
Made in His Image: Love

"We love because he first loved us"

Key Text:

Matthew 22: ³⁴ But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. ³⁵ And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ³⁶ "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" ³⁷ And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸ This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

Mark 12: ²⁸ And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" ²⁹ Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰ And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' ³¹ The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." ³² And the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him. ³³ And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." ³⁴ And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And after that no one dared to ask him any more questions.

- 1) Why is the idea that "God is love" so popular with society? How does the world define love? What are some influences that can pollute our understanding of the *love of God*?
- 2) There are four different kinds of love in the Greek NT language with *agape* predominately used 259 times. *Agape* describes the love of God, which is an act of the will. *Agape* is "an intelligent, purposeful attitude of esteem and devotion; a selfless, purposeful, outgoing attitude that desires to do good to the one loved" (Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies in the Greek New Testament*). Consider how the following passages emphasize this definition: Rom. 5:8; Jn. 3:16.
- 3) Based on *agape* love being the great *commandment*, what does that imply that love is not?
- 4) Why does the great commandment instruct to love God first, others second?

- 5) A quick Google search found the following quotes:
“Love yourself so much that when someone treats you wrong, you recognize it.” – Rena Rose
“To fall in love with yourself is the first secret to happiness.” – Robert Morely
“Self-love is the source of all our other loves.” – Pierre Corneille
“Even when it seems that there is no one else, always remember there’s one person who never ceased to love you – yourself.” – Sanhita Baruah
- a. Consider Mt. 22:39, Mk. 12:31, Lk. 10:27. Based on these passages, does Jesus teach us to love ourselves? Why or why not? Do you have any concerns with the above quotes? If so, why? Also read 2 Tim. 3:1-7.
 - b. How does Paul apply the command to “love your neighbor as you love yourself” in Eph. 5:28-30?
- 6) Romantic love, brotherly love, and a parent’s love for a child is limited in its capacity for the following reasons:
- a. Based on need
 - b. Covets reciprocity
 - c. Weighs the worth of its object

What is the scope or nature of *agape* love according to 1 Cor. 13:4-8?

Key Text:

Galatians 5: ¹³For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. ¹⁴For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁵But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

²⁶Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. ^{6:1} Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. ²Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. ³For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

- 7) What is the law of Christ? How can we fulfill this law based on the context that it was given? How does this show love towards others?