culture, this thesis claims that love and holiness exist in reciprocal entailment—love entails holiness, and holiness entails love, because in discipleship, love is the only concrete implementation of holiness. The abstract devotion or commitment of holiness finds real-life concrete form in and only in the disciple's loyal love for God. And this loyal love is manifested in compassionate deeds for others. Holiness is "being" for God. Love actualizes this being. They entail each other.

The trajectory of this thesis picks up on a direction explored by other works on holiness. In his creatively insightful article, "Forgotten Dimensions of Holiness," James E. Robson argues thematically and exegetically from the OT that God's love, far from being at odds with God's holiness, emerges from it.[5] Similarly, T. A. Noble's erudite contemporary reapplication of John Wesley's theology on holiness as "love excluding sin" seeks to revive a positive understanding of sanctification as the "perfecting" of

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[4] Following Michael Davies (*Graceful Reading: Theology and Narrative in the Works of John Bunyan* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002]), Paul Lim notes the fascinating supposition that not only did "the morose, despondency-inducing Calvinism" contribute to "much psychological malaise and religious despair in early modern England," but there was an "intra-Puritan fine-tuning of such despair-generating tendencies endemic to Calvinism, thereby creating an intrinsic dialectic whereby the total depravity of humanity (complete with the inherited original sin and the moral impotence to achieve salvation on its own) was always paired up with God's gracious willingness to love and save" (Paul Chang-Ha Lim, *Mystery Unveiled: The Crisis of the Trinity in Early Modern England* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2012], 191). Noble agrees with Matt Jenson (Matt Jenson, *Gravity of Sin: Augustine, Luther, and Barth on Homo Incurvatus in Se* [London: T & T Clark, 2006], 38-46) in noting a "curious tension in the Augustinian tradition in which sinfulness is self-centered desire and yet at the same time, the way to find God was through a spirituality of inwardness" (Noble, *Holy Trinity*, 212). It is not difficult to understand that such an environment would foster deep internal spiritual tension and confusion.

[5] James E. Robson, "Forgotten Dimensions of Holiness," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 33, no. 2 (January 2011): 121-46, https://doi.org/10.1163/187122011X593000.

holiness as love, a picture that stands from Noble's perspective as a corrective to his own tradition's "sinless perfectionism."[6] The thesis continues in this vein by offering a holistic model of love and holiness in Matthew. Matthew's vision can be understood to imply such a "holism" of holiness and love that complements and contrasts with the metaphors offered by other scholars and theologians.

Some clarifications are helpful. First, this thesis concerns the relationship between the disciple's holiness and love for God and others. While God's holiness and love cannot be hermetically sealed away from discipleship, the present concern is with the life of discipleship. Second, the focus here is on (so-called) experiential or practical holiness, rather than the idea of forensic sanctification in terms of status (e.g., arguably 1 Cor 1:2).[7] For this discussion, the question, "What does a holy life look like?" is more immediate than, "How is a disciple counted as holy?" Hence, the objective is to articulate a complementary perspective on the relationship of holiness and love for the disciple from Matthew's Sermon on the Mount.

The apostle Paul offers an illustration in 1 Thessalonians. He writes, "May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all . . . so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God" (1 Thess 3:13).[8] The question

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[6] For this expression Noble, *Holy Trinity*, 86.

[7] Understanding holiness correctly, as discussed later, reveals how practical and forensic sanctification or holiness are reconciled. The difference ought not be overstated. In the latter, God devotes his disciples to himself, not unlike devoting an inanimate object. In the former, their lived discipleship accords with this devotedness.

[8] Fee observes the complexity of Paul's use of the transitive verb "to strengthen"— Paul does not just say, "I pray that your love abounds so that your hearts might be blameless," but "I pray that your love abounds so that he may strengthen your hearts blamelessly in holiness" Gordon D. Fee, *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians,* New International Commentary on the New Testament, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2009), 132 n19. While noting that "Paul in prayer desires that the Lord cause their love to increase and overflow, so in this way Christ will also strengthen their hearts in holiness," Fee understands Paul to be praying for the effectiveness of his teaching in the following chapters "in the context of their love for each other" (132-33). Jeffrey Weima observes how greatly the apostles desired to see the churches overflowing with love within and without, suggesting that "it is the 'glue' needed to bond together converts from different social and economic strata within the community" and that Paul prays this because the Thessalonians were "lacking" in love (1 Thess 3:10), though he does not elaborate on the connection to holiness. Jeffrey A. D. Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians,* Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 238-43.

at hand is, "How do holiness and love relate in discipleship as informed by the Gospel of Matthew?" From Thessalonians, the short answer appears to be, "Love so that you are holy," with details of that love-producing holiness appearing in chapters 4 and 5.[9] If the hidden motives of the heart are essential to living "blameless in holiness," it stands to reason that love could form the governing principle for these motives.[10] Matthew presents a holistic vision of discipleship that accords with Paul's statement but also offers the distinctive contribution of doing so as an interpretation of the essence of the Torah that stands in contrast to a first century Jewish "cultural encyclopedia" of purity and holiness.[11]

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[9] Green summarizes, "The grammar implies that establishing the believers as those who are blameless in holiness is the fruit of their mutual love for one another and 'for everyone else,'" which he connects to Romans 13:8-10 in their common thought: "their growth in love . . . contributes to their holiness" (Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians,* Pillar New Testament Commentary, [Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Pub, 2002],179). See Frame: "The point appears to be that without the strong foundation of love the will might exploit itself in conduct not becoming of the ἅγιος" (James Everett Frame, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians* [Edinburgh: Clark, 1946], 138). Frame understands holiness as "separate from the world and consecrated to God" (138). He continues further by connecting a life of love to escaping eschatological judgment: "Only those whose love inspires purposes that are blameless in the sphere of holiness will find the day of the Lord not of wrath (1:10, 2:16) but of salvation (5:9)" (139).

[10] Bruce, observing that "true blamelessness in word and action must be the fruit of inner sanctification (cf. Phil 2:15)" and that "the heart is not only the seat of the understanding and will, but the place where the hidden motives of life and conduct take shape," oddly does not discuss the causal connection between blamelessness and Paul's desire to see their love abound. F. F. Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians,* vol. 45 of Word Biblical Commentary, (Waco: Word Books, 1982), 72.

[11] Here the phrase "cultural encyclopedia" is used in the sense of the "encyclopedia-like semantic representation" shared within cultural groups (Umberto Eco, "The Theory of Signs and the Role of the Reader," *The Bulletin of the Midwest Modern Language Association* 14, no. 1 [Spring 1981]: 43, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1314865). Its significance is that, in the words of Jonathan Pennington, it is "the totality of the collection of all possible cultural interpretations and phenomena in which a text is created" and the "best reading of a text will seek to approximate the position of the Model Reader through an every-increasing competence in encyclopedic understanding" (Pennington, *The Sermon on the Mount,* 22-23). Pennington continues "[since] texts come from real people in real situations, complete with cultural assumptions and evocations" (21); this concept is helpful for managing the "enculturated nature of language and communication." Eco himself states that "in order to understand, then, how a text can be not only generated but also interpreted, one needs a set of semantico-pragmatic rules, organized by an encyclopedia-like semantic representation, which establish how and under which conditions the addressee of a given text is entitled to collaborate in order to actualize what the text actually says" (Eco, "The Theory," 43). In short, Eco draws an analogy with efforts in artificial intelligence and explains that "encyclopedic competence" entails that a reader's encyclopedia would contain the appropriate "sequence of actions" that would evoke the necessary information that the communicator is not making explicit (43).

Approach

The thesis progresses in the following steps: First, reciprocal entailment and the core concepts within this argument will be clarified. Second, three generalized views of the relationship of holiness and love will be introduced.[12] To clarify their differences, a spectrum of conceptual proximity for holiness and love is offered. Each view encodes more or less conceptual alignment between holiness and love. By framing the views through this spectrum, their essential differences become evident. For example, if holiness is seen as separation and otherness, it is de facto in tension with the togetherness of love because it has the opposite trajectory. Third, holiness and love will be defined with careful attention to their natural semantic ranges. Love is perhaps more difficult to define. For the sake of focus, love will be discussed primarily through the lens of Matthew's Gospel. Fourth, given these definitions, the three views will be reviewed in greater depth by examples. The aim is not to negate other useful ways of thinking as these views have value as complementary metaphors. However, the views have yet to integrate holiness and love in such a way that they exist without tension in the disciple's life.

Fifth, the exegetical heart of this thesis substantiates the claim that love and holiness exist in reciprocal entailment from Matthew's Sermon on the Mount. This concept derives from the relationship of Matthew 5:48 to the structure of the Sermon, where it functions as Jesus' interpretation of Torah through the lens of the Golden Rule and Great Commandments. Given first century "germ theory purity" as a prominent entry in the cultural encyclopedia of his hearers, Jesus' teaching on τέλειος (Matt 5:48) and love has profound implications for love's relation to holiness because it directly challenges his hearers' natural mental evocations around these ideas. Jesus' sparring partners in Matthew, the "scribes and Pharisees," had a kind of "devotion" to God that expressed

[12] With emphasis on a *generalization*: Every individual writer and theologian has unique elements. The goal is not to pigeon-hole anyone, but to give a big-picture sense of the wide range of thinking on this matter.

itself in harmful and even hateful ways to others. He takes direct aim at this. Thus, a key point of contemporary relevance appears by way of analogy between the present popular notion of holiness as separation and the Pharisees' error. Understanding love and holiness in reciprocal entailment can forestall a spectrum of errors that are predicated on a "holiness" that births love-lessness and hatred rather than love and mercy for others.

Finally, this thesis will conclude with a brief discussion of some future areas of exploration relating to broader biblical and systematic theology implications.

Core Concepts

Clarifying reciprocal entailment. The thesis can be simply and broadly stated as follows: Holiness entails love and love entails holiness. More specifically, the aim is to demonstrate that both of these propositions are true: "Junia the Christian lives in loyal love, therefore Junia is holy," and "Junia the Christian is holy, therefore Junia lives in loyal love."

In short, a disciple's holiness and love are reciprocal entailments. Since this is both a complementary and corrective perspective with respect to other models explored below, reciprocal entailment requires substantiation. Consider the modal syllogism: "All humans are bipeds," and "Junia is human," therefore, "Junia is a biped."

Next, consider asserting a convertible claim, namely, "Junia is a biped, therefore, Junia is human." Given the syllogism alone, this is a non sequitur. An additional proposition is needed: "All bipeds are humans." So too, the present claim, that love and holiness are mutual entailments, is a convertible claim. One model that fits this claim is an identity model, wherein holiness is love, discussed below. However, while this view functions as a metaphor, grounding mutual entailment in an identity relationship is different than the present claim of mutual entailments; holiness is not love, and love is not holiness, but love and holiness entail each other. This consideration of entailment preserves the contours of love and holiness as distinct concepts.

As a clarification, to avoid treating language as univocal and thereby diminishing metaphorical and imaginative ways of speaking, it is acknowledged that other descriptions holiness and love can serve as helpful metaphors to describe different aspects of the relationship.[13] Thus, the following discussion offers a paradigm for understanding holiness and love that preserves their distinctiveness while granting that alternative ways of speaking (e.g., "holiness is love") can function as acceptable metaphors.

Clarifying "abstract" and "concrete." For any given idea or concept, various terminology and expressions can connote differing levels of detail. Thus, an idea can have representation at different levels of abstraction.[14] Consideration of the level of abstraction is important. Discussions are complicated by a failure to recognize the relationships of abstractions—whether two ideas are at the same or different levels of abstraction. The developing mind of a child provides a simple illustration. A three-year-old can say, "I am a girl, not a toddler!" This minor identity crisis is mildly comical, but it illustrates a problem in discourse that imposes difficulty in relating love and holiness.

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[13] As an analogy by example, Philip Dixon discusses the reduction of Trinitarianism to a "network of propositions" to be argued about and in so doing identifies a "growing concern for the literal truth of the Scriptures, coupled with a decline of the analogical imagination, generated a climate in which the doctrine of the Trinity could not become the subject of critical scrutiny" (Philip Dixon, *Nice and Hot Disputes: The Doctrine of the Trinity in the Seventeenth Century* [London: T & T Clark, 2003], 135). Dixon observes, "The emergence of an attitude to language that privileged the univocal was bound to preclude the exercise of imagination needed to engage fruitfully with the doctrine of the Trinity. This 'flattening' of language was to increase as the century progressed" (65). In any subject, the same danger applies, and it is helpful to welcome analogical and metaphorical language as illuminating different perspectives on complex realities.

[14] The matter of levels of abstraction is ubiquitous in software engineering but may be less familiar to those outside of that field. In software engineering, ideas must be given structural form in code and related to each other. The need for structural form means that the relationship of abstractions becomes critical: Components can be designed to be overly coupled to specifics, and therefore more expensive to change in the future. Hence, a fundamental principle in software engineering is the Dependency Inversion Principle, which states that *concretions* should depend on *abstractions*. This principle means that one should make a component depend on the absolute minimum necessary, so that it does not require change when something that should be irrelevant to it changes. The point here is that relating levels of abstraction is a common and critical practice in software. Developers need to understand whether they are implementing an abstraction or a concretion. This frame for viewing theology can be helpful, even if uncommon.

"Toddler" refers to a little child. "Girl" also refers to a little child but is more specific. These ideas operate at different levels of abstraction. She is a little girl who is a toddler. Hence, an idea can be concrete relative to one idea, but abstract relative to another. A significant underlying frame for this thesis is that theological ideas exist at different abstraction levels—some more abstract, some more concrete.

Abstractions also apply to actions: Consider an abstract action like "open." When it comes to opening a door, the same action can be described as, opening the entrance, or alternatively, turning the door handle and rotating the door ninety degrees. The latter is a specific concretion or implementation of the abstraction of "door opening." Again, a person can open her heart, or she can verbally articulate her emotions and perceptions. The latter implements the former abstraction. More intuitively, abstractions apply to objects. For example, the well-known taxonomic ranking of organisms is an example of a hierarchy of abstractions. *Canis* is a taxonomic abstraction for a dog. Likewise, one can speak of "my dog" or "my Pomeranian." The latter is a concretion of the former.

Love is the concrete implementation of holiness. Applying these ideas, love and holiness can be understood as existing at different levels of abstraction. Holiness is not an ideal for love in a Platonic sense. But holiness is relatively abstract to love, and love is relatively concrete. What grounds their reciprocal entailment? As discussed shortly, holiness is devotion, not separateness or otherness. Holiness is commitment to God.[15] The claim here is that holiness and love reciprocally entail each other because love in all its scriptural richness is the comprehensive implementation of devotion (i.e., holiness) in the disciple's life. Because of the conceptual parity between holiness and

[15] The separateness-from that is so often conflated with holiness is hardly holiness itself, but is at best the by-product of existing wholly in devotion to God by love for God and other, a love which cannot but oppose and turn from anything that is likewise not for God. Wrath will be discussed in brief towards the end of this paper.

love, love can implement holiness. It will be shown from Matthew's Sermon that the only way that one exists in devotion to God is by whole-person heart-love for God by loving others. Strictly, there is no such thing as being holy and loving. There is only being holy—being devoted—by loving. Holiness is entailed by love because love is the only way to implement it; seeking the happiness of God by compassionate deeds for others constitutes the concrete implementation of the relatively abstract idea of devotion.

The polymorphic nature of holiness. Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield thusly justified the word "Trinity" despite the lack of the term in Scripture:

> A doctrine so defined [the Trinity vis-à-vis essence and subsistence] can be spoken of as a Biblical doctrine only on the principle that the sense of Scripture is Scripture. And the definition of a Biblical doctrine in such un-Biblical language can be justified only on the principle that it is better to preserve the truth of Scripture than the words of Scripture. . . . We may state the doctrine in technical terms, supplied by philosophical reflection, but the doctrine stated is a genuinely Scriptural doctrine.[16]

Graham A. Cole wisely assesses Warfield's argument as "an excellent articulation of the rationale for the development of extrabiblical technical language for doing theology responsibly."[17] This section, which introduces specific technical language to help conceptualize the relationship of love and holiness, exists in the same spirit: To do theology responsibly. While the subject of this thesis is not as foundational as the Trinity, misunderstandings of holiness occasion the application of creative language that carves out a new space for thinking about this complex relationship. This attention to precision in technical language can help preserve Scripture, just as Warfield argued that the use of philosophical and technical terminology for the Trinity "does not [pass] from Scripture, but [enters] more thoroughly into the meaning of Scripture."[18] This language will be drawn from software typing theory, and stands as conceptual scaffolding that preserves

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[16] Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *Biblical Foundations* (London: Tyndale, 1958), 79.

[17] Graham A. Cole, *He Who Gives Life: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Wheaton, Ill: Crossway Books, 2007), 64.

[18] Warfield, *Biblical Foundations*, 79.

several concepts simultaneously: first, that holiness and love are distinct; second, that love and holiness can entail each other in the specific context of discipleship; and third, that it is legitimate to apply other metaphors about their relationship precisely because of how the concepts of love and holiness relate. The act of borrowing language is subject to misunderstanding, but the introduction of alternative conceptual buckets for theology warrants the risks. This more nuanced language can help preserve the sense of Scripture in the face of confusion.

One perceptive objection to tightly connecting holiness and love is that holiness also applies to inanimate objects. For an object to be devoted to God is the same concept but looks radically different than for a human to be devoted. Drawing from computer science, a useful term for describing this difference is to say that holiness is polymorphic. Polymorphism means that an abstract concept can take different concrete forms.[19] An inanimate object is devoted to use for God merely as an assigned purpose. But the disciple is holy if the disciple loves God and neighbor.[20] Holiness for the disciple has the form of love in practice. If one wants to be holy, one must love. But an object is not holy because it loves. Its holiness has a different implementation. This application of polymorphism, with holiness and love at different abstraction levels, can be diagrammed in Unified Modeling Language (*UML*), which visually depicts such abstractions.[21]

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[19] In computer science and software engineering, this is called "polymorphism" and is used to make something depend on an abstraction for another thing without knowing its details. The concept "to open" can apply to a door, a box, an email, or human hearts; polymorphism refers to the many forms (hence, the loose etymology of "poly-morph") that the concept takes. Components that "open" something on another part only knows about "opening" in the abstract. The "opened" component invisibly handles the details and implementation of that "opening."

[20] Of course, the objective sense of being devoted as a status applies to people as well, but it is not limited to this as it is with inanimate objects. Again, polymorphism is especially useful here.

[21] For a comprehensive guide to *UML*, see Grady Booch, James Rumbaugh, and Ivar Jacobson, *The Unified Modeling Language User Guide* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1999). *UML* is frequently used in design in software engineering. It is a visual language used in design that expresses the types of relationships of ideas and abstractions. Thus, while virtually unknown to the theological community, it can prove useful when describing how ideas relate.

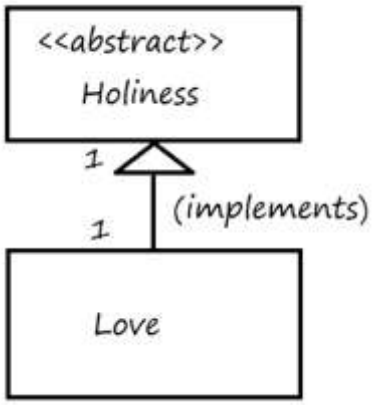

Figure 1: The relationship of holiness and love

This figure encapsulates this thesis in technical terms. First, holiness is an abstract concept relative to love. Love is narrower or more specific. Thus, depending on the level of abstraction, it is legitimate to look at whatever love is and call it holiness. Likewise, one can look at the disciple's holiness and call it love.

Two more terms further describe this "substitutionary" relationship: "covariance" and "contravariance."[22] Covariance refers to the ability to use of a more specific concept in lieu of a less specific one, such as using love in place of holiness.[23] "Dog" is covariant with "Pomeranian." Contravariance is the opposite—using a less specific concept in lieu of the more specific. "Pomeranian" is contravariant with "dog" but not covariant. The term "invariance" means that two concepts cannot be used in place of each other in a specific context.[24] For example, with an inanimate object, love and

[22] See, for example, Giuseppe Castagna, "Covariance and Contravariance: Conflict without a Cause," *ACM Transactions on Programming Languages and Systems (TOPLAS)* 17, no. 3 (May 1995): 431-47, https://doi.org/10.1145/203095.203096; Microsoft, "Covariance and Contravariance in Generics," March 29, 2017, https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/dotnet/standard/generics/covariance-and-contravariance.

[23] Not to be confused with the same pair of terms in the field of statistics.

[24] For example, the concept of an animal is invariant with respect to a cat when it refers to a specific animal, such as a pet dog. One cannot legitimately substitute a cat for the animal, even though an

holiness are invariant because love cannot describe the object's devotion. But for discipleship, holiness is covariant to love (and love is contravariant to holiness) because holiness is polymorphic and takes the form of love with Jesus' disciples. Covariance, contravariance, and invariance thus offer categories for understanding context-specific substitutions between compatible ideas while guarding the unique concrete details of those ideas that prohibit other substitutions.

This terminology also gives a way of describing conceptually what happens when holiness is described as separation: Holiness and love are no longer variant but incorrectly treated as invariant. To use another technical term, they are incompatible, a problem illustrated by the Pharisees' failure to grasp the heart of the Torah. Naturally, problems occur when an abstract concept is used in lieu of a specific concept, but then a different specific concept is later substituted for it. As a simple example, this is akin to someone saying, "I own an animal," when she owns a cat. Then, another concludes, "That person owns a dog," because a dog is an animal. As a theological analogy, this error is like observing that authority is present in marriage, church leadership, and slavery and declaring, "Church elders are to the congregation like a husband is to a wife because both have authority." Or, one might import domineering elements of authority from slavery into the pastorate or marriage. The problem is that by equivocating within a conceptual hierarchy of abstractions, specific aspects of any given concretion of an abstraction can be illegitimately applied to another concretion of that abstraction. Doing so means that details for one concept ("authority in slavery") fail to remain isolated and are imported into another ("authority in marriage") by way of an illegitimate substitution. What is invariant is incorrectly treated as variant. Details illegitimately creep through the

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animal can be covariant to a cat elsewhere.

abstractions, corrupting other concretions.[25] Slavery, marriage, and the pastorate have authority, but are invariant—they are not substitutable.

A mirror problem is seen in confusion around love and holiness. While illegitimate covariance is problematic, failing to appreciate a covariant relationship when it does exist is likewise problematic. In a different context, type theory expert Giuseppe Castagna entitled a discussion of conceptual issues thusly: "Covariance and Contravariance: Conflict Without a Cause."[26] This language is one way of stating the problem addressed in the thesis: Love and holiness can exist in a "conflict without a cause" because they are not understood in a variant relationship of a concretion implementing an abstraction, which enables one to think of "being holy" and "being loving" as the same thing. Because love implements holiness, conflicts perceived between these two concepts are, in a word, causeless, often deriving from a misunderstanding of holiness itself.

To reiterate, love and holiness are not the same. The relationship is one of implementation to abstraction. A Pomeranian is a type of *canis*, but a *canis* is not necessarily a Pomeranian. The latter is a concretion of the former. It is possible for holiness to have other implementations, such as with inanimate objects.[27] However, for Jesus' disciples, the relationship is one-to-one: There is one and only one possible implementation of holiness, of devotion, and that implementation is love. Likewise, since disciples' love is the implementation of holiness, its concrete existence entails its

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[25] By analogy to the consubstantiation debate between Martin Luther and Huldrych Zwingli, in which Luther projected the attributes of the divine nature onto Christ's human nature, this might be called the *communicatio idiomatum* ("exchange of properties") of authority structures. Timothy George, *Theology of the Reformers* [Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2013], 158-59. In the vernacular of software developers, this is called a "leaky abstraction."

[26]Castagna, "Covariance and Contravariance."

[27] The nature of holiness as devotion to God has different forms depending on whether discipleship, inanimate objects, sacrifices, or sanctuaries are in view.

abstraction in holiness, just as the existence of a Pomeranian entails the existence of a *canis*.

In short, love is a concretion that implements the abstraction of holiness for the disciple. Love entails holiness (always), and holiness entails love (always), because for people, holiness has no other implementation.

In the subsequent discussion, other perspectives on love and holiness will be discussed with a view to clarifying further the unique claim made in this thesis in relation to other major claims. Explicit reference to the disciple's holiness is absent from the Sermon on the Mount; despite its silence, the Sermon has implications for holiness as it is implemented in love. The vision cast by Jesus entails a correction to his hearers' misconceptions of devotion to God by calling his followers to a holiness that is comprehensively implemented by love.

A Spectrum of Love and Holiness: Introducing Three Views

There is a diverse breadth of reflection on holiness and love. At the risk of over-generalizing, this section introduces a spectrum of three broad-stroke perspectives to describe this diversity. On one end, holiness and love have little relation except to exist in tension: Holiness is otherness and separation. While love has a "toward-ness"; holiness has an "away-ness." There is little conceptual alignment. On the other end, holiness and love are conceptually aligned. They both have to do with a "toward-ness." Thus, the three perspectives that follow are framed in the context of the conceptual alignment of holiness and love. As a caution, these perspectives are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and they can operate metaphorically or rhetorically. A writer can legitimately state an idea in different ways to emphasize different aspects. There are different metaphors for thinking of love and holiness. However, metaphors can evoke undesired effects, and they employ simplifications that limit their explanatory power to specific contexts.

First, on the one end, some articulations frame the matter as if there is no significant relationship; holiness and love are different attributes of God and entail different obligations on behalf of humanity. The thesis calls this the "not-a" perspective. Toward the other end, the other views are different, asserting a stronger relationship. Moving along the spectrum, the second conception sees a compositional relationship between them.[28] A composition relationship is a "has-a" relationship. Holiness has love as an element or dimension. Holiness is composed of love—and potentially other ideas, like separation or purity. Moving further, the third perspective moves into an identity relationship, an "is-a" relationship, in contrast to "not-a" or "has-a." Holiness is love, or, weakly stated, holiness consists of love (similar to a compositional view). Here, holiness and love are two sides of the same coin, two perspectives on the same reality. So, along this spectrum, three nodes highlight degrees of conceptual alignment: On one end, holiness and love are simply different; in the middle, holiness has love as a part; on the other end, holiness is love.

These ideas can also be diagrammed as shown in figure 2. View 1 has holiness and love in parallel, at the same level of abstraction. They are invariant. View 2 has a strong compositional relationship between them.[29] However, love and holiness are at the same abstraction level since love is one of many components of holiness. Holiness has love like a car engine has fuel injectors. View 3 reduces to an identity relationship.[30] Love and holiness are at the same abstraction level; ultimately, they are the same thing. None of these views consider holiness and love as being at different abstraction levels. But

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[28] The terms "composition," "has-a," "is-a," are common descriptions for structurally relating information abstractions in software engineering. Interestingly, systematic theology shares much with software engineering in that both generate and relate abstractions from concretions.

[29] The diamond in View 2 connecting Holiness with 1) Love and n) [other elements] shows a composition relationship. The diagram reads, "Holiness has love and *n* other parts."

[30] This diagram communicates this with the logical "or" notation ("|"), conveying that these are, in software vernacular, 'aliases' for the same thing.

doing so enables a model where love implements holiness, while love is not holiness.

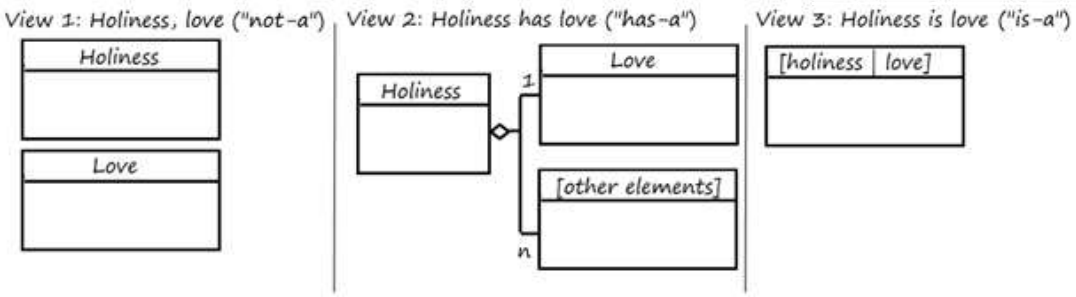

Figure 2: Three views on holiness and love

Implications of the Alignment of Holiness and Love

For cars, wheel alignment is important. Tires that are not pointing in precisely the same direction incur abnormal wear from undue friction as the tires continually pull in different directions. The alignment of holiness and love, highlighted by this spectrum, likewise has effects in discipleship—effects which are practical in at least two ways. First, it can affect the disciple's view and imitation of God. Is God approachable, or is he so "other" and transcendent that he seems cold, harsh, and distant, perhaps even monolithic and deistic? For Matthew, this problem is not merely hypothetical, but one that Jesus addresses in practical ways. A danger is that God is seen as a "hard master," which affects how a person lives for God and has bearing on salvation (Matt 25:24-26).[31]

[31] Donald A. Hagner writes about the servant who hid the talent, "Fear had motivated this servant, the fear of failure and losing the talent he had been given" (Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14-28,* Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 33B [Dallas: Word Books, 1995], 735). If the parable's theme is "the absence of the master (the Son of Man) and the interim responsibility of the servants (disciples)" (734), the risk for disciples of viewing God cynically is that they bear no fruit and prove to be useless. Craig Keener notes the irony: "Whereas the other servants are rewards by the master's benevolence, this servant, fearing

Likewise, during a dark time in the exodus, the Israelites impugned God's goodness with accusations against his motives (Num 14:3). The consequences were catastrophic, and the incident is later interpreted in the NT as an example for Christians (Heb 3:15-19).[32] The judgment is ironic—viewing God as a hard master leads to being treated accordingly—but this shows the gravity of the error. It is impossible to have communion with a God one views as cruel (Ps 18:25-26).

While the error does not always go this far, the lack of alignment between holiness and love for the disciple affects how life is lived. The Bible calls for imitation of God's love (e.g., 1 John 4:11; John 13:34, 15:12; Eph 5:2) and holiness (Lev 19:2; 1 Pet 1:15-16). Disciples are to look to God's love to understand what it means (1 John 3:16). So too for holiness. But if their relationship is merely distal elements within a set of attributes, holiness can be defined in a way that makes God transcendent and unknowable—essentially the opposite of love, for God appears dictatorial and uncompassionate. God's holiness keeps humans away. But if holiness is closer to love, God appears approachable, warm, and familial.

Now the Bible does say, "You alone are holy" (Rev 15:4) and "There is none holy like the LORD" (1 Sam 2:2), and imitation of God's holiness as a ground for ethics has been challenged.[33] One way to understand this uniqueness is to attribute it to the fall. None is holy because of sin. However, this does not do justice to the rest of 1 Samuel 2:2:

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the master's harshness but unaware of his benevolence . . ., experiences the very wrath he feared" Craig S. Keener, *Matthew*, IVP New Testament Commentary, vol. 1 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 359.

[32] Hebrews picks up Ps 95:7-11. "The fact that they had experienced God's great deeds of deliverance from Egypt and sustenance in the desert . . . left them without excuse." Gareth Lee Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews,* New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2012), 191.

[33] See for example, Walter J. Houston, "The Character of YHWH and the Ethics of the Old Testament: Is Imitatio Dei Appropriate?" *The Journal of Theological Studies* 58, no. 1 (April 2007), 9, https://doi.org/10.1093/jts/fll036. It may be significant that the phrase in Rev 15:4 is "ὅτι μόνος ὅσιος"—this is not the usual adjective for "holy," and has the idea of "devout" or even "the things that constitute holiness" (BDAG, s.v. "ὅσιος") and was often used in the LXX to translate "saints" or "godly," or "faithful" and "righteous" ones (e.g., Ps 149:9).

"for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God." This statement implies that God's holiness is somehow unique categorically in contrast to the creature, such that even redeemed saints declare, "You alone are holy." But are resurrected disciples not holy? An understanding of holiness as separation is a simple way of fitting this together: God alone is "separate." And as the thesis shows, holiness has even been defined as ineffability. But this leads to confusion for discipleship by fostering a de facto tension between love and holiness, between togetherness and separateness. And this can lead to a life lived as if God is a hard master. Far better is the notion that God's commitment is categorically unparalleled: "if we are faithless, he remains faithful— for he cannot deny himself" (2 Tim 2:13).[34]

The second aspect of significance is more directly relevant to this thesis: Holiness and love fail to integrate in practical life. If holiness is about separation, then being holy in discipleship is primarily a negative—separation from sin and keeping pure. A potential consequence is that holiness and love may not survive contact with each other in life. A heart-orientation that draws away from people is at odds with showing them compassion.[35] Love toward others becomes risky, like walking in a minefield of possible sin. For example, consider the Christian man who views every woman as a landmine for lust. Whereas Paul exhorts the pastor to encourage "younger women as sisters, in all purity" (1 Tim 5:2), this man avoids personal contact with women. This avoidance is a poor substitute for the kind of intimate and pure relationship that siblings enjoy, and thus

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[34] The unparalleled devotion, or holiness, expressed in this statement by Paul is all the more fascinating given that it follows the contrastive statement, "if we deny him, he also will deny us." God's faithfulness here, which is rooted in the חֶסֶד and אֱמֶת of God (Exod 33), does not preclude judgment, but the polarization flips when it comes to God's faithfulness. To paraphrase, he will deny the one that denies him. If one is faithless, he is not faithless. While it is not discussed at length here, the resolution may be found in understanding God's faithfulness as unparalleled in a Trinitarian sense and in terms of his covenants and commitments. Human unfaithfulness can mean a person opposes God's devotion, in which case, God's faithfulness will not abide the rebellion.

[35] Love may well get "tough" and withhold things for the sake of the beloved. This form of expressing love is not the concern. The concern is separating from those people not for their sake, but to keep them away. This difference is categorical.

hinders the pastorate. The issue here is not too much affection, but too little love in an effort to be "holy."

As another example, revisited below, the Pharisees had a practical devotion to God that was fundamentally about separating from others.[36] A Pharisee wanted nothing to do with anyone who made him externally unclean. But Jesus repeatedly excoriates them for their lack of understanding love. Their loveless avoidance of others is an example of what happens when love and holiness are not integrated in relationship with God. When out of alignment, tires wear prematurely. When love and holiness lack alignment, disciples fail to love rightly.

Finally, this thesis is not claiming that other ways of speaking about holiness and love are not useful. They can be complementary metaphors warranted by the polymorphic nature of holiness that emphasize specific aspects in specific limited contexts. For example, the idea of holiness "as separation" can emphasize that devotion to God in covenant relationship may entail parting with someone who hinders this devotion (Matt 10:37). But, taken too far or when viewed as the core reality, these concepts are distortions. Metaphors that fail to appreciate the covariant and contravariant relationships of the concepts they model cause confusion. The model of reciprocal entailment does not exclude compositional or identity models as metaphors but offers a perspective that clarifies how holiness and love are naturally integrated in the lives of disciples. The thesis next turns to defining holiness and love.

[36] The discussion below highlights that the idea of holiness as separation is rather recent, so it would be anachronistic to apply this to the Pharisees.

CHAPTER 2

REDEFINING HOLINESS AND LOVE

Since much confusion surely flows from inadequate notions of the ideas of love and holiness, and especially of holiness, it is helpful to preserve lexically informed understandings of each while asserting a relationship between them for the disciple that integrates them theologically and experientially.

Preserving the Contours

What follows stands in contrast to approaches that bifurcate them, or that exclude natural experiential aspects of love such as sentimentality. Love is deeply affective, emotional, and intellectual, involving the whole person—thought and action, feeling and reason. And holiness, too often nonchalantly treated as separation, requires positive definition.

Understanding Holiness

For the idea of holy or holiness (Hebrew קָדוֹשׁ, Greek ἅγιος), there has been a helpful resurgence in scholarship that advocates for a fuller understanding.[1] The idea that it means separation is essentially an etymological fallacy. Peter J. Gentry attributes this sense to W.W. Baudissin's deriving of the meaning of holiness from his "hypothetical"

[1] For example, Andrew Case is representative in his article, "Towards a Better Understanding of God's Holiness: Challenging the Status Quo," *The Bible Translator* 68, no. 3 (November 2017): 1: "The standard understanding of God's holiness is usually described as 'separation,' 'transcendence,' or 'infinite purity.' But when the usage of the term in certain contexts is scrutinized, Scripture reveals that it can mean 'totally devoted.' According to Isaiah, this devotion of God to his people manifests itself in social justice, rescue, and restoration. When this definition is compared with the role and nature of the Holy Spirit as comforter, teacher, etc., it makes much more sense that the Spirit is described as holy. Although it may not be possible to change traditional terms for holy in many language communities, there must be a creative effort to turn the tide toward a more biblical understanding."

connection between holiness and the Hebrew root "to cut" in 1878.[2] While the seminal and exhaustive corrective study was undertaken by Claude-Bernard Costecalde, as Gentry notes, its unavailability in English hinders its influence.[3] However, Gentry himself has helpfully integrated Costecalde's research with his own, setting out to understand holiness from Exodus 3, 19, and Isaiah 6.[4] Without reiterating his entire argument, one example is representative.

In Exodus 3, Moses is warned that the ground is holy, but he is not forbidden from walking on it. Gentry thus infers, "We can recognize then, in Exodus 3, a meaning of a derivative of the root קָדוֹשׁ current in the 14th century before Jesus Christ, where the קָדוֹשׁ ground is not the place of distance or radical separation, but of meeting and of presence, the meeting of God and man."[5] Colloquially speaking, the picture may have more in common with the cultural custom of removing shoes when entering a home; far from separation, it connotes intimacy and welcome.[6] Note that although poles were used when handling the Ark of the Covenant, this is clearly not intrinsic to holiness, for Moses

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[2] For the etymological or "root fallacy," see D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1996), 28. Peter J. Gentry writes, "The idea that 'holy' means set apart can be traced to the influence of W.W. Baudissin, who proposed in 1878 that the root of 'holy' in Hebrew, i.e., qds, is derived from *qs-*, 'to cut' (citing W.W. Baudissin, "Der Begriff der Heiligkeit im Alten Testament," in *Studien zur semitischen Religionsgeschichte* [Leipzig, Germany: Grunow, 1878], 2:1-142)." Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012), 324. Gentry points to the research of Claude-Bernarde Costecalde, who "has cast better light on the meaning of the term since his analysis was based on the way the word is used rather than on hypothetical origins" (324).

[3] Claude-Bernard Costecalde, *Aux origines du sacré biblique* (Paris: Letouzey & Ané, 1986). For a helpful summary, see Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 324-25. The substance of the original is also more accessibly available in French in Louis Pirot et al., "Sacre," in *Dictionnaire de la bible / Supplément 10* (Paris: Letouzey & Ané, 1985), 1342-1415.

[4] See Peter J. Gentry, "No One Holy Like the Lord," *Midwestern Journal of Theology* 12, no. 1 (2013): 17-38, https://www.academia.edu/26966746, 17-38. The summary of the relationships between holiness and love that follows will show Gentry's assessment to bear out that "unfortunately, the church of Jesus Christ, at least in the western world, has not understood very well the meaning of the word holy, nor what it means to worship a holy God." Gentry surveys a number of prominent theologians to the effect that they more or less understand holiness as separation, including John S. Feinberg, Rudolf Otto, Charles Hodge, Herman Bavinck, and Millard Erickson.

[5] Gentry, "No One Holy," 22.

[6] Removing shoes is the Canadian custom, for example.

is told to touch what is holy with his bare feet. Holiness manifests differently in varied contexts, which helps calibrate a fuller understanding of holiness. At its essence, holiness means devotion. The land is devoted to God meeting humanity. Gentry concludes,

> As have seen, purity is the result of being holy in the biblical sense, but is not the meaning of the word. Nor is the word connected with divine transcendence however much this idea is otherwise made plain in Scripture. . . . The basic meaning of the word is "consecrated" or "devoted." In scripture it operates within the context of covenant relationships and expresses commitment.[7]

BDAG lines up with this understanding for the corresponding Greek term and identifies ἅγιος with the semantic range of holiness "in the cultic sense dedicated to God, holy, sacred, i.e., reserved for God and God's service."[8]

This understanding serves to avoid decoupling holiness and love from their lexical moorings. The prevailing notion of holiness as separation alarms Gentry as an example of precisely this decoupling.[9] Thus, this thesis argues that holiness, defined as devotion to God, exists when the disciple loves God and neighbor and thereby implements this devotion.[10]

Coupling holiness and love illuminates the relationships between the holy and profane, and the clean and unclean. For example, though difficult to square with Jesus' actions, discussed below, it is unsurprising how one might understand holiness via the lens of the Torah's cleanliness dynamics.[11] Here Philip Peter Jenson's work on holiness in the Levitical priesthood is helpful, in which he builds upon Costecalde's research:

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[7] Gentry, "No One Holy," 37.

[8] BDAG, s.v. "ἅγιος."

[9] "Unfortunately, when biblical studies went awry, systematic theologians struggled on continuing to defend truth, but have been woefully lacking in exegesis. Put succinctly, the problem has been that systematic theologians (1) do not give sufficient attention to the shape of the text, (2) do not perceive the communicative and literary modes in the text, and (3) employ a framework of reasoning which throttles the direction and focus of the text." Gentry, "No One Holy," 38.

[10] Note that the term *devotion* is not necessarily a subjective inclination of the heart but speaks rather to the "for-ness" of something, however that may be implemented.

[11] An example of this sort of influence on holiness is in Michael Scott Horton, *Rediscovering the Holy Spirit: God's Perfecting Presence in Creation, Redemption, and Everyday Life* (Grand Rapids:

> If 'holy' is defined as that which belongs to the sphere of God's being or activity, then this might correspond to a claim of ownership, a statement of close association. . . . The consecration [a special act of God to make a thing or person holy] consists of a double movement, since the initiation of a new relationship with the divine realm entails a corresponding separation from the earthly sphere.[12]

He rejects Baudissin's etymological derivation from "to cut" and clarifies that "separateness is often thought to be the basic meaning of holiness, but it is more often its necessary consequence. Consecration is separation to God rather than separation from the world . . . and holiness has a positive content."[13] This observation will be helpful in the subsequent discussion, when it is argued that love itself must sometimes separate as a consequence. Furthermore, Jenson discusses the parallelism in Leviticus 10:10, which if taken strictly "could suggest that holy/unclean, profane/clean are equivalent in some respect."[14] He clarifies by highlighting the orthogonality of the ideas: "A better suggestion is that holiness (and its opposite, the profane) represent the divine relation to the ordered world, and the clean (with its opposite, the unclean) embraces the normal state of human existence in the earthly realm."[15] It is the intersection of these axes in "Israel's sanctuary" that leads to a complex, situationally-specific blurring of clean and holy.[16]

Jenson's discussion implies that cleanliness and purity are not intrinsic to holiness, but in present terms, they are part of the specific Levitical implementation of "polymorphic holiness." Yet the cleanliness axis is not innate to holiness itself. Being

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Zondervan, 2017), 173.

[12] Philip Peter Jenson, *Graded Holiness: A Key to the Priestly Conception of the World* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 48, see footnote 4.

[13] Jenson, *Graded Holiness*, 48 n 4.

[14] Jenson, *Graded Holiness*, 43. The spectrum looks something like "very holy – holy – clean – unclean – very unclean" (44). Another form is to suggest that "holy and clean, profane and unclean are aligned but not identified." These representations tie holiness closely to purity.

[15] Jenson, *Graded Holiness*, 47. Note that orthogonal lines intersect, but never overlap.

[16] Jenson, *Graded Holiness*, 48.

polymorphic, the Levitical implementation included structures of cleanliness.[17] Preparing to "meet" God meant ritual cleanliness. Even in this, as Jesus teaches, love was at its heart.

Understanding Love

The thesis turns next to examine "love." One of the Greek words, ἀγαπάω, is summarized by BDAG as "to have high esteem for or satisfaction with someth., [to] take pleasure in [the beloved]."[18] This definition is simple but insightful. In the abstract, the working understanding of love here is the idea that the lover takes pleasure in the beloved. A person can love many things, both living or inanimate. A person can love someone for the objective pleasure involved or by taking delight in the pleasure of the beloved. Love can act in various ways, such as sacrifice, good will to others, and so on. But at its heart, love is the lover's pleasure in the beloved object of that love.[19]

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[17] While beyond the scope of the present discussion, Heb 9:8-9 understands these structures as a spatial metaphor for an eschatological-temporal reality. William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 47B [Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1991], 217, 226 The present reading fits this well, with cleanliness dynamics functioning as part of a redemptive-historical metaphor rather than the essence of holiness.

[18] BDAG, s.v. "ἀγαπάω." To expand somewhat, the thesis does not try to establish a "true," or better, a "one-true-Scotsman," view of love, because it is important that when speaking about the disciple's love, one speaks in ways that account for the normal experience of love, including love for objects, animals, people, and even sin. It is unhelpful to hyper-qualify love by saying that these are not really "love." For example, despite its strengths, this "love but" concept is articulated by D. A. Carson in Christopher W. Morgan's *The Love of God,* where he writes: "Scripture's presentation of God's love is far from the 'warmhearted sentimentality' so commonly confused with love today. This book focuses on a positive presentation of God's love in Scripture, theology, and Christian living" (*The Love of God* [Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2016], 21). Carson's correction has merit, but the rhetoric in this instance may over-qualify love so that it does not match the experience of it: Love is deeply affective and it is sentimental. How could whole persons, mind and emotion, be otherwise? And God's love in Scripture is deeply sentimental at times. For example, God pines rather affectively over Israel in Jer 2. Romanticism does not get to corner the market on sentimental affection. Elsewhere Carson does affirm, "The commandment to love must not be stripped of its affective content" D. A Carson, *Love in Hard Places* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2002), 21.

[19] Jonathan Leeman, following Bernard V. Brady (Bernard V. Brady, *Christian Love* [Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2003], 240-64), writes, "That's the thing that is so beautiful and selfless about love—the finding of genuine pleasure in the good of someone else. . . . Loving another means taking pleasure in that person's movement toward conforming to and enjoying this greatest of goods, God" (Jonathan Leeman, *The Church and the Surprising Offense of God's Love: Reintroducing the Doctrines of Church Membership and Discipline* [Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2010], 110). See Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better: Theological Essays on the Love of God* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2001), 1-29.

Theologians sometimes qualify love as they attempt to identify a "true" or "holy" love, but the biblical writers do not overload it with such theological weight.[20] As an example of the gritty, real-life messiness in which love can naturally apply, consider the rape of Tamar by Amnon in 2 Samuel 13. Not only does Amnon profess that he loves Tamar (2 Sam 13:3), but the narrator records, "וַיֶּאֱהָבֶהָ" or, in the Septuagint, "καὶ ἠγάπησεν αὐτὴν" (2 Sam 13:1): "And he loved her." The passion in Amnon's heart leads to a deceptive seduction that turns into a rape, after which he "hated her with very great hatred, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her" (2 Sam 13:15). Thus "love" legitimately applies in causal, good, and evil situations. Therefore, love in general must not be understood in a way that excludes the fullness of its complex affections and actions. Augustine's observation that sin is the heart affixing its love to illicit objects is more useful.[21] The human problem described here is not helped by obfuscating terms, such as limiting the definition of love to exclude affections or denying that love applies in these scenarios.

Love appears in a complex maelstrom of ideas and experiences that defy simplistic description. While the Gospel of Matthew does not lay out a definition of love, it weaves various structural and thematic elements together while drawing on the OT and depicting the character of Jesus in ways that give the careful reader a window into what is prioritized in love in Matthew's Gospel. In the following section, it will be argued that Matthew presents love as loyalty for God and delight in his happiness that manifests in

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[20] It could be that "holy love" functions as a double distortion, involving both terms, as it usually means "separate/other love."

[21] Noting Augustine's argument that no one does anything "except by love," whether love for God and neighbor (i.e., *caritas*) or love for world and life (i.e., *concupiscentia*"), T. A. Noble summarizes, "We cannot be human without being drawn to what we love, and every human being is therefore motivated by love. The key question is *what* we love." (T. A. Noble, *Holy Trinity: Holy People: The Historic Doctrine of Christian Perfecting* [Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013], 60). Noble adds, "If it is drawn towards the things of the world, it is *concupiscentia*, a selfish love that is out to own, to possess, to consume for self-gratification." See also Saint Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God,* translated by Marcus Dods (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers Inc., 2009), 404-405.

mercy for neighbor and care for the happiness of others. The development of this argument will inform the present claim that love entails holiness, that is, that devotion to God is an entailment of heart-felt loyal love for God that manifests as mercy for others. This understanding of love provides an affectionate, relational basis for thinking on the disciple's holiness.

Love in the gospel of Matthew. Several terms and concepts overlap in Matthew, including love, mercy, forgiveness, and compassion. The thesis unpacks this matrix first by focusing on the way that Jesus uses Hosea in Matthew, and then relating that to other key events and themes, including the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus' diagnosis of the religious leaders appears in Matthew 12:7: "And if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless." This citation of Hosea 6:6 tugs on a thread that brings with it the ball of yarn of Yahweh's complex relationship with his vacillating and unfaithful people throughout the narrative of the nation of Israel (and Judah) in the OT.[22]

Jesus is not simply talking about a duty to show kindness to the helpless instead of sacrificing; he is not just saying, "You Pharisees should have opened some food banks and let them run on the Sabbath." While this activity may be a legitimate, creative textual application, it does not capture the essence of Jesus' appeal. Hosea 6:6 is not just about duty; it is Yahweh's heartfelt expression as a forsaken and angry spouse of a cheating bride.

This sense is apparent from Yahweh's initial command to Hosea: "Go, take to yourself a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the LORD" (Hos 1:2 ESV). Israel's idolatry is vividly depicted

[22] This passage is significant in Matthew. Dale C. Allison observes that it is the "only scripture Matthew formally cites more than once [Matt 9:13, 12:7] both times without synoptic parallel." Dale C. Allison, *Studies in Matthew: Interpretation Past and Present* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 213.

as adultery against Yahweh. Yahweh loves his people like a husband loves his wife, and yet she is unfaithful, metaphorically expressed through sexual infidelity and pictured by Hosea's marriage to Gomer. Again, "And the LORD said to me, 'Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as the LORD loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods.'" (Hos 3:1). The problem with God's people is that they have a "spirit of whoredom" and "their deeds do not permit them to return to their God" (Hos 5:4). They are unfaithful in heart. "Whoredom" translates זְנוּנִים or fornication (cf. the LXX's *πορνεία*). Thus, "unlawful sexual intercourse" is a key metaphor for idolatry.[23] Significantly, because of this, "וְאֶת־יְהוָה לֹא יָדָעוּ"— "they do not know Yahweh."[24] Approaching Hosea 5:7, the theme of marital unfaithfulness continues: "בַּיהוָה בָּגָדוּ כִּי־בָנִים זָרִים יָלָדוּ," or, "They betrayed Yahweh because they begat alien children." This language again evokes marriage (Exod 21:8, Mal 2:14). In this context, the term בגד, "to deal treacherously . . . with a [spouse]" will prove important for understanding Hosea 6:6.[25] Here the sense is clear; Yahweh's wife cheated and had children with her lover.

Hence Yahweh responds in wrath as a lion who tears, while at the same time he pines for the return of his bride: "I will return again to my place, until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face, and in their distress earnestly seek me" (Hos 5:15 ESV). His people are immediately depicted as declaring just such a return for healing (Hos 6:1-2), desiring to "know" the Lord (Hos 6:3). But in a complex metaphorical contrast, even as the people describe the faithful appearing of Yahweh as being "sure as the dawn" (Hos 6:3), Yahweh retorts with the same metaphor to accuse their "חֶסֶד" as being as fickle as

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[23] See BDAG, s.v. "*πορνεία*" and *HALOT*, s.v. "זְנוּנִים" for the metaphorical application to idolatry in the Old Testament. See also Jas 4:4, "You adulterous people!"

[24] How could they know Yahweh, with the contrast between their unfaithful hearts and Yahweh's core identity as being faithful? See also Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 141-45.

[25] See *HALOT*, s.v. "בגד."

"the dew that goes away early," a striking image since dew evaporates under the rising sun: It is as if their very response to God's loyal love, love they acknowledge, is unfaithfulness. So, what will he do?

The judgment of Hosea 6:5—he will slay them through the prophetic word. Why this judgment? Because, Yahweh says, "I desire steadfast love (חֶסֶד) and not sacrifice, the knowledge (דַּעַת) of God rather than burnt offerings." They broke covenant with Yahweh.[26] The context here is marital unfaithfulness, and to say, "like Adam they broke my covenant" is as if to say, "they failed to show loyal love to me in our marriage, just like Adam failed to show loyal love to me as my adopted son." As confirmation, the covenant formula itself, "I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God" (Exod 6:7) is itself a play on an ANE marriage formula.[27] It is then no surprise to see this expression reversed in response to the marital betrayal of the people: "And the LORD said, "Call his name Not My People, for you are not my people, and I am not your God" (Hos 1:9 ESV). It fits the Yahweh' grief over how far his people, as his bride, have fallen from their "honeymoon" at Sinai (Jer 2:2).

So, in Matthew, when Jesus cites "I desire mercy," this means that Yahweh desired the loyal love of an affectionate bride in his marriage to his people, not mere rote ritual; loyal love for Yahweh expresses itself in treating others with justice, as the harlotry of Israel expressed in the opposite (Hosea 6:8-10). Notably, while it is common to interpret Sodom and Gomorrah's destruction merely in terms judgment on sexual behavior, the Prophets interpret their unfaithfulness in terms of social justice: "Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food,

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[26] Debates over the meaning of "like Adam" are not material to the point here. For a discussion of this topic, see Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 217-20.

[27] Soeck-Tae Sohn, "'I Will Be Your God and You Will Be My People': The Origin and Background of the Covenant Formula," in *Ki Baruch hu: ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Judaic Studies in Honor of Baruch A. Levine*, (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 364. It is helpful to add that the parallelism between "steadfast love" and its elaboration "knowledge of God" suggests that both terms are *Godward*; that is, they chiefly refer to the people's relationship to Yahweh.

and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy" (Ezek 16:49 ESV).[28] It is as if Jesus charges, "God wants your loyal love, but you show that you care nothing for God by how you condemn your neighbors and oppress them in their need." Jesus' interpretation of loyal love for God as betrayed in their mistreatment of the disciples indicates that love for God must be expressed in deeds of mercy for others. Hence ἔλεος in Hosea and Matthew is not exhausted by the English sense of mercy as leniency and compassion for the helpless. Jesus is saying, "You should have sought God's happiness by showing kindness for others."

Furthermore, the recollection of his "honeymoon" by Yahweh in Jeremiah 2:2 illustrates the semantic tension in translation well. The Hebrew reads, " זָכַרְתִּי לָךְ חֶסֶד נְעוּרַיִךְ אַהֲבַת כְּלוּלֹתָיִךְ לֶכְתֵּךְ אַחֲרַי בַּמִּדְבָּר בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא זְרוּעָה" or "I remember you, the loyal love (חֶסֶד) of your youth, the love (אַהֲבַת) of your betrothal." Here the Septuagint is striking: "*ἐμνήσθην ἐλέους νεότητός σου καὶ ἀγάπης τελειώσεώς σου*" or "I remember the mercy (ἔλεος) of your youth and the love of your maturity."[29] A few comments are in order. First, mercy is not an appropriate rendering here, and the "loyal love" of חֶסֶד should inform the emphasis of the Greek ἔλεος. Second, given that Hosea is playing in the same conceptual and terminological territory, and Matthew and the LXX for Hosea translate

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[28] The rhetorical function of this reference in Ezekiel is to "humiliate" Jerusalem by "class[ing] her with Sodom and Samaria," though "the particulars of Sodom's guilt seem to be inferred from Jerusalem's, rather than from the tradition in Gen 19" (G. A. Cooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel* [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937], 176-77). The is a "cutting indictment filled with irony since the name Sodom was not even spoken by Jews in Judah out of contempt for its evil example . . ." while Jerusalem's "moral depravity exceeded that of . . . even Sodom" (LaMar Eugene Cooper, *Ezekiel: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture*. The New American Commentary, vol. 17 [Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994], 175-76). Even if Ezekiel is overlaying Israel's treatment of the weakest on Sodom, this amplifies the present point, since Jerusalem's disregard for others in their prosperity is in this context would then be deemed worse than the conduct shown by Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 18. However, Yahweh "comes down" because of the "outcry" against Sodom (Gen 18:20-21), which may be the basis for the comparison, as ostensibly it is the weakest crying out under oppression of the powerful, surely exemplified in the "threatened homosexual attack upon the visitors" to Lot. Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 1-19*. Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 28. (Waco: Word Books, 1994), 248.

[29] Note the verb *μιμνήσκομαι* often takes the object of recollection in the genitive, as here (BDAG, s.v. "*μιμνήσκομαι*"); the English "I think *of* your youthful love" functions similarly, even though the English verb "remember" does not expect a genitive object.

חֶסֶד as ἔλεος, this is further warrant to understand that Jesus' citation is implying more than mere compassion for those in need, though not less. He is implying, as argued, that God wanted an intimate, loyal, loving partner in his people (Exod 29:46), and their "adultery" shows itself in how the Pharisees are treating the disciples. For Yahweh, ἔλεος is not compassion for God in his need, but loyal love as an affectionate bride or son. So, the term operates powerfully in Matthew by drawing mercy and compassion into loyal love for God.

This understanding is corroborated by the linguistic work of Christophe Rico and Gentry; Rico has shown that חֶסֶד and its translation into ἔλεος are examples of an established "nomenclature" that became normalized in Genesis and was used consistently through the LXX.[30] Thus, the semantic sense of ἔλεος, which would have been natural to the Greek hearer in Jesus' day, was not always the determining factor in the translation of the LXX; rather it was the established term for translating חֶסֶד. Understanding the relationship of these words illuminates Jesus' complex "reapplication" of the Israelites' original failure—to show loyal love for Yahweh—onto the Pharisees' lack of compassion for others. Their failure in "mercy" is a failure to "love" God. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum note that חֶסֶד often "refers to the obligation of the stronger party to help the weaker party" in a covenant relationship.[31] In this light, חֶסֶד entails expressing loyalty to

[30] On the translation philosophy of the LXX in relation to חֶסֶד and ἔλεος, see Christophe Rico and Peter J. Gentry, *The Mother of the Infant King – Isaiah 7:14: 'almâ and parthenos in the Biblical World—A Linguistic Perspective* (Eugene OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2020), in which the authors argue that "the first books of the Pentateuch were a sort of testing ground for translators. Whether they were aware of it or not, the interpreter of Genesis seems to have established, for a series of keywords of the Hebrew Bible, a nomenclature which would facilitate the task of other translators. The translation of the terms ḥesed and ḥēn admirably reflect this process of trial and error in the first pages of the Septuagint. In Genesis ḥesed would be rendered sometimes as eleos, . . . sometimes as eleêmosunê, . . . and in other contexts as dikaiosunê. Thereafter, the term would almost always have as its equivalent eleos or polueleos, except in the book of Proverbs. [References omitted]," n.p. For the original, see Christophe Rico, *La mère de l'Enfant-Roi, Isaïe 7, 14: "'Almâ" et "parthenos" dans l'univers biblique: un point de vue linguistique* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2013).

[31] Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 581.

God by helping weaker people, not helping God as if he were weaker. Mercy and loyal love naturally cohere.

Finally, in the depiction of Yahweh's glory to Moses in Exodus 34, the loyal love that is חֶסֶד is distinguished from compassionate mercy: " יְהוָה יְהוָה אֵל רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם וְרַב־חֶסֶד וֶאֱמֶת" or, "Yahweh, Yahweh, a God compassionate (LXX: ἐλεήμων) and gracious, rich in loyal love (LXX: πολυέλεος) and faithfulness." The Greek adjective ἐλεήμων carries the sense of "compassion to the needy" but חֶסֶד is rendered in the LXX with an apparent compound πολυέλεος or "much mercy."[32] Since חֶסֶד itself is broader than just compassion, it is surely correct to see the logic as conveying that God's compassion is a function of his character of loyal love and faithfulness (חֶסֶד וֶאֱמֶת). Of course, in a fallen world, mercy naturally becomes the dominating aspect of loyal love. But as seen, mercy does not exhaust loyal love (חֶסֶד) since people are to show loyal love, חֶסֶד and ἔλεος, to Yahweh himself. It is fitting that mercy appears strongly in Matthew's Sermon given that the audience is a sinful yet forgiven people.

In sum, Jesus diagnoses the Pharisees' problem as a lack of love for God, a love illustrated in the OT by joyful marriage (Jer 2:2). When Jesus affirms that the Great Commandment is, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind," joyful delight in God is in view. Given the way that unfaithfulness in Hosea is expressed in their abuse of neighbor, obedience to the commandment "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" should have been borne out of loyal love for God.

Two observations highlight this. First, Jesus warns, "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matt 10:37). Love for family or neighbor flows out of loyal

[32] BDAG, s.v. "ἐλεήμων" "Being concerned about people in their need, *merciful, sympathetic, compassionate.*" On πολυέλεος, the LSJ simply offers "very merciful" (s.v. "πολυέλεος").

love to God. Second, the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant (Matt 18:21-35) illustrates that mercy in compassion for the helpless is a chief expression of love for God. Love for God looks like love for other. Jesus is often moved with compassion (Matt 9:36; 14:14; 15:32).[33] It is striking that Jesus touched unclean people (e.g., Matt 8:3). Noticing this action is key to understanding Jesus' motivation: he did not act out of detached duty when he healed and fed and cared for people. He was moved in his "heart" (the English idiom) by their plight. This compassion is at work in Matthew 18:27: The master forgives "that servant" out of pity ("σπλαγχνισθεὶς δὲ ὁ κύριος τοῦ δούλου ἐκείνου ἀπέλυσεν αὐτὸν"). This parable is an elaboration of the call to forgiveness that lies in the heart of the Sermon, the Lord's Prayer. This forgiveness is the chief expression of the Golden Rule by forgiven sinners; it is the apex of the wholeness of Matthew 5:47, and will be examined later in the thesis.[34] So this parable, which unites so much in the book of Matthew, draws to significant heights the theme of mercy. The master showing mercy in forgiveness out of heart-compassion implies that the forgiven servant will reciprocate to his loving master by doing the same for others.

This discussion provides a foundation for understanding the biblical concept of idyllic love for God and other. It involves affection, compassion, loyalty, heart affection, and delight that looks like a desire for God and God's happiness like that of a bride longing for her husband. It overflows in love for others manifested as mercy for them in their need. Disciples are those who act with mercy to others out of care for the joy of God.[35] The disciple is part of a people in loving marriage to Yahweh. This marriage metaphor shows the contours of "love" in Matthew as Hosea 6:6 informs them. Such love

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[33] The Greek term is σπλαγχνίζομαι, and means "[I] have pity, feel sympathy" (BDAG, s.v. "σπλαγχνίζομαι").

[34] See Allison, *Studies in Matthew*, 610; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 250.

[35] Because God cares about the weak, it follows that seeking God's happiness would lead to caring about that which God cares about (Deut 10:17-19).

defies reduction: It includes duty, but also sentimentality. It includes deeds, but also feelings. It is not a contour-less abstract inclination for the good of an abstract humanity; it manifests as feelings and concrete mercy and forgiveness. This love entails holiness because this love wholly manifests devotion to God.

This diagnosis sheds light on the Pharisees' perception of holiness. Their ideas of righteousness and holiness, however they defined them, were divorced from the relational context of the loyal love of the "marriage" at the heart of the Sinai covenant. Thus, their notions were deeply defective. Hence Jesus says, "If you had known what this meant." So too at present, to understand holiness and love, it is imperative that the reader "go and learn what 'I desire mercy'" means.

Integrating 'Holiness—Devotedness' with Love

Once holiness is defined as devotion and love is understood as the matrix of joy in the beloved chiefly expressed in compassionate deeds, a parity between love and holiness becomes apparent. The present thesis is that the Sermon on the Mount implies that the disciple's holiness and love reciprocally entail each other because love comprehensively implements holiness. Viewed polymorphically, the devotion of holiness has different implementations depending on context. Sacrifices that are devoted to God are not "for" God because the sacrifices love him, but because someone has objectively purposed them. For people, holiness exists where this love is expressed because love concretizes devotion to God. When God devotes his people to himself (i.e., sanctifies them) he does so to obtain their devotion to him (holiness) in nothing other than love. For the disciple, a delight in God that expresses its care for God's happiness through mercy for others entails its abstraction in the "polymorphic" devotion of holiness; this love is the concrete implementation of the abstract concept of holiness. The disciple's devotion is an entailment of love which manifests as concern for the happiness of others out of love to God. Thus, holiness is not strictly something pursued in itself. One is only holy—devoted

to God—insofar as one loves God and others. With this in view, the thesis turns to consider representatives along the spectrum of love and holiness introduced above.

CHAPTER 3

WRESTLING WITH HOLINESS AND LOVE

Three Models for Relating Love and Holiness

"Not-a": Holiness, Not Love

The first view essentially takes holiness and love as items enumerated in a list. If the other views are "has-a" and "is-a," this view is closest to "not-a." R. C. Sproul is representative of this widespread contemporary and Reformed conservative understanding of holiness, as illustrated by his modern classic, The Holiness of God. To understand how this view looks at a disciple's holiness, divine holiness must be understood. This view is the most contrary to the one presented in this thesis. Its main defect is that it takes separation, a mere side effect of holiness, as its essence.[1]

R. C. Sproul. For Sproul holiness is otherness, not a devotedness that can appear to be otherness from the perspective of those that oppose the "object of devotion." Now, Sproul points to Moses seeking God's glory and summarizes the Christian goal as, "We want to see him face-to-face."[2] For Sproul this means that believers will see him "in His pure, divine essence. . . . Only after they are purified and totally sanctified in heaven will they have the capacity to gaze upon Him face-to-face." In other words, according to Sproul's understanding of holiness, believers will see God in his holiness only after they are holy. But despite the deep biblical connection between seeing God face-to-face and God's loyal love and faithfulness (Exod 33:18-19, 34:6-7), Sproul explicitly contrasts

[1] As an analogy, a married couple does not focus on their separation from other people, but rather upon their love for each other. "Separation" is a side effect of that love, not the main point.

[2] R. C. Sproul, *The Holiness of God* (Carol Stream: Tyndale House Publishers, 1998), 22-23.

holiness and love: “Only once is a characteristic of God mentioned three times in succession. The Bible says that God is holy, holy, holy. . . . The Bible never says that God is love, love, love.”[3] In a book on holiness, in speaking of the beatific vision Sproul makes no mention of the connection between mercy, steadfast love, and God’s glory. Sproul rather implies contrast: “The holy God is also a God of grace.”[4] For him, God’s holiness does not entail or give rise to grace. They are in tension. Sproul’s approach is in marked contrast to the other views noted in this thesis.

Moreover, while Sproul does reject the idea of holiness as “purity, free from every stain, wholly perfect and immaculate in every detail,” he stakes his claim by asserting, “The primary meaning of holy is ‘separate.’ It comes from an ancient word that means ‘to cut,’ or ‘to separate.’”[5] As noted, this etymology is irrelevant, and Sproul errs foundationally here, as this forms the basis for his entire argument: Holiness is to be “a cut above,” to be “other and above.”[6] Now for Sproul, holiness is not a moral and ethical quality. Rather, it is fundamentally a negative. It is separation. Sproul relates this holiness to love by saying, “His love is holy love,” analogous to, “His justice is holy justice.”[7] The claim is that his love is “other and above love.” “Holy” draws attention to transcendence, to the fact that God is different, “but it also calls attention to his absolute purity.”[8] It is precisely this understanding that leads him to juxtapose love and holiness: “The holy God is also a God of grace.” Sproul elaborates with Luther’s experience of discovering justification by faith, in that justification is “how a holy God expresses a holy love.”[9] The

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[3] Sproul, *The Holiness of God*, 26, emphasis added.

[4] Sproul, 30.

[5] Sproul, 37.

[6] Sproul, 38.

[7] Sproul, 40

[8] Sproul, 157.

[9] Sproul, 93.

significance for present purposes is the axis Sproul is using here: God experiences love (for the disciple) versus holiness (for himself) and the Gospel is how God sorts it out. The implication is that human beings are obviously not holy since they are not "other and above." God's transcendence is pitted against his immanence, his holiness against his love.

Indeed, for Sproul, Christians are holy because they are "set apart" and the disciple's holiness is fundamentally "nonconformity (Rom 12:1-2)" or a "life that is different."[10] The emphasis is on "transcendent out-of-it-ness" for to "be a saint means to be separated."[11] Progress in holiness is evidenced by growth in the fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23) in contrast to those of the sinful nature (Gal 5:19-21).[12] While holiness is evidenced by the fruit of the Spirit, no particular connection is made between love and holiness; love is merely another mark of obedience.[13] Because Sproul incorrectly defines holiness as "separate" and grows this into transcendent "other and aboveness," love and holiness are placed in fundamental opposition: Love draws together, while "holiness" separates.

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[10] Sproul, *The Holiness of God*,160. The difference is the negative "set apart from" versus the positive "devoted to." Sproul rightly rejects the idea that piety is about externals (162) and notes it is a matter of heart righteousness (162). He mentions "justice, mercy, and faithfulness" (Matt 23:23-24) but does not elaborate on its connection beyond the implication that it is elements of living separate from the world. The thesis will show that he seems well in line with John Calvin's understanding of sanctification here.

[11] Sproul, 163-64.

[12] Sproul, 167; Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008), 233. Hodge locates the crux of sanctification in the demand of Jesus for "everything" as defined by the radical call to love Jesus more than family (Matt 10:37,39): "The law of Christ demands entire devotion to Him" (236). However, the whole issue is framed by shadowboxing with Roman Catholic soteriology, and thus is more interested with what makes a work "good" than love's relationship to all "good works" and holiness. Having said that, the "universally obligatory commandment is that we should love God with all our heart and our neighbour as ourselves" (245). In Hodge's framing, perfection of holiness includes fulfilling duty, and duty includes first of all the commands to love. Hodge affirms John Wesley's statement, "Perfect is the loving God with all the heart, mind, soul, and strength. This implies that no wrong temper, none contrary to love, remains in the soul; and that all the thoughts, words, and actions, are governed by love" (254). Thus, Hodge grants that this means perfection "consists in entire conformity to the law" (254), which reveals that Hodge himself conceives of love as the summary all-encompassing statement for the obligation of the disciple.

[13] Sproul, 167.

Sproul's axis is misplaced because holiness is defined negatively.[14] When holiness is understood correctly, this tension can be reconstrued. It is not between God's separateness and love, but rather between God's love for his people and God's love for God—a love which is the expression of God's devotion, his holiness, to God.[15] From a "holiness as devotion" perspective, it is not that sinful humanity encounters a problem with God's otherness, but that it "tests" God's love by putting itself at odds with God's devotedness and love for God. Moreover, disciples are not holy just because they are separate. They are holy or devoted to God through love.

John Calvin. Although the idea of holiness as separation post-dates John Calvin, as the traditional forebear to Presbyterianism, he does not seem to do justice to positive holiness. Rather, sanctification was rooted in self-denial. As T. A. Noble summarizes, "Sanctification proceeds in believers as they practice self-denial. . . . When we deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and live soberly, righteously and with godliness . . . then these . . . 'constitute complete perfection.'"[16] In short, for Calvin, "Perfection of faith will express itself in wholehearted self-denial."[17] Calvin thus defines holiness negatively by emphasizing what is not, or from what one separates. Of course, self-denial

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[14] For a similar critique that holiness is misplaced along an axis of separation, see James E. Robson, "Forgotten Dimensions of Holiness," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 33, no. 2 (January 2011): 121-46, https://doi.org/10.1163/187122011X593000; the thesis examines his perspective shortly.

[15] This understanding is what T. A. Noble is getting at when he writes, 218: "The fullest possible understanding of what it means to say, 'God is holy,' is to say 'God is love.' (1 John 4:8)" (T. A. Noble, *Holy Trinity: Holy People: The Historic Doctrine of Christian Perfecting* [Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013], 218). To get Trinitarian for a moment, it can perhaps be said that each person of the Trinity loves the other and for any creature to do something that is not honoring the persons of the Trinity is to do something that invites wrath, not because God "is wrath" but because the persons of the Trinity love each other and cannot abide seeing the others treated shamefully. Or, each person of the Trinity is fully devoted to the others (i.e., holy) and that devotion, which for God is also expressed in love, is what sinners run afoul of. Perhaps one could say that it is not that sinners violate God's "holiness" so much as they run afoul of God's "holiness's love," to speak in compositional terms.

[16] Noble, *Holy Trinity*, 69.

[17] Noble, 69.

flowing from love for other over self is hardly objectionable. Doubtless this emphasis has rolled through history in the Reformed tradition. It is exemplified by Sproul.

But Calvin is more complex. His summary of the fruits of repentance are, "offices of piety toward God, and love toward men, general holiness and purity of life."[18] He summarizes the 2 tables of the Law with love for God (expressed chiefly in worship) and love for neighbor.[19] For Calvin, fear of God leads people to love others. In other words, he would surely agree that love for God means worship to God and love for neighbor. He even writes, "worship of God is the beginning and foundation of righteousness" and without this, it matters little what "righteousness" people might feign. Interpolating, this suggests that Calvin saw love for God as both the root of worship and love for neighbor. Now if worship comes from love for God (the Great Commandment), and righteousness is founded on worship, then righteousness is founded on love for God. Or in present terms, righteousness exists where love for God leads to love for neighbor. Calvin would say that it is all under "the rule of love."[20] This view entails that "if all powers of the soul are not directed to the love of God, there is a departure from obedience to the Law."[21] Thus Calvin helpfully does not make love a mere element in a set of obligations. Love is the root.

How does this relate to holiness for Calvin? Ostensibly, love must be the summary of anything in keeping with holiness. However, does holiness consist in love? Or is love a part of holiness? Calvin writes, "When mention is made of our union with God, let us remember that holiness must be the bond; not that by the merit of holiness we

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[18] Jean Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion,* ed. by Henry Beveridge (Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc, 1990), 395.

[19] Calvin, *Institutes,* 239.

[20] Calvin, 266. He applies this expression to Paul's summary of all commandments under love for neighbor.

[21] Calvin, 266.

come into communion with him . . . but because it greatly concerns his glory not to have any fellowship with wickedness and impurity."[22] Per Noble's assessment, this quote and its contextual explanation in terms of separation from sin suggests that Calvin thought of holiness in purity terms. However, it does imply some devotion to God, for mere separation does not unite one with God. Holiness must mean separation with God away from sin. Thus, love and holiness have a loose relationship: Love will be the duty and summary of a life that is separating from sin. It is surely fair to say that love is part of being holy for Calvin. Calvin can argue that God's promises and warnings are both meant to stir up love for God (and hate for sin).[23] Yet ultimately, Calvin's emphasis on self-denial has contributed to a sense of otherness in holiness, and thereby encouraged a Christian experience that reads like a cycle of despair and "humility and abasement" in failure, followed by fleeing to God.[24] Now, self-denial is biblical (Matt 16:24); the point here is that it ought to flow from love (Matt 7:12), not stand in as an anemic holiness.

Systematic Presentations: Grudem and Horton. Calvin's emphasis on self-denial may have worked its way into Wayne A. Grudem and Michael Scott Horton's systematic theologies, even as both hint at a closer connection between love and holiness. Separation yet remains primary. For Grudem, it is helpful to begin with divine holiness and love, which are categorized as communicable attributes of God, and only then turn to human sanctification in understanding the relationship of the disciple's holiness and love. Initially noteworthy is the enumeration of love, mercy, and holiness in a list of God's moral attributes.[25] Grudem defines love thusly: "God's love means that God eternally

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[22] Calvin, *Institutes*, 446.

[23] Calvin, 235.

[24] Calvin, 234-35.

[25] Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 186.

gives of himself to others," and it is in God's nature "to give of himself in order to bring about [the] blessing or good of others."[26] God is love (1 John 4:8) and the Triune persons each seek "to bring joy and happiness to the other two."[27] Grudem's overview of Trinitarian mutuality in love is helpful so far. The previous discussion of love comports well with his discussion, which can be applied to humans with the caveat that sin distorts one's love inward (so Augustine).

How does Grudem treat holiness? "God's holiness means that he is separated from sin and devoted to seeking his own honor."[28] He highlights both relational and moral aspects of separation from sin, as well as the positive element of devotion. While the latter is helpful, separation remains the primary lens: The tabernacle is firstly a place separate from the world; the sabbath day is firstly separate from the ordinary activities of the world.[29] In fairness, the sabbath and tabernacle are dedicated to God's service. No doubt he would affirm they have a positive purpose, perhaps even primarily. However, that is not the emphasis. When explaining that "God's holiness provides a pattern for his people to imitate" (Heb 12:10, 14), Grudem begins with separation from the influence of the world (2 Cor 6:14-18; 2 Cor 7:1; Rom 12:1).[30] The eschatological vision is of a world "separated from evil, purified from sin, and devoted to the service of God in true moral

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[26] Grudem, *Systematic Theology,* 199.

[27] Grudem, 199. This point is excellent.

[28] Grudem, 202.

[29] Peter J. Gentry's understanding of Grudem's reading is the same. Although Grudem defines God's holiness as "devoted to seeking his own honor," Gentry observes that "further reading yields a discussion that is traditional so that the use of the word 'devoted' in his opening sentence is confused with the notion of separation. Indeed, the systematic theologians of the last five hundred years have not been helpful in explaining what scripture teaches on this topic due to reliance on doubtful etymologies and connection of the term with moral purity and divine transcendence" (Peter J. Gentry, "No One Holy Like the Lord," *Midwestern Journal of Theology* 12, no. 1 [2013]: 17-38, https://www.academia.edu/26966746, 36-37). For example, a positive understanding of the Sabbath is that it is devoted to rest. Ironically, the Pharisees' fencing of the Sabbath as "separate" leads to the excoriating rebuke earlier noted in Matt 12.

[30] Grudem, 202-3.

purity."[31] Again, the lens of separation predominates and devotion is moral. While Grudem accepts that love is part of moral purity, he does not elaborate. On sanctification, Grudem states the "initial step . . . involves a definite break from the ruling power and love of sin." [32] Here again is conceptual conflation. Sanctification begins as separation from sin, even as it is "change in one's primary love."[33]

Noteworthy for this thesis is Grudem's interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount: "When Jesus commands us to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect (Matt 5:48), this simply shows that God's own absolute moral purity is the standard toward which we aim and the standard for which God holds us accountable."[34] Moreover, the disciple's obligation in sanctification is to "strive for holiness" by "patterns and habits of holiness" such as Bible reading, active trusting of God, and the corporate obligation to "stir up one another to love and good works."[35] But love is just a part, as evidenced by the list of motives, where the first is "a desire to please God and express our love to him" alongside many others.[36] It contrast, it is the contention of this thesis that the Sermon on the Mount implies, "A desire to express our love to God will appear in all motives, such as the desire to be a 'vessel for noble use' and 'the desires to avoid God's displeasure and discipline.'" Matthew 5:48 will be revisited, so it will suffice now to observe that Grudem's framing of moral purity puts the moral cart before the love horse. It is not so much wrong as it is an incomplete statement that fails to reckon with the structure of Jesus' critique of piety and purity apart from the wholeness of heart-love. Grudem would

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[31] Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 203.

[32] Grudem, 747, emphasis added.

[33] Grudem, 748.

[34] Grudem, 758.

[35] Grudem, 755-56.

[36] Grudem, 757.

surely place love in moral purity, but that is precisely the point at issue—when love is subsumed into purity, all the elements of what purity entails become equal to love and no longer exists as the essence and foundation and all-encompassing category in which moral purity itself is found. Grudem gives a reductionistic understanding of the Sermon that misses the point. On a more extreme level, the Pharisees decoupled love from purity, with disastrous results. Holiness as otherness treads in dangerous water.

Still in this camp, though blurring into the compositional view below, is Horton's systematic theology The Christian Faith. He also builds on the incorrect etymology for the Hebrew "holy" in "to cut or separate" and he summarizes God's holiness as "underscor[ing] the Creator-creature distinction." [37] Recalling Peter J. Gentry's example of God's meeting with Moses in Exodus 3, the thesis can highlight the difference in concepts of holiness by contrasting Horton's emphasis on the Creature-creature distinction (an "away-ness") with the Creature-creator communion of the holy ground (a "toward-ness"). However, Horton grants that "because of God's mercy, God's holiness not only highlights his difference from us; it also includes his movement toward us, binding us to him in covenant love. In this way, God makes us holy."[38] This striking statement is closer to this thesis, since he means that God's way of making disciples holy is covenant relationship defined by love. Hence, he adds, "That holiness which is inherent in God alone comes to characterize a relationship in which creatures are separated unto God, from sin and death."[39] So holiness is separation, but at least it is not merely separation. It includes separation to God.[40]

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[37] Michael Scott Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 268.

[38] Horton, *The Christian Faith*, 268.

[39] Horton, *The Christian Faith*, 268-69.

[40] Leeman, *The Church and the Surprising Offense*, 99-100.

Despite this, in writing of love as a communicable, he contrasts love with God's other moral attributes: "If God's love could trump his other moral attributes, then the cross represents the cruelest waste."[41] In context, Horton is answering the idea that "God is love" as controvertible, as if it implies, "love is God." Nevertheless, he starkly reveals that love is in opposition to holiness.[42] Elsewhere, in Horton, love and justice are in tension, and Horton's answer for dismissiveness toward judgment is to reverse the emphasis—love is made secondary to "conviction, judgment, and justification" in the Holy Spirit, who is "anything but passive or shy or vulnerable."[43] In short, he (inadvertently) implies that love may be a little less worthy of God.

Now in calling love the chief fruit of the Spirit, Horton interprets 1 John 4:8 to mean that "love is an attribute of the one divine essence . . . and each person of the Trinity expresses that love according to his personal attributes."[44] So is the disciple's love also like this, as one attribute among many? Concerning repentance, he frames it within a law-gospel dichotomy; the law convicts of sin, but faith runs to Christ, leading to hatred of sin and seeking righteousness, à la Calvin's cycle of despair.[45] But Horton endorses the cycle by framing repentance in terms of legalism: "our tendency even as believers is still

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[41] Horton, *The Christian Faith*, 266.

[42] Horton dismisses Stanley Grenz's speculation that "love alone [is] definitive of God's inner being" (Horton, *The Christian Faith*, 266 n 13). Without granting Grenz's argument, Horton may be polarizing in the opposite direction by reducing love to another attribute, and therefore precluding God's love from itself being foundational for God's holiness. For present purposes, once divine love is omitted from divine holiness, it means that for the disciple, love is merely another element of moral obligation. But such compartmentalization is counter to the Sermon on the Mount's holistic conception of love and the implication of love for holiness.

[43] The dichotomy is striking: "Taking up residence in the earthly temple, the Spirit—wrapped in his glory cloud—remained a witness for and against Israel. *Hovering, covering, filling*: these are the 'strong verbs' associated with the Spirit's work in history, and these verbs do greater justice to the personhood of the Spirit than 'bond of love.' The Spirit is anything but passive or shy or vulnerable, much less simply a benign comforter. He is the sovereign Lord who executes conviction, judgment, and justification." Michael Scott Horton, *Rediscovering the Holy Spirit: God's Perfecting Presence in Creation, Redemption, and Everyday Life* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017), 110.

[44] Horton, *Rediscovering the Holy Spirit*, 222-23 (emphasis original).

[45] Horton, *The Christian Faith*, 579.

to turn back toward ourselves and trust in our repentance" and so "we must be driven again to despair of our righteousness."[46]

At the risk of being overly critical of Horton, note that he illustrates an unhelpful conception arising from a misalignment of love and holiness. Since love is not the whole arena in which moral purity plays out, moral acts become dangerous lures for self-righteous legalism. But this is deeply at odds with discipleship in the Sermon on the Mount. Horton's view is problematic because disciples who feel guilty for loving out of fear of self-righteousness will surely fail to show loyalty to God by loving others, not only because they are sinful and imperfect lovers, but because they flog themselves for taking the pleasure in loving that is to love. By definition, love rightly brings pleasure. Self-denial that calls this sin and theology that fears self-righteousness in love undercuts love at its heart by cultivating people who feel too guilty to love even right objects. Loyal love to God as pleasure in the good of another can hardly exist. This concept of repentance, because it views as legalism the happiness and joy and security properly experienced through love, will undermine the love that must characterize all of discipleship.[47] Thus, holiness—devotion to God—is undermined by an experiential guilt-renewal, unassured-assured ping-pong in the disciple's life.[48] But as argued presently, if love were the whole arena of discipleship, an act of moral goodness in which pleasure is found can be conceived of as obeying Jesus, as discipleship, as repentance, because that

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[46] Horton, *The Christian Faith*, 579.

[47] The Sermon on the Mount teaches that love shown in merciful deeds is the heart of discipleship. "Merciful action is the concrete expression of loyalty to God." W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, The International Critical Commentary (New York: T&T Clark, 1988), 454-55.

[48] John R. W. Stott is representative of this polarity: "the law sends us to Christ to be justified, and Christ sends us back to the law to be sanctified" (John R. W. Stott, *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount*. The Bible Speaks Today [Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1985], 36). Scot McKnight offers an insightful critique of Stott's assertion: "This problem is created by tidy systematic formulas, and I appreciate the nuances and discussions and light that systematicians sometimes shed, but in this case something has gone terribly wrong. The immediate problem is that the debate often assumes that law demands performance while the gospel expects only faith" Scot McKnight, *Sermon on the Mount*. The Story of God Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 53-54.

act would instantiate the Great Commandments. Holiness would be found there because in that very act the disciple implements true devotion to God. At the root of the matter, in this "not-a" view, love is categorically in tension with an incorrect notion of holiness as separation, because love draws together, while this kind of holiness drives apart. This misalignment impedes the fruit-bearing of a love that implements holiness.

"Has-a": Holiness Has Love

James E. Robson. A better perspective is that of a compositional relationship—the notion that holiness "has" love. Again, language often functions metaphorically, and diverse expressions are not necessarily mutually exclusive, although the "not-a" view illustrates that some models are built on shaky foundations. But turning to the compositional view, James E. Robson represents an insightful articulation. He argues that love is an aspect or dimension of holiness itself.[49] He writes,

> It is my contention that this sense of separation, represented cultically in terms of ritual and sometimes literal separation and ethically in terms of metaphorical moral separation, should not be allowed to override another dimension of YHWH's holiness, holiness as love.[50]

While some assert that God dwells with Israel in spite of his holiness—akin to the "not-a" view above[51]—Robson aims to change this "'in spite of' to 'because of.'"[52]

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[49] Robson, "Forgotten Dimensions," 121.

[50] Robson, 131.

[51] Here Robson spars with Richard A. Muller's view, which in the framing of this thesis would be a "not-a" perspective, and he notes, "Although Muller's outlining of Reformed Orthodoxy articulates the 'positive' dimension of divine holiness (esp. p. 502), as well as moral and essential separation, the consequences of divine holiness for God focus only on the punitive dimension" Robson, "Forgotten Dimensions," 130 n 32. See Richard A. Muller, *The Divine Essence and Attributes,* Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 497-502.

[52] "There is something of the unapproachable about the holy. Nevertheless, in later literature God is also the Holy One of Israel (frequently so in Isaiah), who in spite of his holiness dwells with Israel . . . I want to change the 'in spite of' to 'in spite of and because of.'" Robson, 142.

His complex treatment points to a few challenges. First, "holiness is never actually defined in the Old Testament."[53] Ostensibly, this may explain why holiness is subject to so much theological backfilling and identification with ideas that are associated with it, such as (ironically) the polar notions of love or separation.[54]

Second, Robson discusses the problems with analogies between human and divine holiness. He writes that if "'love your neighbour' is an expression of human holiness, and human holiness is analogous to divine holiness, then we would expect to find YHWH's love to be an expression of his holiness." [55] However, some aspects of holiness in Leviticus seem untransferable. Some scholars have argued against this analogy and imitation of God as a foundation for OT ethics, including Walter J. Houston: "To speak of something being 'holy' to a deity is to say that it is dedicated to it, caught up into the divine sphere and strictly separated from what is not, and especially from what is unclean. Holiness . . . has two dimensions: a vertical one, dedication to the deity, and a horizontal one, separation from all else."[56] Robson takes issue with Houston. He grants the presence of similarity and dissimilarity, with an obvious example being the command not to avenge unlike God (to be holy), contrasted with the command to love like God (to be holy). But in rejoinder, Robson observes something ironic about Houston's argument. He states, "To call YHWH holy, who is a deity, expresses both his separateness from the profane world and from the unclean, and his transcendence and unapproachability in

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[53] Robson, "Forgotten Dimensions," 125. The order presented here is different from Robson's.

[54] The need for clarity is apparent given that different groups can identify holiness with virtually *opposite* ideas.

[55] Robson, 124. He concludes, "In summary, then, there are three main problems with grounding investigations into God's holiness from the conjunction of 'Be holy, for I, YHWH your God, am holy' and 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' First, Lev 19 contains many injunctions that cannot be predicated of YHWH; secondly, there is a sense in which holiness is inherently and uniquely a property of YHWH alone; thirdly, the holiness that is in view seems to be, from the parallel in Lev 20:26, essentially ritual rather than moral, even if there are moral dimensions" Robson, 127-28.

[56] Walter J. Houston, "The Character of YHWH and the Ethics of the Old Testament: Is *Imitatio Dei* Appropriate?" *The Journal of Theological Studies* 58, no. 1 (April 2007): 1-25, https://doi.org/10.1093/jts/fll036, 9.

himself," and then observes that even here there is analogy, for the call to love neighbor could be an "expression of [Israel's] separation (Lev 20:25-26)" from the nations so that Israel's holiness is "like YHWH's holiness in separation, rather than in love."[57] In short, they even imitate God's separation by a love which makes them distinct.

Thus, Robson is unsatisfied with separation "as an 'exclusive and exhaustive' explanatory principle," and argues that it forgets a more important dimension of "holiness as love." He cautions that a focus on ritual and moral separation risks giving "the impression that YHWH's holiness is something forbidding, something before which a person cannot stand, something which makes entry in YHWH's presence inherently impossible."[58]

Because Robson grants separation as an intrinsic element of holiness, his view is classified here as "compositional." Holiness is comprised of parts, including love and separation. But Robson also detects the polarity of these ideas, illustrated with the spectrum of views above, while working to reconcile them. Helpfully, God's "love will be seen to be predicated upon or grounded in his holiness."[59] He argues that love appears in three aspects of OT holiness: "holiness and self-disclosure, holiness and saving activity, and holiness and presence."[60] Two passages illustrate Robson's argument. First, in Isaiah 6, which seems transcendent, "holiness reaches out and purifies Isaiah's lips."[61]

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[57] Robson, "Forgotten Dimensions," 130; Houston, "The Character of YHWH," 9.

[58] Robson, 131.

[59] Robson, 131.

[60] For the first, the central element in God's self-disclosure is the "character of YHWH as holy, as compassionate, as deliverer" and this self-disclosure comes with new association in the narrative that Yahweh is holy, pictured chiefly at the burning bush (Robson, "Forgotten Dimensions," 132-33). In short, "the holiness of YHWH entails self-disclosure and compassionate concern" (134). Holiness entailing saving activity is illustrated well in Isaiah, especially in the cleansing of Isaiah himself in the vision of God's holiness in chapter 6, where "holiness reaches out and purifies Isaiah's lips" (140), and in chapters 40-55 where it is the "Holy One of Israel" who is "linked with YHWH's saving activity" (138). Finally, Robson wants to adjust the idea that Yahweh dwells with his people "*in spite of*" his holiness to "because of" his holiness (142) and points to numerous examples of blessing and benefit centralized on Yahweh's holiness (145).

[61] Robson, 140.

Second, in Isaiah 57:15, "one of the principal marks of God's 'high' holiness is his delight in dwelling with the lowly and the contrite."[62] Robson summarizes thusly, rejecting what this thesis calls the "not-a" view:

> Holiness as something proper to God has often been located along the axis of separation and moral perfection, expressed in unapproachability, on the one hand, and judgement against sin, on the other. These are important, and should not be lost. But from within divine holiness, rather than from a separate source, comes YHWH's love, a love expressed in self-disclosure, in saving activity, in a desire-to-be-in-right-relationship.[63]

The cash value for discipleship is that like God, human holiness "is not to be found in separation in the sense of withdrawal . . . but in distinctiveness of lifestyle" that includes mercy—in short, "You shall be holy as I am means you shall love your neighbor as yourself."[64] Robson paves a helpful path by arguing that God acts in love not "in spite of" but "because of" holiness.[65] But he still grants separation as central and intrinsic to holiness, in contrast to holiness as the "toward-ness" of devotion.

The view articulated in this thesis is in the same spirit as Robson's and is offered as a complementary model. One difference is that holiness is understood positively in this thesis. It is not conceived of as having separation as an intrinsic part;

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[62] Robson, "Forgotten Dimensions," 145. He elsewhere writes, "[Isaiah's exclamation of lostness] is quite natural, especially in the light of his understanding of divine holiness as revealed in 5:16. Uniquely designated as holy by a threefold exclamation, YHWH's holiness exhibits moral distance from humanity. What is striking, though, is what happens next. For that same holiness reaches out and purifies Isaiah's lips, symbolizing the removal of sin and atonement for the whole person. Holiness is not inherently inimical to cleansing, atonement, forgiveness, purification, although punishment and judgement is in order for a people of unclean lips (cf. vv. 8-10). Indeed it is holiness that has graciously reached out and enabled all this to happen" (140). See also David G. Peterson, *Possessed by God: A New Testament Theology of Sanctification and Holiness*, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, 1995): "The paradox of holiness is that God acts to judge everything that is unholy and yet provides a way of cleansing and sanctification for sinners" (19).

[63] Robson, 146.

[64] Holiness "is not to be found in separation in the sense of withdrawal, and certainly not in moral prudishness, but in distinctiveness of lifestyle that does not eclipse compassionate and open-hearted reaching out to those who are not fit for God's presence." Robson, "Forgotten Dimensions," 146.

[65] "Though YHWH's holy presence is awesome and potentially dangerous (cf. Lev 10:1-3), a moment's thought should remind us that this very presence is principally the source of blessing and life for his people. . . . there is something attractive about holiness" (Robson, "Forgotten Dimensions," 143-44). Reflecting on Psalm 51, John G. Gammie observes, "The presence of holiness does not frighten," and "whenever a person has been led to honest self-examination, that person has already begun to enter into the presence of holiness" Gammie, *Holiness in Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989) 106, 198.

rather separation is a situational side effect. An analogy, discussed below, is the wrath of God; it is the situational response of his goodness to evil.[66] So too, separation can be devotion's response, a by-product of delight in God that recoils at displeasuring God. But this thesis is not that holiness has separation, but that love entails holiness and love's allegiance can rise in hostility or separation when the beloved is threatened. It is not so much that the disciple's holiness extends out in love, as Robson suggests, but that love implements the more abstract concept of holiness via deeds of mercy. In Robson's terms, could not one just as easily speak of love as "having" holiness as a "dimension"? However, he has provided a helpful model that enables a positive alignment between love and holiness. This thesis shares this spirit: To move from a model of "love in spite of holiness" to one of "love because of holiness."

"Is-a": Holiness Is Love

A third view is that holiness and love are deeply interwoven in essentially an identity relationship. This view has deep historical roots within Christianity, embedded by no less than Augustine and carried through Thomas Aquinas, for whom love was an all-encompassing element of God and Christianity.[67] Diverse successors include both Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley. The language in this perspective conveys a strong connection that blurs holiness and love into the same reality. As with the "has-a" view, this is helpful as a metaphor, but nevertheless, that the "not-a" camp does not speak thusly highlights a large difference in understanding.

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[66] See Aquinas's insight into the relationship of love and hate: "Now hatred of a person's evil is equivalent to love of his good" Aquinas, Thomas, St. *Summa Theologica: Volume III - Part II, Second Section* (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2007), 1284.

[67] Noble, *Holy Trinity*, 59-60, 66, following Aquinas: "'Perfection' must be understood in terms of love, *caritas*, particularly love of God" and in the degrees of perfection, the second way it is possible now is "when human affection excludes everything which hinders our being wholly in love with God" (66).

Jonathan Edwards. Beginning with the Calvinist side, Jonathan Edwards represents a thoughtful articulation of a strong identity relationship between love and holiness. He reflected on the relationship of God's love and holiness, and in arguing that the Holy Spirit is God's love personified, made a striking statement that identifies God's love with his holiness, and the creature's love with the creature's holiness:

> Both the holiness and happiness of the Godhead consists in this love. As we have already proved, all creature holiness consists essentially and summarily in love to God and love to other creatures; so does the holiness of God consist in His love, especially in the perfect and intimate union and love there is between the Father and the Son.[68]

As noted, the strength of alignment between love and holiness here enables a strong analogy between God and humanity for both ideas. For Edwards, God's holiness means he "regards" everything as appropriate to its worthiness, and since love is the highest "regarding," God's holiness must mean that God loves God.[69] For Edwards, holiness and love are, as Jonathan Leeman puts it, two "perspectives on the same reality"; from the inside, the reality is love, but from the outside, the reality is holiness, or "the fact that he is purely and undistractedly devoted to loving his own glory."[70] Of course, this is not far from the present contention that love implements holiness. Edwards builds his argument by first articulating that a disciple's holiness is "summarily" love for God and other, and then he extends this to the Godhead.

In contrast to many, Edwards sought a holistic concept of holiness, an endeavor that drove him to reflect on the concept of divine love:

> 'Tis common for us to speak of various graces of the Spirit of God as though they were so many different principles of holiness, and to call them by distinct names as

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[68] Jonathan Edwards, *Treatise on Grace* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1971), 63.

[69] Jonathan Leeman, *The Church and the Surprising Offense of God's Love: Reintroducing the Doctrines of Church Membership and Discipline* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2010), 99.

[70] Leeman, *The Church and the Surprising Offense,* 99-100; for Edwards' argument that God pursues the good of the creature out of his "supreme regard to *himself,"* see Jonathan Edwards, "Dissertation on the End for Which God Created The World," in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards,* 1:94-140 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005), 120.

> such,—repentance, humility, resignation, thankfulness, &c. But we err if we imagine that these in their first source and root in the heart are properly distinct principles.[71]

He argues that there is one singular "fountain of grace" within believers and that "the one common essence" or "principle" in "the soul of the saints, which is the grand Christian virtue and which is the soul and essence and summary comprehension of all grace, is a principle of Divine Love."[72] Since Jesus taught that all duty is summed up in love, so is all grace.[73] And, Edwards found the "infinite holiness" of God in the "Holy" Spirit—the Spirit is God's holiness.[74] Those familiar with Edwards' pneumatology will immediately see the connection, as he argues in "An Unpublished Essay on the Trinity" that the Spirit is the Father and Son's love personified.[75] For the Spirit to be God's love and holiness personified is to identify these at a Triune level. For Edwards, "the holiness and happiness of the Godhead consists in . . . love."[76] Or again, the "holiness of God consists in that Divine Love in which the essence of God really flows out."[77] Hence, a close conceptualizing of love and holiness enables tight alignment between holiness and love

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[71] Edwards, *Treatise on Grace,* 39-40.

[72] Edwards, *Treatise on Grace,* 40.

[73] Relevant for present purposes, Edwards finds this teaching in Matthew: "If we take the Law in a yet more extensive sense for the whole written Word of God, the Scripture still teaches us that Love is the sum of what is required in it. [Thus] Matt. xxii. 40. There Christ teaches us that on these two precepts of loving God and our neighbor hang all the Law and the Prophets,—that is, all the written Word of God. So that what was called the Law and the Prophets was the whole written Word of God that was then extant. The Scripture teacher this of each table of the Law in particular" Edwards, *Treatise on Grace,* 41.

[74] "The holiness of the Father and the Son does consist in breathing forth this Spirit" Edwards, *Treatise on Grace,* 64.

[75] "The Scripture seems in many places to speak of love in Christians as if it were the same with the Spirit of God in them" and "God loves the understanding and that understanding also flows out in love so that the Divine understanding is in the Deity subsisting in love. It is not a blind love" Jonathan Edwards, *Writings on the Trinity, Grace, and Faith,* The Works of Jonathan Edwards vol 21, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 125, 133. Edwards states, "I believe the whole Divine essence does truly and distinctly subsist both in the Divine idea and Divine love, and that each of them are properly distinct Persons". Steven M. Studebaker, and Robert W. Caldwell, *The Trinitarian Theology of Jonathan Edwards: Text, Context, and Application* (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2012), 32, 37. In short, the Holy Spirit is the love of God personified.

[76] Edwards, *Treatise on Grace*, 63.

[77] Edwards, *Treatise on Grace*, 73.

for God and disciple. This alignment is seen precisely with Edwards. Thus, he can conclude:

> We have shewn that the holiness and happiness of God consist in the Holy Spirit; and so the holiness and happiness of every holy or truly virtuous creature of God, in heaven or earth, consist in the communion of the same Spirit.[78]

Edwards' theology carries him about in a way that almost leaves behind the lexical data. Or, at the very least, rightly or not, he has constructed a Trinitarian superstructure that backfills holiness with the biblical emphasis on love. But what is helpful is the concern for a holistic and positive understanding of holiness, which he develops with profundity of insight. He offers a model that stands in polar contrast to that of the "not-a" view, such as Sproul. The idea that the same reality appears externally as holiness and internally as love is the closest to the present thesis that love comprehensively implements the disciple's devotion. A key difference is that this thesis maintains the semantics of love and holiness; love is not holiness.

T. A. Noble and John Wesley. Turning to a Wesleyan perspective, T. A. Noble presents an even-handed recontextualizing of John Wesley's understanding of Christian sanctification (i.e., holiness) as perfection in love.[79] Notably, he is self-critical

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[78] Edwards, *Treatise on Grace*, 77-78.

[79] Noble, *Holy Trinity*. Two observations are worth noting. First, there has been a recent renaissance in writing on John Wesley's intellectual contribution, with the presence of "two main trends . . . the Reformed gives pride of place to Wesley's teaching of justification by faith; the Arminian privileges Wesley's emphasis on sanctification." Edgardo Antonio Colón-Emeric, *Wesley, Aquinas, and Christian Perfection: An Ecumenical Dialogue* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009), 12, following Harald Gustaf Åke Lindström, *Wesley and Sanctification* (London: Epworth Press, 1956), which Colón-Emeric calls the "classic study of perfection in Wesley" (*Wesley, Aquinas, and Christian Perfection,* 11). Second, Colón-Emeric draws attention to "three discrete phases" commonly understood by Wesleyan scholarship, which reflect in his thinking on perfection (12). Originally, he emphasized "attaining holiness in order to be acceptable to God." From here he develops an emphasis on "the primacy of grace in justification," and finally, the "'late Wesley' (1765-1791) . . . integrated the primacy of grace with the necessity of human response in a mature synthesis that overcame the dialectical tensions of his middle period" (12). Noble's treatment aligns with Colón-Emeric's focus on this latter Wesley. The thesis will primarily look at Noble and Wesley through his lens as an *illustration* because he asks a similar question to that of this thesis, namely, *how do holiness and love relate?* This question is slightly different than *what is perfection in Wesley's thinking*, because the latter does not necessarily question the nature of an understanding of "holiness" itself, as Colón-Emeric evidence. See, for example, his statement that "it is important to affirm that Wesley strongly links God's love with his holiness. God's love is a holy love" (30). Underlying this appears to be the idea that holiness is a moral qualifier that can apply to love (and everything else), even an

of his own tradition. His goal is to reestablish a positive, biblical view of Christian holiness from the atonement, incarnation, and Trinity.[80] He perceptively asks, "What constitutes the holiness of God? Is the Triune God 'holy' because he is separate from sin and sinners? . . . 'Is God eternally holy?'" and answers thusly:

> The doctrine of the Trinity suggests that the eternal holiness of God consists in the fact that he is a communion of interpersonal love. The fullest possible understanding of what it means to say, 'God is holy,' is to say 'God is love.' (1 John 4:8).[81]

Immediately, it is evident how this view—like Robson and Edwards—is a marked divide from Sproul, who wrote that while the Bible says, "holy, holy, holy," it never says "love, love, love." For Edwards and Wesley, "holy, holy, holy" is akin to saying, "God loves God, God loves God, God loves God!"

Noble offers a relevant hermeneutical insight. He suggests that the Reformed tradition, post-Luther and Calvin, "reverted" to a scholastic theological method that focused on distinctions and failed to approach theology holistically.[82] For present purposes, this gave life to the problem of abstract fragmenting and categorizing of theological concepts apart from the whole, which reinforced a primarily negative

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"otherness," which is a different model than that at present, where holiness is a devotedness that has the form of love for God manifesting in compassionate deeds for others. Thus Colón-Emeric can write, "The words and deeds of the perfected must remain *above reproach and truly holy.*" (60, emphasis added).

[80] Noble, *Holy Trinity,* 5.

[81] Noble, 218.

[82] On the consequences of a scholastic approach, Noble writes, "This implies the rejection of a second style of theology also exemplified by Aquinas, the scholastic model first formulated in the classrooms of the Middle Ages. In this style, doctrines were strung out in distinct, separate articles of *foci*, like washing on a line, as R. P. C. Hanson expressed it (R. P. C. Hanson, *The Attractiveness of God; Essays in Christian Doctrine* [Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1973], 47). Instead, we need to aim at a holistic theology where, rather than a series of distinct doctrines conceived of almost as separate compartments of truth, the emphasis is on *connections* rather than *distinctions*" (Noble, *Holy Trinity,* 19). He continues, "The Holy Spirit is placed in one article and eschatology in another. This whole way of setting out doctrine, which we have inherited from the Reformation and from the post-Reformation period of scholastic Protestant orthodoxy, encourages a scholastic mindset. It encourages us to parcel out Christian theology into tidy boxes and to elaborate fussy distinctions and rigid categories of thought that perhaps have more to do with tidy lecture notes than with real theology!" He calls this a "failure to grasp Christian theology as a whole." Noble, *Holy Trinity,* 183.

understanding of holiness.[83] Noble implies that this influenced those who articulate what is here called a "not-a" view. Sproul, for example, is traditional Presbyterian, and represents the direct descendants of such "scholastic" Reformed thinking. His view is an apt illustration of Noble's point—that this approach fails to integrate love and holiness, and results in an introspective tendency in holiness, almost to the exclusion of what should be a strongly external focus on God and others.[84] It seems reasonable that holiness and love have endured a compartmentalization as evidenced quintessentially by Sproul, given that the Reformed tradition did not integrate a doctrine of perfection into sanctification, instead adopting a kind of sanctification that was primarily negative, and a matter of purity. This compartmentalization parallels the "germ theory purity" of the Pharisees, discussed below.

Wesley's understanding of sanctification was "love excluding sin."[85] Given his deep respect for the Bible, he used the biblical language of "perfection," which later degraded into sinlessness in the Wesleyan tradition.[86] This issue aside, aspects of Wesley's view are insightful. First, Wesley's idea of "perfect" is helpfully expressed in today's terms as "perfecting," which emphasizes the teleological and affirms that it is not

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[83] He also lays out a general critique that applies beyond the Reformed tradition but is definitionally embodied by R. C. Sproul: "'Holiness' tends to be interpreted as 'other-worldliness.'" Noble, *Holy Trinity,* 44.

[84] "One major tradition in the church has generally rejected 'perfection.' It is that strain of Augustinian thought which issued in two of the great traditions of the Reformation, the Lutheran and the Calvinist or Reformed . . . [they] that have generally rejected the idea of perfection have not only often assumed that it must mean absolute, sinless perfection, but have also been deeply colored by Augustine's doctrine of original sin. The Lutheran tradition (even more than the Reformed) has been motivated by a deep fear that any such positive account or advance in Christian sanctification will compromise the great Reformation assertion of justification by faith alone." Noble, *Holy Trinity,* 24.

[85] Noble, *Holy Trinity,* 86. On Wesley as a "man of one book," see Noble, *Holy Trinity,* 3. This description aligns with the analysis of Colón-Emeric, who notes that perfection "has both a negative and a positive aspect" and "entire sanctification entails both freedom *from* sin and freedom *for* love" (Colón-Emeric,*Wesley, Aquinas, and Christian Perfection,* 25). Moreover, "To be perfect . . . is to be perfect in love," which is "fitting" as a "participation in the very nature of the God who is love" (30).

[86] Noble, *Holy Trinity,* 22-23. Noble rejects this idea and notes that, ironically, Wesley did as well.

attained in this life. The essence of this perfecting is love—there is no "perfection" except "perfect love," or better, "perfecting" love.[87]

Wesley's perspective will sound familiar to those familiar with the Sermon on the Mount. First, at the center of his idea is an undivided heart: At the core of perfection (τέλειος) is a wholeness or completion that entails being "undivided in thinking and willing;" in short, there exists a "purity of intention."[88] Here Wesley is deeply Augustinian.[89] The nature of this "single intention" is to be sanctified fully; the "mature Christian is no longer of a divided mind or heart" because he or she loves "God and his perfect will whole-heartedly."[90] Perfection is the pure motivation of love for God and others, in contrast to a self-centered mindset. Perfection "is not the outward legalistic observation of rules and regulations: it is the internal motivation of a heart filled with love," or as Kent Brower puts it, "single-minded devotion to God and love of

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[87] Noble, *Holy Trinity,* 44: "For Wesley, Christians could be perfect in one way only, perfect in *love*." He later writes: "The prophetic office of Christ, understood as his revelation of the love of God on the cross, can give us a basis for a doctrine of Christian 'perfection' as perfect love. Here is the aspect of Christian holiness as relational, and if Christian perfection is to be understood not just in a negative way as purification from sin, but in a positive way as 'perfection in love,' then the revelation of the love of God in the atonement must be central. This view of perfection coheres with Wesley's whole approach, which, as Wynkoop reminded us, was 'A Theology of Love,'" 156, citing Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love: The Dynamic of Wesleyanism* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1972).

[88] Noble, *Holy Trinity,* 28, following John N. Oswalt: "The *leb shalem* refers to someone who is undivided in thinking and willing, having an undivided heart of single-minded devotion to God." John N. Oswalt, *Called to Be Holy: A Biblical Perspective* (Nappanee, IN: Evangel, 1999), 46-52, and Kierkegaard "Purity of heart is to will one thing." Noble, *Holy Trinity,* 23.

[89] "Gertrude Gillette notes that Augustine expresses the concept of the resulting purity of heart in a number of ways: 'simplicity of heart,' a 'clean heart,' and a 'single' or 'simple heart.' It is an inner disposition of the heart focused on God alone . . . But what kind of faith makes the heart pure? Augustine quoted Paul: 'faith working through love' (Gal 5:6)" (Noble, *Holy Trinity,* 61, citing Gillette). So too Colón-Emeric: "For Wesley, as for Augustine, we are made for God." *Wesley, Aquinas, and Christian Perfection,* 14.

[90] "The whole thought-life is then 'integrated,' that is to say, has *integrity* or *unity,* around this one dominating desire: to please God. This is not final 'perfection,' but it is a new level in the believer's 'perfecting'" (Noble, *Holy Trinity,* 195). Colón-Emeric observes that the "distinguishing mark of the perfect person is the love of God that has been shed into the heart by the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom 5:5)" entailing that the "perfect acts with a single eye and a pure heart" (Colón-Emeric, *Wesley, Aquinas, and Christian Perfection,* 60-61). God's love is "the source" and "the goal" of the believer's love, and "to be made perfect in love means to be ruled by love so that everything we do in this life is motivated by and for the sake of love" (32). While Colón-Emeric does not draw this conclusion, such a summary itself entails that a believer's holiness can consist in nothing other than love, as highlighted by Noble.

neighbor."[91] Perfecting in love means "living in a way which is centered on God and neighbor," and disciples will "love nothing that conflicts with their love of God," in contrast to a "self-absorbed interiority" that appears in some other approaches to sanctification.[92] Noble summarizes eloquently:

> In itself, the phrase has something of a negative ring since, rightly or wrongly, 'sanctify' tends to be equated with 'purify,' and seems to prompt the question: from what are we purified or sanctified? But in Wesley's thinking, the positive is primary. For him, as Mildred Bangs Wynkoop saw so clearly, holiness is not primarily a negative, freedom or purification from sin, but a positive. Like Paul and John, Nyssen and Augustine, Bernard and Aquinas, his understanding of Christian holiness was a 'theology of love.' If 'entire' sanctification was understood as purification from 'inbred sin,' then it is only a means to an end: the end is that we should be filled with the love of God. Wesley's hermeneutic is not so much a 'hermeneutic of sin' or cleansing from sin: it is rather a 'hermeneutic of love.' It is best understood in his key phrase that gives priority to the positive: 'Love excluding sin.'[93]

Sanctification is to fill the disciple's heart with love.[94] With the idea that perfection is the possession of an undivided heart concerned with pleasing God and loving neighbor, like Edwards, for Wesley, the disciple's holiness must "summarily" be love.

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[91] Noble, *Holy Trinity*, 30, following Kent E. Brower, *Holiness in the Gospels* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill, 2005), 125. Note that Noble is critical of those that turn holiness *inward*. "Christian 'perfection' down through the centuries of the church has therefore been understood *not* as a self-centered, inwardly turned search for spiritual achievement or satisfaction, but as outwardly turned *love.* The great teachers of Christian spirituality define it in terms of the great commandments, loving God with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength, and loving our neighbors as ourselves" (Noble, *Holy Trinity,* 24). And again, he simultaneously jabs at Wesleyan experientialism and Reformed navel-gazing: "Wholehearted love for God does not come about when we are peering into the depths of our own souls trying to find (or even worse, to induce or work up or reproduce) a particular spiritual or emotional 'experience,' but rather when, fully aware of the depth of our own sin, our eyes are quite simply fixed on God!" (90). He also attributes this to Augustine's use of the rational soul as the model for the Trinity, saying that with this model "it is understandable that Christian holiness should be understood in individualistic terms. To be holy, the individual Christian had to *separate* herself from the world and focus introspectively upon her internal 'spiritual' thought-life. The implication of the self-absorbed interiority was that the better she understood and loved herself, the better she understood and loved God. . . . The result could be a negative and even judgmental attitude towards 'the world' along with a spirituality of withdrawal and individual introspection" (212). So Matt Jenson (*Gravity of Sin: Augustine, Luther, and Barth on Homo Incurvatus in Se* [London: T & T Clark, 2006], 38-46), who observes a "curious tension in the Augustinian tradition in which sinfulness is self-centered desire and yet at the same time, the way to find God was through a spirituality of inwardness."

[92] Noble, *Holy Trinity*, 87, 91. Note that this is in line with the view of this paper that any sense of separation arises not so much from holiness for the disciple but from the strong allegiance of love itself.

[93] Noble, 86.

[94] Noble, 35-36. "Christian theology must include an understanding of the way God 'makes holy' (sanctum facere)."

But Noble does not offer a clear definition of holiness. Based on the Shema, he states that "at the heart of the holiness of the people of God is loving God with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love of neighbor."[95] He relates this to God's holiness by stating that holiness referred "uniquely" to the God of Israel and that "only God is the source of holiness and only the Holy Spirit can sanctify," while Israel had a "vocation to reflect God's holiness."[96] But what then is holiness?

On the one hand, Wesley declares, "Love is the sum of Christian sanctification; it is the one kind of holiness."[97] Noble concurs, "To be so intimately related to God and to have such a love for God in the heart and mind and shaping the will is sanctification, for God is holy."[98] This language relates a strong sense of identity between love and holiness, or with Edwards, "holiness consists in love." However, Noble also states, "A healthy balance of both aspects of Christian holiness, love from the heart and obedience in the life, can only arise as the product of the new relationship with God."[99] Speaking generously, Noble is surely emphasizing that there is an obligation, but he frames it as if this obligation is in addition to love, and holiness consists in the two together. So does the one kind of holiness consist in love and obedience, or just love that obeys? Presumably, the latter, but what exactly is holiness? Admittedly, Noble is not aiming for razor

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[95] Noble, *Holy Trinity,* 42.

[96] Noble, 42, 184.

[97] John Wesley writes, "'But what more than this can be implied in entire sanctification? It does not imply any new *kind* of holiness: let no man imagine this. From the moment we are justified, till we give up our spirits to God, love is the fulfilling of the law; of the whole evangelical law, which took [the] place of the Adamic law, when the first promise of 'the seed of the woman' was made. Love is the sum of Christian sanctification; it is the one *kind* of holiness, which is found only in various *degrees,* in the believers who are distinguished by St. John into 'little children, young men, and fathers.'" John Wesley, "Sermon 83: 'On Patience,'" in vol. 2. *The Works of the Reverend John Wesley, A. M*. trans. by John Emory (New York: Waugh and T. Mason, 1835), 221. See Noble, *Holy Trinity,* 87-88.

[98] Noble, 81.

[99] Noble, 111.

precision, but Gentry similarly notes the recurring lack of exegetical and lexical clarity about the concept of holiness.

The closest Noble comes to a definition appears when he defers to John G. Gammie's study on OT holiness: "Holiness in Israel was not first and foremost something for human beings to achieve, but rather the characteristic of ineffability possessed only by God, the Lord of Hosts, the Holy One of Israel."[100] So on the one hand, holiness in the OT is indescribable, and in fact, refers to precisely that which is indescribable. Noble observes that "Christians have always recognized that God alone is holy"[101] and "only God is the source of holiness and only the Holy Spirit can sanctify."[102] This recognition does not adequately treat the issue. Perhaps it means that God alone is the source of love and the Spirit alone produces single-minded love in people. After all, as Noble writes, to say 'God is holy,' is to say 'God is love.'"[103] And for Israel, given the Shema, the relational holiness "required of Israel in order to reflect the character of God" which they were to embody "was faithful, consistent loyalty and love."[104] If this is the case, holiness is strongly identified with love. However, it is not clear. Perhaps Noble's and Wesley's theology is better than their lexicography, illustrated by Noble's comments on the issues around ideas of holiness:

> When the 'holy' is contrasted with the 'profane,' and linked to the contrast between 'pure' and 'defiled' or 'sinful,' a rather negative understanding of holiness can result. It is true that in the history of the language, the root meaning of 'quadosh' is the idea of separation. But when our understanding stops at this point and holiness is defined only in this way, as 'separation,' the danger is that, since it is regarded as out

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[100] Noble, *Holy Trinity,* 26, citing Gammie, *Holiness in Israel,* 195. Noble incorrectly cites the author as *Alexander* Gammie.

[101] Noble, 209.

[102] Noble, 184.

[103] Noble, 218.

[104] Noble, 26; see also Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, on the word pair "justice-righteousness" as a summary for the Torah (577-78), and especially the word pair "lovingkindess and truth" (חֶסֶד וֶאֱמֶת) as another perspective on summarizing the "relationship entailed" by the Torah (581).

> of the ordinary or exceptional, sinful existence then appears to be the normal, even the norm.[105]

This statement betrays a tension. On the one hand, Noble is granting the idea of separation as central to holiness. But on the other, this does not fit well theologically. So, like Edwards, he backfills holiness with love. What would it mean to say that God alone is holy? Does this mean that God alone loves? Or loves perfectly? If, at least theoretically, disciples love whole-heartedly, can they be holy like God? Or is holiness something else, something indescribable, a quality uniquely belonging to God? Or is it a distributable "substance" that expresses itself in the disciple's love?

Wesley's theology, and Noble's with it, with its appreciation of a doctrine of perfecting love, points in a particularly helpful direction. Its lack of a lexically sound concept of holiness holds it back. The present contention is that by preserving the idea of holiness as devotion, the relation of holiness and love can be described such that they are naturally related without qualification, and thus biblical language and concepts are preserved. Noble rightly detects the centrality of love for Christian life as the all-encompassing goal of discipleship. But holiness is imprecisely related to this, aside from an ambiguous identification between the 2.

Now, one can mean that holiness is implemented by love by saying holiness consists in love. If love entails holiness, then holiness "summarily" consists in nothing but love. This language is acceptable, used as it is metaphorically. Through the lens of covariance and contravariance, holiness "is" love, and love "is" holiness.[106] Now, metaphors can blur concepts. This blurring becomes problematic when language is inadvertently "shifted" from the analogical to the univocal and the metaphorical intention is lost, so that the idea of the reality itself is wholly replaced with the metaphor instead of

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[105] Noble, *Holy Trinity,* 210.

[106] There is no need to revisit the debate over the sense of copulative reminiscent of the dispute between Luther and Zwingli, in which Luther stood on the words "*Hoc est corpus meum*" Timothy George, *Theology of the Reformers* (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2013), 155. Here the sense of "holiness is love" is analogous to "a Pomeranian is (a form of) *canis*."

illustrated by it. The consequence is damaging: Blurring love and holiness leads to notions of their relationship that are fundamentally qualifications, resulting in a negative view of love: Love your neighbor, but don't park in front of her driveway. Or, love is "holy love."[107] This notion of love regresses to a fragmentary vision of love in the disciple's life where it is viewed as a landmine jeopardizing holiness. A cohesive, biblical understanding of holiness and love is essential.

Toward the Alignment of Love and Holiness: Reciprocal Entailment

Given these perspectives, it is evident how deeply sanctification, holiness, love, theology proper, and anthropology are interwoven. While this thesis is focused on the disciple's holiness in relation to love, reciprocal entailment, along with Wesley, Edwards, and Augustine, implies deep parity between God and the disciple's holiness and love.[108] In distinction, however, this thesis claims that holiness, rightly understood, is implemented by love for disciples. Holiness does not cause love; it is polymorphic. Love, in a sense, "causes" holiness for the disciple. The disciple cannot "be holy" to be loving. To be holy is to realize it with love. God alone is holy in the sense that God's devotion is unparalleled. He alone can make one holy because the Spirit alone transforms one to exist wholly for God.[109] And this does not strictly make the disciple love and obey; there is no obedience in addition to love. Love brings forth all obedience. The transformation of the

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[107] This view is similar to what this thesis dubbed the "love-but" perspective represented by Carson's rhetorical posture in Christopher W. Morgan, *The Love of God* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2016), 21-32.

[108] See Sinclair B. Ferguson's positive framing in Devoted to God: "In a sense 'holiness' is a way of describing love. To say that 'God is love' and that 'God is holy' ultimately is to point to the same reality. Holiness is the intensity of the love that flows within the very being of God, among and between each of the three persons of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is the sheer intensity of devotion that causes seraphim (whose holiness is perfect but creaturely) to veil their faces." Sinclair B. Ferguson, *Devoted to God: Blueprint for Sanctification* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2016), 2. "If this is what holiness means in *God*, then *in us* it must also be a corresponding deeply personal, intense, loving *devotion* to him—a belonging to him that is irreversible, unconditional, without any reserve on our part" (4).

[109] Horton, *Rediscovering the Holy Spirit*, 209-20.

disciple is, with Noble and Wesley, the transformation to love what is right. And in loving "perfectly" the disciple exists for God in complete devotion: The disciple is holy.

These views suffer from a lack of clarity around the nature of holiness. Holiness appears at times to be a substance or a source, or some undefined state. In contrast, when holiness is understood as devotion, the notion of substance is eliminated, as well as the idea that holiness has a life of its own. As a polymorphic concept, holiness is more abstract and is concretized by an implementation particular to the context. Moreover, with this view, it is straightforward to see how sanctification can function forensically. The disciple has been chosen for devotion to God, and in Christ the disciple is devoted wholly (Col 3:3), analogous to consecrating an object. But, through undevoted conduct, disciples may not consistently reflect this forensic devotedness in their life. Only insofar as the disciple loves God by loving others is holiness entailed; it is by implementing holiness in love that the disciple is experientially holy. Holiness should thus not be framed against or in contrast to love. It is not, "Love, but make sure you are holy." It is rather, with Paul, "Love so that you are holy." This entailment enables speaking of these realities from either end: Be holy. Be loving. For love is how the disciple concretizes abstract holiness. Love includes all obedience, as its summary, source, and goal.

CHAPTER 4

RECLAIMING HOLINESS AND LOVE: THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Holiness as a First-Century Casualty of Germ-Theory Purity

Ellen T. Charry's analysis of the "religious climate" and its concept of purity contemporary to Matthew's Gospel is a helpful entry point to understanding the cultural encyclopedia into which Jesus spoke.[1] While Matthew's goal is paraenetic, rather than to give a theology of love and holiness, Jesus' vision of discipleship is spoken in the context of prevailing cultural understandings and distortions of holiness. His teachings indirectly but intentionally evoke ideas about holiness and purity for his hearers. Understanding the cultural encyclopedia helps modern readers reconstruct the evocations first century listeners experienced from the Sermon. These evocations are important since they are how Jesus' teachings implicitly challenged a widespread concept of devotion amongst his hearers and thereby called his followers to a "whole person" understanding of holiness as concretized in love for others.

Charry employs a medical metaphor to describe the Pharisees' view of purity. Before elaborating, it is noteworthy that other models for a "contagious" dynamic have been debated even in recent past.[2] For example, Philip Peter Jenson is critical of the "Law of Contact or Contagion" model advocated by James Frazer in 1922 in discussing sympathetic magic: Whether "a medical metaphor (impurity as a contagious disease), . . .

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[1] Ellen T. Charry, *By the Renewing of Your Minds: Pastoral Function of Christian Doctrine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 61.

[2] Philip Peter Jenson, *Graded Holiness: A Key to the Priestly Conception of the World* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 70-71.

or a physical one (holiness as electricity) . . . these common analogies encourage the reduction of a highly symbolic action to a simple physical event. Holiness and impurity are conceived of as forces . . . which can be manipulated."[3]

The risk of oversimplifying by relying on an imperfect understanding of germ-theory purity is a fair caution. The symbolic nature of ritual surely exceeds a merely physical model. However, the use of metaphor to describe aspects of a reality does not deny a fuller reality, and fear of metaphors leads to the reduction of language to merely univocal usage—an irony since a primary problem with univocal language is over-simplification by denial of other perspectives. This misuse of metaphor is debilitating. Since the present subject pertains to practical purity, such as at mealtimes, cultic symbology is not as primary. The effect of views of purity on social separation is relevant because it illuminates a de facto tension with love. The thesis will bring to light the ways in which Jesus challenges practical devotion and purity practices. In this context, Charry's medical metaphor is helpful.

Charry builds on E.P Sanders' argument that the "strands of Judaism . . . all sought to interpret the Law of Moses in order to achieve purity."[4] Concerning the Pharisees, the primary sparring partner for Matthew, "categories of pure and impure were determined by what appears to be a germ theory of contamination by touch or proximity."[5] She argues this is evidenced by both the emphasis on purity in contact, and the addition to the cultic sacrifices of immersion and washing hands and clothing to

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[3] He also adds dirt, magnetism, and even demonic forces as suggested models (Jenson, *Graded Holiness*, 71).

[4] Charry, *By the Renewing*, 62; E. P. Sanders, *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah: Five Studies* (London: SCM Press, 1990), 245-46.

[5] Charry, *By the Renewing*, 62. "The Pharisees focused on food, utensils, furniture, clothing, and the human body, all of which could become impure by contact with a corpse, semen, a menstruant or other person with bodily emissions, certain insects, and things and person associated with idolatry."

achieve that purity.[6] Considering the prior argument that loyal love looks like mercy in Matthew and that the Pharisees' erred on this exact point, Charry's assessment is plausible, especially given Jesus' charges against them (Matt 23). This linkage with purity also enlightens the significance of alluding to Leviticus 19 in Matthew 5:48.

A "germ theory" of purity is deeply rooted in the idea that purity "worked from the outside in," of which Pharisaism was "one expression" in Tannaitic Judaism.[7] For Charry, Jesus deliberately tackled this concept and "let loose a new understanding of purity that worked from the inside out, not from the outside in," because "separation from others" did not establish purity in the eschatological community.[8] She observes that post-temple destruction (70 A.D.), Judaism was eviscerated of its sacrificial system, leaving a gap in achieving its main concern—purity. The Tannaitic model stood as a strong contender to fill this void.[9]

To fully grasp the impact of this entry in the first century Jewish cultural encyclopedia, note that the Pharisees, contra any present sense that they were oppressive elitists, had a "popularity and trust" which "attests to the fact that they were viewed by many as a source of comfort."[10] Clearly, the general population did not take issue with Tannaitic purity as held by the Pharisees—and by implication their "holiness"—since purity constituted their devotion to God. Jesus is speaking to those who, at least tacitly, agreed with the practice of such purity as devotion to God, a devotion operating on an axis of physical purity while ignoring the heart. Thus, Charry sees the Sermon on the Mount in this context as answering the "question of obedience to God" as a matter "far

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[6] Charry, *By the Renewing*, 62.

[7] "Piety is expressed behavior rather than faith or values" (Charry, 62).

[8] Charry, 63.

[9] Charry, 63.

[10] Charry, 64.

beyond what one is to do—it crafts what kind of person one is to be. Matthew turned attention from correct performance to the agent's self-concept, from behavior to character."[11]

Now, Charry argues that a Matthean redactor produced the written text when Matthew's Judaism and Tannaitic Judaism were talking past each other, so that his charge of hypocrisy against the Pharisees was a "misnomer."[12] It is not in itself hypocritical for the Pharisees to hold this model of purity and to act accordingly; their concept may be wrong, but that does not mean they are saying one thing while doing another. Charry also draws on Sanders' argument that inclusion in God's people was a gift by birth so that the Pharisees' observance of purity was not an effort aimed at salvation.[13] But this is beside the point: Because Jesus' charge of hypocrisy because it is aimed at an inconsistency between outside action and inside intention, like offering alms for the poor while lacking love and seeking self-aggrandizement, it is not a misnomer, because love is how devotion is expressed. From Jesus' perspective, their devotion is pretense, a "white-washed tomb." They claim to understand the Torah while missing its essence—that loyal love for Yahweh works out in compassionate deeds. Charry misunderstands Matthew here—seeking purity in self-aggrandization while feigning love for God is the essence of hypocrisy to Jesus: "They are hypocrites because they are not unified in heart and action;

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[11] Charry, *By the Renewing,* 80.

[12] Charry, 64-65.

[13] Charry, 64: While "purity and defilement were unavoidable constants that recurred through life" this should not "be mistaken for soteriological exclusivism and thereby legalism. . . . Jewish ecclesiology held that membership in the household of God . . . was by birth or conversion, not by observance of purity laws." Interestingly, Jesus does seem to strongly connect their approach to soteriology: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves" (Matt 23:15). Soteriologically intended or not, they were fatally in error.

they actually do the right things, but they are not the right kind of people because their hearts are wrong . . . they lack virtue."[14]

Nevertheless, Charry's germ theory model of purity, which dominates the Pharisees' concept of holiness and righteousness to God, fits well with Matthew 23. In Matthew 23:27, Jesus zeroes in on efforts for external purity that disregard the heart: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness." A few verses prior, Jesus had explained what he meant. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness" (Matt 23:23). The terms, "justice and mercy and faithfulness" recall the heart of God in the OT.[15] Jesus is placing the "weightier matters of the law" in the relational context of loyal love and faithfulness to God.[16] Given that, in Matthew, loyal love for God manifests in compassionate deeds, Jesus effectively tells them, "You have missed the heart of God." Their error involves replacing the essence of righteousness with external purity.

This charge by Jesus is consistent with the idea that a germ theory of purity was predominant—the focus on outward purity and separation from impurity would not lead to compassionate engagement with the poor. Rather, it would lead separation to maintain devotion through outward purity. Jesus says, "So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness" (Matt 23:28).

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[14] Jonathan T. Pennington, *The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 79. He observes that this charge of hypocrisy is "not in the sense that we typically use that term, meaning someone who says one thing but lives a different way, such as a pastor who preaches marital faithfulness but serially commits adultery."

[15] Peter J. Gentry, and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012), 141-45.

[16] Of course, in the Torah, "Uncleanness is contagious" (John E. Hartley, *Leviticus,* Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 4 [Dallas: Word Books, 1992], 209). But the Pharisees' recognition of this biblical directive appears to be defective in how it compromised more important biblical commands; distorted obedience is not truly obedience.

The term “lawlessness” is nuanced here. It is not about neglecting the minutia of the Torah—that is the one thing the Pharisees did. Rather, it speaks to the “weightier matters.” Their lawlessness is that they fail to embody God’s heart of loyal love that flows out in compassionate deeds. Lawlessness is hardly a matter of missing mere rules. They do not love God, so they do not manifest it in mercy for others. This error is analogical to the present concept of holiness as separation; both are notions of holiness that impede love.

Finally, Jesus directly expresses why he thinks they are hypocrites, and it connects with Tannaitic germ theory: “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat, so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice” (Matt 23:2 ESV). And when they “do,” “they do all their deeds to be seen by others” (Matt 23:5). Giving to the poor is hypocrisy when it is done for self-aggrandizement rather than out of love. This is because the act of giving is a shell, robbed of its essence—a charade, mere acting.

A simple summary is that the Pharisees, inadvertently or not, placed commitment to God in tension with loyal love expressed in compassion to others. This parallels the contrast between holiness as separation and love as togetherness. The Pharisees did this by defining purity so that even deeds of compassion might make one “dirty.” By analogy, this is not unlike allowing fear of legalism to overtake one’s perspective such that love itself is a minefield for self-righteousness. The danger is always missing the weightier matters—trying to live holy, devoted and committed lives, yet in self-deceived corruption. While trying to remain pure for God, love is diminished because purity itself entails separating from impurity. This contrasts with love exercising deeds of mercy, which draws towards people who may be impure. Consider this in the context of Jesus touching a leper or healing a hemorrhagic woman (Matt 8:3; 9:20-22). This is shockingly confrontational. It is not a rebuke of words but that of deeds of compassion that implement true devotion.

Craig L. Blomberg's analysis of the social dynamics of meals corroborates Charry. After surveying the OT Apocrypha, the Pseudepigrapha, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and other Greco-Roman practices, he summarizes:

> Even more so than in the Old Testament, intertestamental Judaism viewed meal-times as an important occasion for drawing boundaries. Dining created an intimate setting in which one nurtured friendship with the right kind of people, eating the right kind of food.[17]

Jesus deliberately challenging these boundaries is well illustrated with three anecdotes: First, Blomberg argues that at the Wedding at Cana, Jesus' "choice of the water from Jewish jars for purification to be the object of his transformation suggests a deliberate contrast with the cleanliness rituals of his day."[18] Second, while Jesus cannot rightly be called a "party animal"—despite the accusations of his contemporaries (Matt 11:19)—the overriding "kingdom purpose" in Jesus' life led him to be "strikingly willing" to socialize with "anyone and everyone,"[19] including the Pharisees (Luke 7:37). Jesus did not simply relocate the boundaries he was challenging, but came with a different paradigm entirely.[20] Finally, in surveying Jesus' meals with sinners (e.g., Mark 2:13-17, 6:30-44; 8:1-10, 11-12; Matt 11:19; Matt 21:31-32), Blomberg observes a unifying theme of "contagious holiness" in Jesus' assumption that he will not "be defiled by associating with corrupt people."

> Rather, his purity can rub off on them and change them for the better. Cleanliness, he believes, is even more 'catching' than uncleanliness; morality more influential than immorality. [21]

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[17] Craig L. Blomberg, *Contagious Holiness: Jesus' Meals with Sinners* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2005), 93.

[18] Blomberg, *Contagious Holiness*, 127.

[19] Blomberg, *Contagious Holiness*, 129.

[20] Blomberg discusses this incident but focuses upon the woman anointing Jesus (Blomberg, *Contagious Holiness*, 131-37). He does observe again Jesus' characteristic "lack of concern" for ritual impurity (132).

[21] Blomberg, *Contagious Holiness*, 128.

So, Jesus' social practice demonstrates a tacit and radical challenge against a "devotion" defined by germ theory purity. Blomberg's study thus underscores the connection between holiness and purity. By showing that Jesus acted as if holiness was "contagious," Bloomberg's research corroborates the "to-ness" rather than "from-ness" of holiness. Furthermore, that Jesus' behavior was counter-cultural corroborates that germ theory purity had influenced meal-time practices. Jesus' actions, given this social norm, infill the background of the Sermon on the Mount and inform any reading of his challenge against prevailing notions of devotion.

It is helpful to take stock of the ingredients so far. First, viewing an understanding of holiness as devotion, not separation. Moreover, exploring an understanding of love as primarily including delight in the beloved, which in Matthew looks like "loyal love" for God chiefly expressed in whole-person mercy for others. Furthermore, the widespread influence of the Pharisees suggests that a germ theory of purity was encoded into the cultural encyclopedia of Jesus' day, with a strong focus on externals and an "epidemiology" of impurity. And Blomberg's analysis points to how living life with such a dominating idea of external purity naturally feeds back into any understanding of devotion.[22] If a person believes that proximity to another makes one impure, how could that pressure towards distance not affect merciful love, which ought to bring nearness and intimacy?[23] Recall that Jesus' various rebukes of the Pharisees indicated that they had trounced loyal love for God that should have exemplified itself in deeds of mercy (Matt 12:7). And Jesus is himself charged for his proximity to "sinners," which serves to highlight his understanding of holiness. The thesis will show that the teaching and deeds of Jesus stand as an indictment of this defective "matrix" of purity,

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[22] "'Holiness' for the Pharisees was too easily defined as external obedience and cleanliness" and "external matters of purity and behavior" Pennington, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 78.

[23] Any model that has an innate tension between love and holiness has a false axis and can damage both elements, as love becomes less worthy of devotion to God, even something that can harm holiness, while holiness loses the devotedness that only love can supply.

love, holiness, and sin. In the final assessment, it does not look like the kind of life to which Jesus calls his disciples.

Surely Jesus' audience did not hold a uniform and monolithic mindset. However, the dominating notion of purity has implications for holiness and love, both in Jesus' time and today. While other models for love and holiness have utility, they lack a positive definition of holiness to guard against germ-theory distortions. But understanding holiness as an entailment of love, beyond seeing how love flows from holiness, provides insight into why it is that Jesus, the Holy One par excellence, can touch a leper and dine with sinners. Love and holiness cohere, such that Jesus can describe the whole Christian walk through the lens of τέλειος and the Golden Rule, without a mention of "holiness" for the disciple.

Love and Discipleship from the Sermon on the Mount

This section contains the exegetical heart of this thesis and argues the following from Matthew's Sermon: Love and holiness reciprocally entail each other because love is the comprehensive implementation of holiness for Jesus' disciples. Holiness exists when love concretizes devotion and commitment, and love exists where one is holy, because compassionate love for others out of love for God is the sole implementation of devotion. In this way, where holiness exists, love is implementing it; where love exists, holiness is implemented. Thus, holiness entails its implementation in love, and love actualizes and entails the devotion of holiness. This claim flows from Jesus' teaching on discipleship, and what follows is an interpretation of the Sermon given its implications for an audience with a cultural encyclopedia influenced by the "germ theory purity" of Tannaitic Judaism.

The Sermon on the Mount:
Wholeness through Love

While Matthew's complex tapestry of themes offers a number of entry points through which this concept can be explored, the Sermon on the Mount presents an invitation to wise flourishing discipleship rooted in love as an interpretation of the Torah.[24] Furthermore, within it, Jesus challenges the "righteousness" of the Pharisees and outlines his vision of discipleship in direct contrast to their piety.

This is significant because by so doing Jesus brings "germ-theory purity" into his crosshairs at precisely the point he launches an exegesis of the Law that finds its height in the Golden Rule. In other words, the Sermon has all the ingredients necessary for building an understanding of the essence of proper devotion to God and its relationship to love. Jesus casts a vision where devotion to God is implemented not as a matter of externals, and certainly not as people-pleasing self-aggrandizement, but as whole-person love for God, neighbor, self, and enemy.[25] Because love flows from the heart and out in deeds, it naturally stands in contrast to mere externalism as it definitionally involves the whole person.[26] For example, the rich young man "lacks the

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[24] Commenting on Ps 1 as wisdom literature in relation to the Sermon and the false dilemma between the Beatitudes as requirements versus blessings, Pennington summarizes it this way: "[Psalm 1] is an inspirational vision for the wise way of being in the world that will result in . . . human flourishing. It is a poetically crafted form of *implicit invitation* to consider what the best way of being in the world is and to pursue it" (Pennington, *Sermon on the Mount*, 51-52); see also 151, 181-82. Pennington calls the sermon a "*Christocentric, flourishing-oriented, kingdom-awaiting, eschatological wisdom exhortation*" (15) and argues that it is answering the "greatest metaphysical question that humanity has always faced—*How can we experience true human flourishing?*" (14). Similarly, McKnight writes, "The Sermon on the Mount is the moral portrait of Jesus' own people," and, "Nothing makes sense about the Sermon until we understand it as messianic vision, and once we understand it as messianic we can understand it all—especially its radical elements" Scot McKnight, *Sermon on the Mount*, The Story of God Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 1, 13.

[25] On the controversial and admittedly distorted concept of self-love, McKnight writes, "But the blessed people are noted by godly, loving relations with God, self, and others" (McKnight, *Sermon on the Mount*, 34). He calls self-love the "element of ethics" that is "sometimes overlooked. Love of neighbor in Lev 19:18 is rooted in proper love of self: 'love your neighbor as yourself.' The Golden Rule, the other great reduction of the Torah by Jesus (Matt 7:12), also rings the bell of self-love" (38). On Matt 5:48 in relation to the Golden Rule, McKnight even goes so far as to say that "self-love is the fertile ground for growing love for all, including one's enemies" (252). McKnight does not mean the kind of popular *selfish indifference to others* that is called "self-love" today.

[26] The understanding of love here is as that delight in others that flows out in deeds. These elements should not be separated, as if the heart and action can be separated while remaining love (e.g., 1

necessary wholeness that requires the proper love."[27] Given a cultural encyclopedia influenced by germ theory, merely presenting this vision challenges his hearers to expand their concept of devotion.

Jesus does not command holiness directly. The Sermon is not a systematic theology. He offers an invitation to a "flourishing way of being" by giving examples of profound love that holds forth a vision of personal wholeness, of being undivided between inside and out—a vision of one who in loyalty to God abundantly overflows in love even for enemy.[28] It is a vision of a holistic, concrete devotion to God. It thus implies the reciprocal entailment of love and holiness. His hearers were challenged in their idea of devotion, and this deliberate challenge shows that Jesus corrects them: Devotion to God looks like love chiefly expressed in merciful deeds. Love in its wholeness comprehensively implements holiness in the disciple's life.[29]

Approach. The thesis will explore in three movements Matthew's artfully crafted structural and literary presentation as the Sermon reveals that love is the implementation of whole-person, undivided devotion to God in discipleship. The first and most important movement, given that holiness is not an explicit subject, is an exploration of the relationship of τέλειος and holiness as an interpretation of the Torah. Holiness as Jesus interprets it is an undercurrent of the Sermon, which is more clearly seen when

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Cor 13 for the worthlessness of emulating even great righteous deeds without love). Jesus saw people holistically: "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Matt 12:33-34). Heart and deed cannot be separated. Loving deeds flow from a loving heart. For the loveless heart, "what is needed is a change of heart." D. A. Carson, *Matthew: Chapters 1-12*, in vol. 1 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: with the New International Version*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, 1995), 293.

[27] Pennington, *Sermon on the Mount*, 83.

[28] The disciple is "whole" (Pennington, *Sermon on the Mount*, 74-77), which means being one of "singular devotion" (79).

[29] Perhaps in some way, the entire project of God reaching out to sinful humanity is a correction of human "devotion" – human holiness.

holiness is understood as devotion or commitment, not as separation. Definitionally, if the Sermon is depicting God's intention for life, Jesus is ultimately talking about nothing other than devotion to God—nothing other than holiness.

Building on this, the second movement establishes that the concept of wholeness, or τέλειος, is coextensive with love. The Sermon's structure indicates that to be τέλειος is an existence of whole-person, from-the-heart love that flows out in mercy. Love also naturally fits as the embodiment of wholeness; as Jesus elsewhere teaches, the fruit comes from the root, the words flow from the heart (Matt 15:17-20). And love engages the whole person, with the heart issuing deeds, and deeds reshaping the heart.[30] Finally, the third movement addresses whether holiness must be implemented in love and anything else. Broader elements in Matthew will corroborate that the Sermon is a comprehensive vision of discipleship, albeit without many details. Being comprehensive, everything else is details—even wrath. Nothing needs to be added to this vision of wise love to implement holiness.[31]

Movement 1: The "Whole" in Holiness

First, while the primary structure of the Sermon's body is identified by the chiasm of "the Law and the Prophets" between Matthew 5:17 and 7:12, the first substructure can substantiate the connection with holiness. It contains the so-called "antitheses," which will be referred to as "exegeses" here to emphasize continuity between Jesus and Moses, and runs from Matthew 5:20 to 5:48.[32] In verse 20, Jesus

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[30] Here the concept of virtue ethics is important (Pennington, *Sermon on the Mount*, 197). While it is true that the heart flows out in deeds, the act of doing also affects the heart. It can be hardly one way. Love is perfect for this, because the deeds of love affect the heart, and the heart affects and effects the deeds. Love cannot be love if it is not the whole person. See also McKnight, *Sermon on the Mount*, 4-5.

[31] Given the difficulty it poses for any claim that love is exhaustive, even the idea that God is love, the relationship between wrath and love will be explored in brief later.

[32] Following Pennington; since the strong contrastive sense of the text gives the idea that there is an "antithesis being made between the teachings of Torah/Moses and Jesus . . . this traditional title ['antitheses'] is understandable but unfortunate. It leads one to misread this set of 6 examples of greater

begins his explanation of how he has come to fulfill the Torah and Prophets: "Λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι ἐὰν μὴ περισσεύσῃ ὑμῶν ἡ δικαιοσύνη πλεῖον τῶν γραμματέων καὶ Φαρισαίων, οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθητε εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν." Jesus explains (γὰρ) that what follows is not only what it means to teach, rather than relax, the commandments. Importantly, it shows how Jesus fulfills the Torah—how he achieves its purpose and satisfies it, as indicated by the phrase "all is accomplished" (vs 18). Jesus does this by forming a people who embody the Greater Righteousness. This concept is not moralism, but speaks to the eschatological outworking of Jesus' purpose in fulfillment of the Torah's intent.[33] Jesus does not employ hyperbole when he chides, "unless your righteousness abounds way beyond the Scribes and Pharisees." πλεῖον functions adverbially to περισσεύσῃ and amplifies the comparative genitive τῶν γραμματέων καὶ Φαρισαίων:[34] Jesus is explaining what true righteousness is.[35] As seen, their righteousness was rooted in external purity and contagious impurity. This is far from enough.[36] Jesus' phrasing even suggests this, as

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righteousness regarding the law as being Jesus contrasting his teaching with the law . . . precisely what he insists he is *not* doing in 5:17-19" (Pennington, *Sermon on the Mount*, 120-21). Pennington suggests a better alternative that conveys the sense – these are "exegeses." Following Pennington, the thesis will use "exegesis/exegeses."

[33] On fulfillment, see R. T. France, *Matthew: Evangelist and Teacher* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1989), 166-205, where he argues at length that it is the main theme; see also R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 10-14. See Pennington, *Sermon on the Mount*, 174-77; W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *Matthew 1-7*. The International Critical Commentary (New York: T&T Clark, 1988), 485-86.

[34] BDAG, s.v. "πολύς."

[35] This "true righteousness" is hardly forensic righteousness, for that is quite alien to the Sermon's emphasis on the heart; "it expresses the essence of the sermon on the mount" and "is therefore Christian character and conduct in accordance with the demands of Jesus . . . hence 'righteousness' does not refer, even implicitly, to God's gift. The Pauline (forensic, eschatological) connotation is absent" (Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 499). Indeed, it rather stands in contrast to the outward righteousness of Matt 23 that Jesus rebukes the Pharisees for, and indeed, those woes structurally mirror the beatitudes and sit as their beatitude-woe counterpart (Pennington, *Sermon on the Mount*, 55). Ironically, while a Pauline doctrine of forensic righteousness is alien to this text, Paul himself follows Jesus in framing the fulfillment of the Law exemplified in disciples who *love*, that is, Jesus fulfills the goal of the Law by bringing about the eschatological blessing of the Spirit through whom the love of God is outpoured into their hearts (Rom 2:27, 5:5; 8:4; 13:8, 10), discussed briefly below.

[36] As Allison notes, "Jesus' words in the subsequent paragraphs will require even more than the Torah itself requires," let alone a poor external imitation! (Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 502)

the word "righteousness" is "elegantly omitted" before "the scribes and Pharisees."[37] To exceed this righteousness, one must be τέλειος (Matt 5:48), for which the profound examples of this wise way of living appear in the exegeses.[38] One must understand the true intent from Jesus and wisely apply it given the arrival of the kingdom in him.[39]

Matthew 5:48 then reads, "ἔσεσθε οὖν ὑμεῖς τέλειοι ὡς ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος τέλειος ἐστιν." While τέλειος is often translated "perfect," this English word carries additional semantic baggage that overwhelms the more accurate sense of "whole" and "complete" in "undivided devotion."[40] A better reading is, "Therefore, you must be whole, as your heavenly Father is whole."[41] The background is surely Leviticus 19:2. In the six exegeses, Jesus already challenged contemporary interpretations and applications of the Torah.[42] Moreover, Jesus has just cited Leviticus 19 in the preceding exegesis itself

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[37] Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 499.

[38] Allison calls the "antitheses" six "concrete examples" that show the "attitude and behavior Jesus requires" and "how his demands surpass those of the Torah without contradicting the Torah" (Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 508).

[39] In each exegesis, "Jesus takes up a command from the Jewish tradition and, without overturning it, shows the true intent and practical reality of the commandment, all the while driving home his point with urgency in light of his coming" (Pennington, *Sermon on the Mount*, 182).

[40] The term τέλειός is the subject of some discussion amongst scholars and commentators. The ESV, HCSB, NASB, NET, NIV, KJV, NLT, and RSV, to name some translations, render it "perfect." To the English hearer, it implies perfection (in the sense of flawless, or "moral perfection, absolute purity, and even sinlessness" (Pennington, *Sermon on the Mount*, 70). While the original certainly does not carry the sense of flawed, τέλειός slurps in the sense of תָּמִים from the OT, and therefore expresses the idea of wholeness, of one "who has an unimpeded relationship with Yahweh" (75). In the LXX, "all instances of τέλειός mean 'unblemished, undivided, complete, whole'"; the idea is one who is "singular in devotion" to God (75). Summarizing Patrick Hartin, Pennington lists 3 aspects of τέλειός: Wholeness and completeness, wholehearted self-giving to God, and "wholehearted dedication" in "walking with God" in obedience to God (76).

[41] See Daniel M. Gurtner, and John Nolland, *Built Upon the Rock: Studies in the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub, 2008). Interestingly, Donald A. Hagner prefers "perfect" to "mature" because "it points to a quality of life marked by the kind of righteousness described in the antitheses," while at the same time, following Brower, takes the "double love commandment [as] central to holiness." Donald A. Hagner, "Holiness and Ecclesiology: The Church in Matthew," in *Holiness and Ecclesiology in the New Testament,* ed. Kent Brower and Andy Johnson (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2007), 55. If "perfect" and "complete" are contrasted, as Hagner does here, it seems like a distinction without a difference since love is the central aspect of the "perfect." What would that mean but "wholeness"?

[42] See McKnight: "In each antithesis Jesus quotes Scripture, but Jesus' antithetical relationship is not against the Scripture itself but the interpretation of that Scripture" (McKnight, *Sermon on the Mount*, 75-76).

("love your neighbor"). So the pericope in Leviticus 19 that contains the command to love neighbor as an explanation of imitation of God's holiness (19:2) is already in view as Jesus' teaching itself climaxes in verse 48.[43] Hence, Jesus plays off Leviticus 19:2, "You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy," weaving in Deuteronomy 18:13: "You shall be blameless (תָּמִים, τέλειος) before the LORD your God."[44] The LXX for Leviticus 19:2 reads, "ἅγιοι ἔσεσθε ὅτι ἐγὼ ἅγιος κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὑμῶν." The use of the future medio-passive is the same, even as ὡς replaced ὅτι and Matthew's use of "heavenly Father" overrides "the Lord your God," a substitution which amplifies the comparison given the Sermon's idea of sonship. In Leviticus, with the Sinai covenant as analogous to a marriage with Yahweh, God is calling for his people to reciprocate his devotion, as if to say, "Because I am committed to our marriage, I want you to be just as committed as I am, and for you that looks like love (Lev 19:18) and justice (19:5) and caring for the poor (Lev 19:9). Love me by loving each other." Thus, it is perfectly fitting that when Jesus draws the love command in Leviticus 19:18 into his teaching on love in Matthew 5:43-47, a command which flows out of and climaxes the call to holiness in Leviticus 19:2, that he alludes to Leviticus 19:2 as he concludes his own argument in Matthew 5:48.[45]

Jesus' interpretation, "You must be τέλειος" thus naturally plays into the contrast between germ theory purity and holistic devotion to God. Since the exegeses challenged Jesus' hearers at each point, the rhetorical weight of Matthew 5:48 lands as a

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[43] While Mark F. Rooker interprets holiness in terms of purity, he notes that the "major sections, 19:3-18 and 19:19-36, explain and specify what it means for the Israelites to be holy . . . this chapter indicates the comprehensive nature of holiness as it is exhibited in the realms of both religious and social relationships." Mark F. Rooker, *Leviticus*, vol. 3A of *The New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2000), 251. Moreover, the statement 'love your neighbor as yourself' forms a climax to this first major section, and it was regarded by some as the central principle of the Law" (258). Note that debates around imitation of holiness are probably misplaced—in light of the Sinai covenant as a marriage between Yahweh and his people, God is effectively calling for his people to reciprocate his *devotion* to them, his commitment to his marriage, back to him.

[44] For the assimilation of Deuteronomy into Leviticus in Matt 5:48, see Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 560.

[45] See Hartley, *Leviticus*, 312, on the outworking of imitation of Yahweh's holiness throughout life and into the "various commandments to extend mercy and show mercy."

final challenge, especially since it summarizes his call to the Greater Righteousness: "Your righteousness must exceed that of the Pharisees—. . . you must be τέλειοι, as your heavenly Father is τέλειος."[46] In this light, Matthew 5:48 almost functions as a (seventh) antithesis—or better, an exegesis—of Leviticus 19:2:

> You have heard that it was said, 'You shall be holy.' But I say to you that you must be whole, as your heavenly Father is whole.

In short, Jesus is showing the true intention of the Levitical command to be holy.[47] In teaching the Greater Righteousness, Jesus interprets a fundamental summons of the Torah—to imitate God's holiness in commitment to God and neighbor—as an imperative to wholeness that he unpacks in the Sermon and will shortly ground in the Golden Rule ("do to others") and Great Commandments ("love God and neighbor"). Jesus' transposition of Leviticus 19:2 into Matthew 5:48 in a cultural milieu of germ theory purity and in contrast to the righteousness of Pharisaism would challenge any hearer with a picture of τέλειος, which confronts the pursuit of devotion to God in externalism.[48] As Jonathan T. Pennington observes, "The word 'holy' was too loaded with the connotations that Jesus is arguing against to simply quote Lev 20:26 directly."[49] In this way, Jesus challenges a distortion of holiness. This distortion was taking holiness itself to mean separation, as today. Their distortion was to place the loci of devotion in external purity such that loyal "love" for God became even abuse of neighbor. Jesus' antidote to this is Matthew 5:48.

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[46] Note that the first verb, a plural future medio-passive, requires agreement in number, and hence the first appearance of τέλειός is plural.

[47] Recall again the interpretative action in the exegeses: "Jesus takes up a command from the Jewish tradition and, without overturning it, shows the true intent and practical reality of the commandment, all the while driving home his point with urgency in light of his coming" (Pennington, *Sermon on the Mount*, 182). "The call to 'holiness' in Lev. 19:2 and 20:26 is now properly explicated, as was its true intent always, as a call to 'wholeness,' or in short, Godward virtue" (79).

[48] Pennington calls the "change from the much more common *hagios* (holy) to the less frequent *teleios* . . . very significant" because it draws attention to the true heart of the matter-"not moral perfection but wholehearted orientation toward God." Pennington, *Sermon on the Mount*, 78.

[49] Pennington, *Sermon on the Mount*, 79.

Τέλειος is not equal to holiness, and that is not what is claimed. The Hebrew has words to reflect the different concepts, such as שָׁלֵם or תָּמִים and קָדוֹשׁ, largely corresponding in Scripture to τέλειος and ἅγιος.[50] The issue is one of interpretive and rhetorical emphasis—holiness is devotion or commitment, while τέλειος is unpacking the wholeness that is essential in devotion.[51] It is another window into devotion. Jesus backfills the notion of holiness for his hearers by framing it as a wholeness which is described by a portrait of a flourishing life.

While it is not the Sermon's objective to outline a thesis on holiness, in this way, Jesus does imply a contrast with his contemporaries' understanding. For him, τέλειος rightly embodies devotion.[52] The problem with their defective "germ theory" implementation of holiness is that it manifested as a corruption of what should have been whole-person heart-love for others. Jesus responds with a positive vision that decimates any notion of a nepotistic love for only one's own, and he does this through an interpretation of Leviticus 19:2 that challenges the hearer to consider what wholeness means for their lives.

Movement 2: The Wholeness of Love

There is a fundamental connection between τέλειος and love in the Sermon on the Mount. The vision of discipleship finds its essence in his summary of the Torah as a call to love God and neighbor. But even before this, as noted, the sixth exegesis provides just such a substantial connection between τέλειος and love.

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[50] As an example, Noah is referred to as תָּמִים, what the translations often render "blameless" in Gen 6:9. *HALOT* classified this usage as "complete, unscathed, intact" (*HALOT*, s.v. "תָּמִים"). The LXX translates this into Greek as "τέλειος ὢν ἐν τῇ γενεᾷ αὐτοῦ" – being "whole" in his generation. Similarly, sacrifices are to "without blemish," that is, intact and whole (Exod 12:5), and a point already noted in Deut 18:13. See also 2 Sam 22:26. The OT also uses שָׁלֵם, "whole, undivided" (1 Kgs 8:61, *HALOT* s.v. "שָׁלֵם"), which the LXX also translates as τέλειος.

[51] Pennington, *Sermon on the Mount*, 79.

[52] Davies and Allison write that, τέλειος, in the "LXX usually . . . means 'whole'—as in, 'undivided heart" Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 561-63.

Charles L. Quarles writes on the sixth exegesis:

> The words "Love your neighbor" (v. 43) are thoroughly biblical, and while these words are a verbatim quotation of Leviticus 19:18 from the LXX, importantly, the quotation did not include the phrase 'as yourself.' This subtle revision transformed a command about how God's people are to love into a command focusing on whom they are to love.[53]

This is evocative of the same reorientation of the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37, 10:29).[54] Jesus states the call to be τέλειος immediately after challenging a limited love. Structurally, verse 48 is summative of all six exegeses, close on the heels of the radical command to "love your enemy," a demand which fills out the idea of τέλειος with love that is profound in its reach.[55] For some, holiness included the interpretation Jesus addresses: "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy."[56] But for Jesus, being God's child means love for others, even for persecutors; in this way, Jesus is challenging their idea of devotion. Comparing limited love to what "Gentiles" do likely jabs at their self-identity as God's people. Jesus corrects their defective devotion by casting a vision for a τέλειος disciple who loves family, friend, neighbor, and especially

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[53] Charles L. Quarles, *Sermon on the Mount: Restoring Christ's Message to the Modern Church*, New American Commentary Studies in Bible & Theology (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2011), 158.

[54] See John Nolland, *Luke 9:21-18:34,* Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 45. (Dallas: Word Books, 1993), 589-92 on the extent of the "reach of neighbor love."

[55] The radicality of the demand to love enemy is such that many interpreters have great difficulty, especially given "Paul, who was not exactly a wimp in dealing with his opponents, not to mention the author of 2 Peter and his way of dealing with enemies (2 Pet 2:12-22)." Ulrich Luz, James E. Crouch, and Helmut Köster, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 291.

[56] McKnight cautions that "hating your enemy was not typical of Judaism," (McKnight, *Sermon on the Mount,* 141-42). However, the "Community Rule from the Dead Sea Scrolls [of the Qumran Essenes] repeatedly commands members of the community to 'hate the children of darkness,'" and "Jesus countered the popular rabbinic interpretation of Lev 19:18." See Quarles, *Sermon on the Mount,* 159, 151. But McKnight wisely observes that "one doesn't have to go to the Qumran dwellers to find the prejudicial love or ethnic bias that one finds in Jesus' opening 'thesis.' Loving those we like and hating those we don't like is as common as skin" (McKnight, *Sermon on the Mount,* 142). Furthermore, John Piper notes that the "situation into which Jesus spoke his command was one in which love was a very limited affair," illustrated by the Pharisees' exclusivism, the aforementioned Qumran community, the interpretation of neighbor (Lev 19:18) as excluding "the non-proselytized non-Israelite," all showing a "wide-spread attitude of non-love to outsiders." John Piper, *Love Your Enemies: Jesus' Love Command in the Synoptic Gospels and the Early Christian Paraenesis,* Society for the New Testament Studies Monograph Series, 38 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 91.

enemy.[57] To be a holy, dedicated-to-God, called-out, separated-from-the-world member of God's people entails love for those in that world, not hatred and the heart-less multiplication of rules.[58] The interpretation of the word "holy" as "τέλειος" is a call to devotion, a devotion implemented as a whole-person love from the heart for even enemy.

More than this, in the broader Sermon, the Golden Rule stands structurally in relation to the Torah as a description of its essence, and since Jesus is offering this as the Greater Righteousness, it encapsulates all of discipleship, discussed further below.[59] A life of loyal love for God that reciprocates to God for his mercy by showing love in mercy is comprehensive. This love thus entails holiness because commitment to God by seeking the happiness of God through compassion to others implements devotion to God.[60] Likewise, holiness entails love, because Jesus is explaining the (only) way to be τέλειος. So, if one is holy, the disciple is necessarily τέλειος, which is to say, the disciple is necessarily undivided in living in loyal love for God and other.[61] In short, discipleship

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[57] So Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 562: "in this lies perfection: love of unconstrained compass lacks for nothing" noted by Robert C. Tannehill, who from a Methodist perspective interprets τέλειος as "complete" and argues thusly: "The translation 'complete' helps to express the contrast with love that is incomplete in quantity because it excludes some." Robert C. Tannehill, *The Shape of the Gospel: New Testament Essays* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2007), 130.

[58] Scot McKnight notes this perspective when he observes that the Torah had become "fertile ground for multiplying commandments," an approach that stands in contrast to the summation of the Torah by Jesus in two rules. See McKnight, *Sermon on the Mount*, 139-40.

[59] On the use of "Torah" versus "Law," the former captures the sense of instruction better than the latter term, which today connotes court proceedings, statute and case law, and judicial systems in general. The Torah was much more than this, and the modern idea of "law" does not well express this. Pennington calls this a "slippage of gears" and observes that "even in its occasional narrowest sense of 'commandments,' [the Torah] comes to us in the context of a bilateral covenant made between the rescuing, saving God and his chosen people. This is a far cry from the images of dusty old law books . . . [it] is covenantal and relational" (Pennington, *Sermon on the Mount*, 173); so Gentry and Wellum, who observe that the Hebrew "means 'direction' or 'instruction' . . . given in the form of a covenant. The Torah, then, is unlike any law code in the ancient Near East. It is a set of directions for living in the framework of a covenant relationship." Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 566 n 4.

[60] On the happiness of God, McKnight writes: "Jesus' words drive his followers to see that they are to seek the pleasure of God and not the approval of others." McKnight, *Sermon on the Mount*, 151.

[61] For an understanding of reciprocal entailment not to hold, something would need to be added. But Jesus (and Paul) teach that all the prohibitions themselves fall under the broad envelope of חֶסֶד for God that manifests in mercy for others.

is loyal love for God that manifests chiefly in deeds of mercy as a reciprocation to God.[62] This is wholeness.

Now if there is a thesis statement in the Sermon, the pericope of Matthew 5:17-20 contains it.[63] In the context of Matthew 4:17's call to repentance, Jesus is "unpacking . . . what this call to repentance looks like."[64] Matthew 5:17 forms an inclusio with Matthew 7:12.[65] As noted, the whole body of the Sermon is an explanation of what it means for Jesus to fulfill the Law and the Prophets (including 5:48).[66] Verse 17 begins by establishing that Jesus, hardly in opposition to the Torah, has arrived in full keeping with the intention and purpose of it. Jesus then teaches his (authoritative) interpretation, arriving at the summary in Matthew 7:12: "So whatever you wish that others would do to

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[62] For a helpful and perceptive study of the Golden Rule in the context of ancient relationships of reciprocity from a Lukan perspective (yet applicable to Matthew), see Alan Kirk, "'Love Your Enemies,' the Golden Rule, and Ancient Reciprocity (Luke 6:27-35)," *Journal of Biblical Literature.* 122, no. 4 (2003): 667-86, https://doi.org/10.2307/3268071. See also Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (Chicago: Aldine-Atherton, 1972), 198-99 for the context of reciprocal kinship relationships. McKnight can use the phrase, "reciprocal forgiveness" (McKnight, *Sermon on the Mount*, 173-74). So too France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 250: "In the parable of 18:23-25 God's forgiveness comes first, but it is withdrawn when the person forgiven fails to forgive another. There is then something inevitably reciprocal about forgiveness. To ask to be forgiven while oneself refusing to forgive is hypocritical." On a fuller understanding of grace in general, Barclay discusses the confusion around "the language of grace" which is often taken as God's "unconditional action," despite the original idea of χάρις as having more to do with the idea of "favor given" or "a favor returned" in the "reciprocity of gift-giving"; that is, it entails a "sense of obligation arising from the gift" and "expectations of gift-reciprocity" (John M. G. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015], 26-27, 66-67, 76-77). So Alan Kirk, who writes that χάρις described the "dynamic of open-ended exchange of benefits among friends—that is, generalized reciprocity," and "designates both the concrete favors that friends do reciprocally for one another and the gratitude shown in return, a gratitude that we have seen is the affective dimension of the diffuse obligation to reciprocate," having in "view the graciousness, trust, and voluntariness crucial to this kind of mutual exchange." Kirk, "Love Your Enemies," 678.

[63] Pennington, *Sermon on the Mount*, 170.

[64] Pennington, *Sermon on the Mount*, 170. Note that the vision of repentance here has nothing to do with the issue of legalism, despite the predominant emphasis on legalism in repentance in practical Reformed theology.

[65] "Mention of the 'law and the prophets' takes the reader back to 5:17 and creates an *inclusio,* between which Matthew has set forth Jesus' relationship to the Torah." (Dale C. Allison, *Studies in Matthew: Interpretation Past and Present* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005], 194); see also Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew,* Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 1, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 262-63.

[66] So Allison, "the whole Sermon to be an exposition of the true meaning of the whole law as the Torah of the Messiah" and "Mention of the 'law and the prophets' takes the reader back to 5:17 and creates an *inclusio,* between which Matthew has set forth Jesus' relationship to the Torah." *Studies in Matthew,* 194.

you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets" (ESV).[67] This bookend is critical. It is one of the "lag bolts" of this argument because it affirms that the Sermon's content is an all-inclusive vision of human obligation in discipleship, while at the same time defining that all-inclusive vision as love for God and neighbor.[68] Since the Torah commands holiness, identifying the Golden Rule as the OT's essence is significant, for this alone implies that holiness is itself subsumed and relativized into the Torah's essence: love.[69]

Jesus declares, "οὗτος γάρ ἐστιν ὁ νόμος καὶ οἱ προφῆται," or "for this [the Golden Rule] is the Law and the Prophets." Importantly, this is not merely a summary, contra the NIV's "sums up"; it rather "elucidat[es] its true meaning."[70] First, the predicate construction opens the door to this reading. The definite article locates ὁ νόμος καὶ οἱ προφῆται as a compound subject, with the Golden Rule as the predicate nominative. "The Law and the Prophets is [the Golden Rule]." While this is not an equality, Jesus is placing the Law and Prophets in the "conceptual class" of the Golden Rule.[71] This claim is not

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[67] Pennington, *Sermon on the Mount*, 175-76, 180. Contra Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 506, who does not see Jesus as giving his interpretation of the law, which does not seem tenable given that Jesus *cites*, explains the *meaning*, and *applies* it with an example in each exegesis (Pennington, *Sermon on the Mount*, 182). This three-fold presentation is interpretation, and to correct a secondary reading implies another correct interpretation in its place!

[68] In construction, lag bolts are structural screws that bear the largest loads—a useful metaphor.

[69] So McKnight, *Sermon on the Mount*: "If Jesus explicitly reduces the Torah to loving God and loving others as oneself, then every ethical statement of Jesus somehow needs to be connected to the double commandment of love," and "Jesus reduces God's will to loving God and loving others" (38, 268).

[70] Of course, it could be that the excellent NIV translators meant "sums up" in terms of essence. At present, the thesis deliberately enjoys some terminological pedantry for the sake of rhetorical clarity: "Many translate ἐστιν as 'sums up,' but it is slightly better to translate 'the essence of the Law and Prophets' in terms of elucidating its true meaning" (Osborne, *Matthew*, 262). See Craig A. Evans, *Matthew*, New Cambridge Bible Commentary (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 169, and Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew. 1-13*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 33A (Dallas: Word Books, 1993), 176. Allison states that it is "simply the most basic or important demand of the law, a demand which in no way replaces Torah but instead states its true end" (Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 690). This reading is weaker and does not do justice to the predicate.

[71] On predicates, see Wallace: "The predicate nominative (PN) is *approximately* the same as the subject (S) and is joined to it by an equative verb, whether stated or implied. The usage is very common. The equation of S and PN does not necessarily or even normally imply complete correspondence (e.g., as in the interchangeability of A=B, B=A in a mathematical formula). Rather, the PN normally

convertible; the Golden Rule is not the Law and the Prophets because the Golden Rule is conceptually broader by being less specific. Rather, Jesus is saying that the whole Torah can only be understood through the lens of the Golden Rule because it embodies its heart, and Jesus is giving it as the core of the Greater Righteousness of Matthew 5:20-7:11. Unlike his contemporaries, Jesus uniquely frames the rule positively.[72] Such a framing contrasts the Torah's essence with the Pharisees' germ-theory externalism and mere prohibition by locating that essence in a picture of love lived that coheres with the Great Commandments and summarizes a life of flourishing. The NLT captures the sense well: "This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets."

Moreover, the Golden Rule is explicitly placed in relation to the content of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus employs the inferential particle οὖν, which not only syntactically connects it to the immediately preceding teaching in Matthew 7:7-11 concerning asking and seeking, but it picks up reciprocal themes throughout chapters 5-7.[73] For example, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy" (Matt 5:7) invites the pursuit of the paradoxical wise way of flourishing by showing mercy to others.[74] And Matthew 5:46 encourages loving even enemies for the sake of reward,

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describes a larger category (or *state*) to which the S belongs. It is important to keep in mind, however, that there are two distinct types of S-PN constructions; these will be discussed below. . . . The significance of the S-PN construction affects more than mere translation precisely because S and PN do not normally involve total interchangeability. The usual relationship between the two is that *the predicate nominative describes the class to which the subject belongs*. This is known as a *subset proposition* (where S is a subset of PN). Thus, the meaning of 'the Word was flesh' is not the same as 'flesh was the Word,' because flesh is broader than 'the Word.' 'The word of the cross is foolishness' (1 Cor 1:18) does not mean 'foolishness is the word of the cross,' for there are other kinds of foolishness. 'God is love' is not the same as 'love is God.' It can thus be seen from these examples that *'is' does not necessarily mean 'equals.''* Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 40-41.

[72] Rabbi Hillel answered a challenge to summarize the Torah thus: "What is hateful to you, do not do to anyone else. This is the whole law; all the rest is commentary. Go learn it." Carson, *Matthew: Chapters 1-12*, 187.

[73] Note that the teaching on asking and seeking also creates a context for hearing the Golden Rule in light of how one wants to be treated by the *Father himself*.

[74] For the Sermon on the Mount in connection to Ps 1 as an invitation to a "wise way of being in the world," see Pennington, *Sermon on the Mount*, 51-52, 127.

which hints at showing mercy for reward from a God who has shown mercy to the disciple. This in turn flows into the heart of the Sermon in the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:10-15. And this prayer, located at the "center of the center of the center"[75] of the Sermon, stands at the "apex of this journey . . . providing the high point of the Sermon's revelation,"[76] and calls for the practice of the Golden Rule in forgiving others as one wants to be forgiven by God. Here is the height of how a fallen person loves a fallen person—forgiveness and mercy. This is especially evident given the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant (Matt 18:21-35). The Golden Rule thus draws the rubric of the whole Sermon into its purview. It interprets the Greater Righteousness of Matthew 5:20. Love for others expressed in mercy is the Golden Rule lived with respect to God, as one shows the mercy to others that one wants to receive from God, which fits given the warning about hypocritical condemnation in Matthew 7:1-3. The only way for a fallen but delivered person to live in devotion to God is in constant reciprocation of love to God by mercy to others.

The rhetorical weight of the statement in 7:12 must be acknowledged: Jesus has bookended the thesis of the greater righteousness of 5:17-20 with love, and 7:12 not only grammatically connects to the discourse that preceded it, but connotes exhaustive and all-inclusive coverage of human life: "Πάντα οὖν ὅσα ἐὰν θέλητε" or "therefore everything whatsoever you wish."[77] In short, even beyond the grammatical predicate, it is as if Jesus says, "Look, nothing at all is outside of this—you need to govern whatever you do or think in anything, anytime, by what you want done to you by God and others.

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[75] Pennington, *Sermon on the Mount*, 210-12, 222. Being the center, "the Lord's Prayer has much to teach us about the whole." (222). Pennington provides an insightful structural overview in pages 111-34, and especially 132-33.

[76] Pennington, *Sermon on the Mount*, 133.

[77] Pennington's translation includes the πάντα (Matt 7:12) explicitly (Pennington, *Sermon on the Mount*, xix). So also Morris: "*All things whatever* is comprehensive: nothing is excluded from this the scope of this rule" Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1995), 172.

If you live this way, you understand and fulfill in your lives the whole purpose of the Law and the Prophets."[78] As R. T. France elegantly puts it, this is the Greater Righteousness "in a nutshell."[79] In other words, "you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev 19:18; Matt 19:19) is not mere detail, but embodies the heart of the Torah. Everything else is rather its details.

This understanding relativizes the interpretation of the holiness command in Leviticus 19:2. Of course, not only does Leviticus 19:18 flow seamlessly from verse 2, but as above, verse 2's imitation of God is clearly explained in Leviticus 19 itself in holistic terms that include how people treat each other. The implication is that vertical obligations to God are included in the horizontal.[80] W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison disarm the tension by eloquently observing that "merciful action is the concrete expression of loyalty to God, and that what God demands is not so much activity directed Godward ('I desire . . . not sacrifice') but loving-kindness benefiting other people ('I desire mercy')."[81] In short, loyalty to God looks like love for others. Activity "directed Godward" is compassionate deeds for others.

It is helpful at this point to discuss briefly the connection of the Golden Rule to the Great Commandments. First, the second Great Commandment, to "love your neighbor as yourself" as applied by Jesus to love for enemy is already connected to the call to be whole as an example of the Greater Righteousness. Sitting as it does in relation

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[78] This understanding accords with the importance of the love commandments in the discussion between a scribe and Jesus Mark 12:32-34. As Keener summarizes, "One who observes this basic principle will fulfill all the basic principles of the law the way God intended them (compare 5:21-48; 22:37-39)" Craig S. Keener, *Matthew*, IVP New Testament Commentary, vol. 1 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 162.

[79] France, *The Gospel of Matthew,* 145.

[80] This uses "vertical" in the colloquial sense of "relationship with God," and "horizontal" as "relationship with people." Perhaps tangentially, however, the reading here suggests that an approach to sanctification that teaches one to "get the vertical right first" and then the horizontal will flow from that may be a category error: Getting the "vertical right" entails a certain kind of "horizontal," or the vertical is absent.

[81] Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 455.

to the wholeness (Matt 5:48) that finds its elaboration in the Golden Rule (Matt 7:12), the latter rightly evokes the command to love neighbor. Second, the reciprocity of the Golden Rule ("whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them") is symmetric with the reciprocity of the second Great Commandment ("love your neighbor as yourself"). Third, and perhaps most significantly, later in Matthew, Jesus himself parallels the function of the Great Commandments and the Golden Rule, suggesting that they are simply two ways of saying the same thing:

> You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets (Matt 22:37-40).

Verse 40 is essentially the same as Matthew 7:12: The Torah is flowing out of love. Therefore, to speak the Golden Rule is to evoke the Great Commandments, and they are mutually interpretive as the matrix that stands as the essence of the Torah.[82]

Finally, James E. Robson notes a tension between how the original audience would have understood the Torah and Jesus' first century summary as love. In short, the summary commandment is "deeply embedded in the middle of Leviticus," and Robson thinks it unlikely that its first readers would have summarized it this way.[83] He points to Antony Cothey's assessment that the call to holiness in Leviticus 19:2 is a more probable original understanding: "If we take Leviticus itself as our guide, then the book's concerns are unified by YHWH's demand that Israel be holy."[84] So what is Jesus doing? Robson sees three influencing factors that contribute to why Jesus summarized it this way: First,

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[82] Pennington, *Sermon on the Mount*, 76-79.

[83] James E. Robson, "Forgotten Dimensions of Holiness," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 33, no. 2 (January 2011): 122, https://doi.org/10.1163/187122011X593000. McKnight writes elegantly, "the surpassing righteousness of 5:20 is a kaleidoscope revealing in separate views the Jesus Creed of loving God and loving others, being 'perfect' in 5:48, and the Golden Rule of 7:12" (McKnight, *Sermon on the Mount*, 141).

[84] Antony Cothey, "Ethics and Holiness in the Theology of Leviticus," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 30, no. 2 (December 1, 2005): 132, https://doi.org/10.1177/ 0309089205060612; so too Lev 20:23 – do not be like the nations.

it was in vogue in the first century to summarize the Torah as love; second, the Greek imperative to "love God" in the Shema (Deut 6:5; echoed in Deut 11:1) appears only there and in the command to love neighbor (Lev 19:18) and sojourner (Robson does not note this connection, but see 19:34), which would elevate its interpretive weight in light of midrash;[85] and third, the Decalogue itself, with its focus on treatment of other, is cohesive with a command to love others, a point Jesus himself makes in Matt 19:18-19 when speaking to the rich young man.[86] Robson also notes that the NT does not replace holiness with love, citing 1 Peter 1:15-16 and Jesus' summary command to be τέλειος (Matt 5:48).

Given the model of reciprocal entailment, this tension is a false dilemma. If love (1 Pet 1:22-23) is the implementation of holiness (1 Pet 1:14-16), the two concepts remain intact; they do not replace each other. They exist at distinct abstraction levels. They only appear in tension when they are placed at the same level of abstraction, or they are misunderstood, as with the misconception that holiness is separation. Holiness is more abstract while love is more concrete, and devotion to God is concretized by whole-heart love for God and other. The detection of such a (false) tension ironically corroborates the close, organic relationship between love and holiness advocated here. Holiness has no innate tension with love. Both are about a "to-ness"—both are being for something. Jesus interprets the holiness of the Torah as love, and this invites a recalibration in understanding the relationship between love and holiness that is the central argument of this thesis.

In summary, the essence of the Torah is given in terms of the Golden Rule and the Great Commandments, and Jesus' fulfillment of the Torah is found in a people

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[85] For example, see William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 47A (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1991), who observes in Hebrews the "hermeneutical principle of *gezera sawa*, that is, if two separate passages of Scripture contain the same word, the verbal analogy provides a sufficient reason for explaining one text in light of another." 158-59, cxxvii.

[86] Robson, "Forgotten Dimensions," 122-23.

realizing its purpose through the Greater Righteousness (Matt 5:20), because this fulfills the goal of the Torah in whole-person heart love (Matt 7:12; 5:48).[87] This stands in direct contrast to the externalism of the Pharisees. This vision of devotion to God and the Greater Righteousness, which manifests in deeds of compassion, is a standing critique not only of germ theory purity but also of a kind of loveless "holiness" or "righteousness" that this "purity" produced. Anyone influenced by germ theory purity would be confronted by Jesus' positive vision of wise discipleship, as the envisioned wholeness of love as devotion to God exists as an implicit corrective to a cultural encyclopedia that misconceived of holiness as having its locus in outward purity. If one wants to be holy, one must implement devotion to God in nothing other than love for God shown in the love of mercy to others.

Movement 3: Love + Nothing = Holiness Implemented

Finally, the broader context of Matthew indicates that the Sermon's vision of discipleship is comprehensive of the Christian life. There is nothing to add to the wholeness of love to exist in devotion to God. First, given that the Greater Righteousness embodies the Torah's fulfillment in whole-person heart-deeds of mercy in keeping with the Golden Rule, the warning "οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθητε εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν" reinforces an understanding that Jesus is not offering a statement on part of the Christian life. The Greater Righteousness is discipleship. All else is what this righteousness looks like. The phrase "τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν," or "kingdom of heaven" evokes in Matthew's context the ways and will of God being realized on earth.[88] It speaks to the ways of the

[87] Or, to cite Paul: "For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (Rom 8:3-4). It is not merely that the active obedience of Jesus fulfills the Law, *but that his people fulfill the Law by love for neighbor* (Rom 15:19) Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans,* Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998), 690.

[88] Jonathan T. Pennington, *Heaven and Earth in the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Baker

Holy One finally coming to pass (Matt 6:10). One of the only places in Matthew where the word group for holiness appears is in Matthew 6:9—"ἁγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου" or "let your name be sanctified" and in the flow of thought, the prayer immediately shows how: "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt 6:10).[89] In context, this happens by the Greater Righteousness growing through the expansion of Jesus' disciples (Matt 28:18). God's name is held in the view of all exactly how it should be—it is in this sense devoted, because when reverenced it is held to represent God as he is. In polymorphic form, the holiness of God's name is a reference to the wholeness of God's character and God's unwavering devotion to God. God's name is sanctified in the lives of people when the Greater Righteousness is the only way of "being in the world" because they are living as if God is likewise completed committed, undivided, devoted, and whole. A fascinating illustration of this appears when God rebukes Moses for striking the rock (Num 20:10-13). He tells Moses and Aaron, "You did not believe in me, to uphold me as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel" (Num 20:12). In the covenantal context, to fail to uphold God as holy is to question his commitment to the covenant, and his resolve to follow through on his promises.[90] In this act, Moses commits the same error as the people when they doubted God's goodness at Meribah. They considered God as not "holy"—not at all to mean impure. They rather impugned his commitment as lackluster.

According to the Sermon, the way that God's name is sanctified is by loyal love to God shown in love for other through deeds of compassion that reflect how one wishes to receive mercy even from God. God is upheld as holy, as committed, when

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Academic, 2007), 7.

[89] It also appears in the warning, "Μὴ δῶτε τὸ ἅγιον τοῖς κυσὶν" or "Do not give what is holy to dogs" (Matt 7:6), but this is likely a proverb along the lines of Prov 23:9 (Keener, *Matthew*, 243) and does not help us understand the disciple's holiness in Matthew's context, as it refers to something "holy" in the disciple's possession.

[90] Acknowledgements to Peter J. Gentry for informally sharing this insight.

people live in trust of the eschatological vision of flourishing. Jesus not only summarizes the whole of discipleship (τέλειος, Matt 5:48) under a whole-person love for God and people, but the nature of that summary establishes a relational context of loyal love for God that is the only way that disciples can exist for God's sake.

The vision of discipleship in Matthew's Gospel finds its heart in the first discourse in the Sermon on the Mount. However, the entire ministry of Jesus in Matthew is bracketed by a question of authority. In the temptations of Jesus of chapter 4, the third temptation, in contrast to Luke 4, has Satan place Jesus on a "high mountain" and offer him the "kingdoms of the world" if he will worship him (Matt 4:8-9).[91] The theme of authority remains strong, especially on the coattails of the Sermon on the Mount. But this scenario is recalled after the resurrection when Jesus gathers his disciples to a mountain in Galilee (Matt 28:16). He tells them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matt 28:18 ESV). Therefore, the disciples are to "make disciples of all nations" in his authority (Matt 28:19). Three participles orbit the finite imperative μαθητεύσατε ("you disciple"): Go (πορευθέντες), baptize (βαπτίζοντες), and teach (διδάσκοντες). The first ("Go") is a participle of attendant circumstance and functions as a command.[92] The relevance of the other two at present is that these participles backfill the content of disciple-making by explicating the means of the finite imperative. They are to make disciples and that means "διδάσκοντες αὐτοὺς τηρεῖν πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην ὑμῖν," that is, "and teach them to keep everything, whatever I commanded you."[93] Discipleship

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[91] On this internal literary connection and the appearance of mountains in Matthew (Matt 4:8; 5:1; 15:29; 17:1-2), see W. D. Davies, and D. C. Allison, *Matthew 19-28,* The International Critical Commentary (New York: T&T Clark, 1991), 679; and Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 369-70.

[92] It is not, "As you go, make disciples." The participle is most likely one of attendant circumstance and takes on the flavor of the finite verb and functions as an imperative. See Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 640, and especially 645: it "fits the structural pattern for the attendant circumstance participle: aorist participle preceding an aorist main verb (in this case, imperative)."

[93] Author's translation. See also Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew,* New American Commentary, vol. 22 (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1992): "Teaching obedience to all of Jesus' commands forms the heart of disciple-making . . . . Jesus' words further demonstrate that Christian ethics and morality should first of

is encapsulated by the teaching of Jesus in Matthew. The other participles speak to spreading and entering discipleship. But the content is in whatever Jesus has taught them, and in Matthew, this is the Greater Righteousness of the Sermon. From his perspective, there is no other part of discipleship that is parallel (in the sense of additive) to what Jesus has taught. What follows in the rest of the NT does not stand as an addition to Jesus' teaching. It is all elaboration from the heart of his teaching. This holistic understanding fits well with the trajectory of the Sermon in contrast to the multiplication of fences around the Torah: Even if Matthew does not explicate every detail, he certainly lays out the main point for which every detail is relativized as (mere) elaboration.

Canonically, Romans 13 corroborates this important trajectory: "Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (13:10). Paul sees Christians who love as the fulfillment of the Torah's purpose such that he "upholds the law" with the Gospel—teleologically speaking, loving Christians (Rom 2:27, 3:31; 8:4; 13:8, 10) embody all that the Torah's commands sought to achieve.[94] Paul and Matthew are expressing the same concept: Love is the essence and all else flows from it. As Scot McKnight insightfully puts it, "Jesus reduced the Torah to two points—loving God, loving others (the Jesus Creed)—not to abolish the many laws but to comprehend them and to see them in their innermost essence."[95] Jesus does not intend for people to look for what they need to add to his teaching—which might be akin to the Pharisees' error in

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all focus on Jesus' teaching, even though the Old Testament still remains relevant. . . and even though the rest of the New Testament remains relevant as further explanation of the significance of Christ and his teachings" (433).

[94] See Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998), 208, who notes that in Romans 3:31, "the idea is not precisely that the law is fulfilled by faith in Christ . . ., but rather than those who have faith in Christ will keep the law" (207-8), as it were, by the Holy Spirit in a life of love (404, 144-45, 692-94): "Believers ought to love one another because this fulfills what the law commands" which is how "love fulfills the law [13:8], since through love the commandments of the Law are upheld and the summary of the Law in Lev. 19:18 is fulfilled" (690).

[95] McKnight, *Sermon on the Mount*, 249. He writes, "Of the many ways to describe or articulate the Torah, two are pertinent in our text: one can either *multiply laws* so as to cover all possible situations, or one can *reduce the law* to its essence."

"fencing to Torah"—but to understand how particulars flow from it. The "reduction" McKnight observes hardly eliminates the details, for it means that all else is encapsulated within the main point, just as Paul affirms. If so, a disciple's holiness is coextensive with this call to discipleship: The disciple's commitment to God is concretized in τέλειος-ness, in the Greater Righteousness, which finds its form in nothing other than the Golden Rule and Great Commandments lived through compassionate deeds.

In summary, Jesus confronts the way that people thought about devotion to God and he teaches that the one who is devoted to God is the one who loves God from the heart and shows that love with mercy to others. In this way, he shows us that it is love that entails holiness, and holiness entails love.

CHAPTER 5

IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Four Aspects

This section briefly discusses four areas of consideration raised by this thesis that warrant deeper exploration.

When Love Separates—
The Complex Contours of Devotion

Paul's response to the man engaged in sexual relations with his step-mother offers a test-case for this thesis. On one hand, devotion to God entails radical mercy to sinners as one who is forgiven. But devotion to God appears, in 1 Corinthians 5, to require strong judicial separation from a sinner (1 Cor 5:3-5). Two polar errors suggest themselves. On one end, a strong example of purity and authority is a magnet for justifying loveless harshness. On the other end, some could never act as Paul does for any reason, as that would lack "grace" and "mercy."

Several comments follow as a starting point for future reflection. First, this tension should not be trivialized. It is a matter of wisdom. One must weigh all factors. Paul illustrates this by his application of the concept of judgment as well as the distinction between those within and without the church.

Second, this sort of separation is not in tension with holiness as devotion, nor with love as the implementation of devotion. It stands orthogonal to the issue. Loves sometimes conflict. It has been argued that biblically, love for God in its rich contours is often expressed in love for others. This entails seeking the pleasure of the beloved—not in everything (i.e., boundless hedonism) pleasing to the individual, but in what brings pleasure to God, the chief love. When loves conflict, loyal love to God trumps

accommodating the sinner, such as in the sense of a love that seeks to fulfill the near-term sinful desires of a person. Jesus explicitly demands greater love for himself than others (Matt 10:37), and from the pen of Matthew, for whom compassion to others is a chief theme. In the general sense, it is a kind of love to seek the immediate happiness of a person, but this is not loyal love to God and therefore does not fulfill the call to love neighbor. What is right in the eyes of God forms the contours of love. Hence, separation vis-à-vis flagrant, proud, and boastful sin (1 Cor 5:11, cf. vs 2, 6-7) occurs when love for Christ (1 Cor 5:7-8) demands it. Devotion to God is implemented with undivided love for God (Matt 5:48), and when that conflicts with obligations, affections, and love for others, the latter acquiesces.[1]

Third, Paul is not callous; his desire was that the man be saved (1 Cor 5:5). While it is unlikely that the person "punished by the majority" (2 Cor 2:6) in Paul's second letter is the same individual; Paul's well illustrates hi compassion as he cries, "I beg you to reaffirm your love for him."[2] Paul loves God's people (2 Cor 2:4)—his joy is found in their joy (2 Cor 2:3). What Paul demanded in his first letter was not cold, callous judgment, but the expression of devotion as love for Christ that in this case resulted in necessary separation from one that prevented devotion. Yet later, this devotion leads to mercy and compassion.

In summary, such issues do not conflict with love as the implementation of holiness. They illustrate the difficulty of the conflicts of relational obligations in a fallen

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[1] Gordon D. Fee draws attention to the Passover imagery of leaven at work in this passage, which corroborates this in advocating for an "'unleavened' expression of their new existence . . . in terms of 'sincerity and truth'" (Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament, [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2014], 219). Furthermore, Paul's corrective instruction, that he only speaks of those *within* the church, where he strongly clarifies that he does "not at all" teach that they must not associate with those outside the church who practice such things (220-23), indicates that Paul is not concerned about a mere moralism, but wholeness and sincere devotion to God.

[2] For a compelling argument that the issue addressed in 2 Cor was rooted in messy interpersonal conflicts and insults against Paul, see Ralph Martin, *2 Corinthians, v*ol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 30-34.

world, where wisdom, such as that illustrated in the Sermon on the Mount, must be applied to discern how to love God and others as a realization of devotion.

Love and Wrath

Similarly, a second area of potential elaboration is the relationship between love, holiness, and wrath. At first, wrath stands in awkward relation to the claim that holiness is comprehensively implemented by love. How is wrath loving? In one sense, the answer is elegantly simple: "Love" that cannot "rise" to wrath for the beloved is hardly love at all.[3] Indeed, wrath can be "wrathful" precisely because the beloved is affronted or harmed. The question then becomes, "What if wrath itself derives its potency from the strength of love?" To answer this question, consider the following three examples.

First, Paul's discussion of sovereignty and the Divine Potter's prerogative in Romans 9 is relevant, where he offers a theodicy given the hardness of Israel.[4]

> What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory— even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?" (Rom 9:22-24)

First, there is an asymmetry between mercy and wrath expressed via the rhetorical distancing in the discourse, indicated by the perfect middle-passive preparation (κατηρτισμένα) of vessels of wrath, in contrast to the aorist active preparation (προητοίμασεν) of vessels of mercy.[5] Second, this should not be read merely as a cosmic

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[3] Recall Aquinas on this point: "Now hatred of a person's evil is equivalent to love of his good." (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica: Volume III - Part II, Second Section* [New York: Cosimo Classics, 2007], 1284). Jonathan Leeman writes, "God's God-centered love bears a posture that opposed everything that opposes God, just as you and I will oppose anyone who opposes the human objects of our love such as a friend or spouse." Jonathan Leeman, *The Church and the Surprising Offense of God's Love: Reintroducing the Doctrines of Church Membership and Discipline* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2010), 86.

[4] See also Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans,* The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1996), 548-49.

[5] Moo notes that while some take the middle-passive to indicate that God is not the agent of

coin flip over who receives wrath. Questions of predestination and Paul's theodicy aside, the narrative of the Exodus gives insight. The example of the object of wrath is Pharaoh. But in Exodus 4:22-24, the hardness of Pharaoh cannot be disconnected from God's love for his beloved: "Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, Israel is my firstborn son, and I say to you, 'Let my son go that he may serve me.' If you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son.'" This, of course, ultimately occurs when the Lord strikes the firstborn Egyptian sons at Passover. The point at present is that God's compassion for his beloved, God's love itself (Exod 3:7-8) gives rise to God's wrath against the Egyptians. The lover cannot dispassionately ignore the affliction of the beloved. Furthermore, God's intention in raising Pharaoh up included the proclamation of his name to the nations (Exod 9:16), which is noteworthy as a merciful objective.

For the second example, in Numbers 25 the Israelites were led astray with the Moabites. Phinehas brutally slays an Israelite and a Midianite woman at the tent of meeting (Num 25:7-8), averting Yahweh's wrath. Significantly, God explains Phinehas's motive: "Phinehas the son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, has turned back my wrath from the people of Israel, in that he was jealous with my jealousy among them, so that I did not consume the people of Israel in my jealousy." Recall that the covenant formula, "I will be your God, and you will be my people," most likely derives from a marriage vow, and often in Scripture the metaphor of adultery is often used for idolatry. Hence, the use of the term jealousy is not a dispassionate response but is couched in the context of a relationship of intimacy and loyal love. For Phinehas to respond with Yahweh's jealousy is to say that he rose to wrath because he loved Yahweh and was enraged for the sake of his beloved. His wrath rose out of his love for God (Lev 19:18!) and this motive not only

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preparation for the vessels of wrath, "the parallel with vv. 17-18 suggests strongly that the agent of 'prepared' is indeed God" (Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, 607); see also Thomas R. Schreiner, who writes that those who take the verb as a middle hold a "self-preparation" view (Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998], 521). Better is Schreiner's observation that "perhaps the use of the passive voice in contrast to the active . . . signals that the plan to destroy the wicked is asymmetrical with the plan to save the vessels of mercy" (522).

justifies Phinehas but transposes his deed into God-honoring love. For Phinehas, loyal love for God comprehensively implemented his devotion to God. In this case, with God's people in rebellion, loyal love for Yahweh excluded compassionate deeds for them. But it was love for God that led Phinehas to concretize his devotion.

The final example is again from Matthew. In Matthew 21, "Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons." What should have assisted travelers' worship had mutated into a marketplace, perhaps including usury and the abuse of the vulnerable. It had invaded the place of worship itself.[6] John explains Jesus' actions in the words of Psalm 69:9: "Zeal for your house will consume me." It is the love of Jesus for his Father that leads him to act in wrath upon the moneychangers. Jesus reveals that this is his motivation in Matthew 21:14, where immediately after the "cleansing" of the temple, "The blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them." Jesus responds in loyal love for God which leads to both wrath for his Father's sake and compassion for the weak and helpless.

The claim of this thesis is not that wrath cannot be an expression of devotion to God. What is suggested here is that wrath is relativized; it is itself the response of love when the beloved is harmed. It is not a separate part of devotion, as if bifurcated from love. It may be understood as the very response of love that concretizes devotion as it arises passionately for the sake of the beloved. In a fallen world, loyal love for God entails difficult choices, and entails allegiance to God that means turning from people at times. But that is nevertheless loyal love for God.

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[6] Note that at a fuller level, Jesus is "threatening the whole sacrificial system" in his actions (Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, New American Commentary, vol. 22 [Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1992], 315). "Den of robbers . . . does suggest at least that Jesus considered many of them generally corrupt" (314). Blomberg also draws attention to the fact that while "the poor who couldn't afford to buy sheep to sacrifice could substitute doves in their place (Lev 5:7)," there is evidence from Mishnaic documents "that extortionary prices for doves exacerbated the plight of the poor" (314).

Intra-Trinitarian Love and Holiness

More briefly, an area left comparatively unexplored in this thesis is the relationship of love and holiness for the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Can it be said that the holiness, the devotion of each Triune person to the other persons, is implemented in their love for each other? Since God is love, does love ground the commitment of God to his covenants, promises, and people? To what degree is the holiness and love of the disciple analogous to inter-trinitarian holiness and love? These questions would provide further insight into the understanding of this thesis.

The Holy Spirit and Concretized Devotion

Finally, another aspect that this thesis does not address is the role of the Holy Spirit in connection to the disciple's love. In the passage beloved by Augustine, "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" (Rom 5:5), Paul may imply that God's love itself is the love of the disciple for God and other. Similar themes are seen in the Gospel of John and 1 John. The Spirit is holy—he is devoted. And the way his "perfecting presence" in believers is seen is in their Spirit-borne love for God and other.[7] It appears that the Spirit sanctifies by bringing God's love in people to its telic objective—to perfection. Thus, the Spirit's role vis-à-vis this thesis is a significant area for future study.

[7] Michael Scott Horton, *Rediscovering the Holy Spirit: God's Perfecting Presence in Creation, Redemption, and Everyday Life* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017), 41-46.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Love and holiness have often been placed in tension. This tension is rooted in a polarity between the "to-ness" of love and a misconceived "from-ness" of holiness. As a result, Christian sanctification can be affected in areas such as compassion, mercy, and assurance.

This thesis, with its goal of integrating holiness and love for the disciple, has argued that love entails holiness, and holiness entails love, because Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount that devotion to God is comprehensively implemented or realized in loyal love for God that works out in love for others, chiefly in compassionate deeds. This reciprocal entailment was derived from the implicit challenge in the Sermon against the prevailing first century "germ theory" of purity that focused on externals. By inviting people to a wholeness of devotion realized by love for God and other, Jesus offers a cohesive picture of love implementing holiness in the disciple's life.

Moreover, the idea of polymorphism and its application to holiness was introduced to provide a conceptual category for understanding that ideas can exist at different levels of abstraction. In this case, the commitment or devotion that is holiness can be implemented with different forms depending on context, whether forensic or experiential, or personal or inanimate. Love, taken primarily as delight in the beloved, was focused through the lens of loyalty to God and the loving mercy toward other people that naturally flows out of such loyalty. For people, love is the comprehensive implementation of "polymorphic" holiness. By observing that holiness is relatively abstract, and love is relatively concrete, they can exist in reciprocal entailment, even while upholding their natural semantics—love's abstraction in holiness is always entailed

by its presence, and holiness's concretion of love is likewise always entailed when a disciple is "holy."

Let it never be love versus holiness. Rather, *love so that you are holy*.

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ABSTRACT

LOVE AND HOLINESS IN RECIPROCAL ENTAILMENT: LOVE AS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF HOLINESS IN MATTHEW'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT

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The relationship between love and holiness has been an area of confusion. On one hand, when holiness is understood as separation, it is naturally in conflict with love. Yet others have understood them to be different expressions of the same reality. In this thesis, the relationship of love and holiness is explored considering recent lexicographical research on holiness, which has shown that its central meaning is the positive sense of devotion. Together with the theological implications of Matthew's Sermon on the Mount given the contemporaneous and dominant cultural concept of purity as primarily a matter of externals, it is demonstrated that holiness and love exist in reciprocal entailment. The concept of polymorphism is applied to holiness: While love and holiness are distinct concepts, love is the comprehensive implementation of holiness for Jesus' disciples, such that devotion to God is wholly implemented in nothing other than love in all its contours.

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