



THE SECOND GREATEST COMMANDMENT
1 Jn. 4:19-21 | Jn. 21:15-19 | 1 COR. 13:1-7

Two Mistakes to Avoid...

- Altruism: All that matters is _____ others.
- Individualism: All that matters is my _____ spiritual growth.
 - I try to _____ being inconvenienced by others' needs.

What Is Love For Our Neighbor?

- Love for God's _____ is an inescapable consequence of love for God. (1 Jn 4:19-21; Jn. 21:15-19)
- Loving someone is a commitment to having righteous thoughts, words, and actions toward them. (1 Jn. 3:15-18; 1 Cor. 13:4-7)

The Difficulties of Love...

- Love requires having an open hand with your _____ and convenience. (1 Jn. 3:16; 1 Cor. 13:4-5)
 - Love's Posture: "You first, me later."
- Love demands pointing others to that which is _____ over that which is easy. (1 Cor. 13:6)

The Power to Love Others...

- God's _____ for us fuels our love for others. (1 Jn. 4:19)
- God's love for _____ fuels our love for others. (Rom. 14:15)
- We will receive eternal _____ for our acts of love. (Heb. 6:10; 1 Tim. 6:17-19; Lk. 14:14)

Cross Adoption Reward



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The Power to Love Others...

- God's _____ love _____ for us fuels our love for others. (1 Jn. 4:19)
- God's love for _____ others _____ fuels our love for others. (Rom. 14:15)
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Last week we talked about loving God with all of our heart soul mind and strength. And in Mt. 22 Jesus calls that the first and greatest commandment, but after that he moves on to the second great commandment which is love your neighbor as yourself... Want to frame our conversation this morning with two errors to avoid when it comes to thinking about knowing and following Jesus...

Two Mistakes to Avoid...

- Altruism: All that matters is loving others.

Altruism is one of those ACT words. Means selfless concern for others. To be a Christian means that you're committed to spreading peace in your community and being committed to social action. It's not about Christ absorbing the penalty of our sin and offering abundant life through repentance and faith. It's about emulating Christ's example of loving others. Salvation through repentance and faith isn't really important in fact I heard one person say, "It's not about seeing people go to heaven, but bringing heaven to earth." And we're going to spend our time today talking about the necessity of loving our neighbor, following Christ is much more than loving our neighbor. And at least in evangelical circles, what seems to be more of a problem than pure altruism is rugged individualism...

- Individualism: All that matters is my personal spiritual growth.

The only thing that matters is my personal relationship with Jesus. My personal holiness and walk with the Lord. My spiritual disciplines and development. If Altruism makes the mistake of being only horizontal, individualism makes the mistake of being only vertical. And what happens here is you build a lifestyle that allows you to pursue Jesus but avoid being inconvenienced by others' needs.

- I try to avoid being inconvenienced by others' needs.

I just have a lot going on and I only have enough bandwidth for me and mine. Now we would never say it this way because we'd feel bad, but this is so many of us. I can't afford to be burdened by your brokenness and pain because I've got my own issues, and besides I'm super busy and just don't have time. You should probably just go talk with your therapist or pastor because I'm late for my lunch appointment. But I'll be praying for ya! **Pray.**

What Is Love For Our Neighbor?

- Love for God's people is an inescapable consequence of love for God. (1 Jn 4:19-21; Jn. 21:15-19) There is a popular idea in American Christianity that you can love Jesus and pass on the church. There are tons of people that you and I know that swear up and down that they love God, but have no affiliation or commitment to the church. People who promise that they have a personal relationship with Jesus but don't have any personal relationship with his people.

Besides, you're not saved by going to church, the church has hypocrites, and some people are legalistic, and frankly annoying and weird. And we can have Jesus in our heart, we can pray and read the Bible in our bedroom—we can even listen to sermons online. So why not just do that? That sounds like a way better deal. I'll enjoy the benefits of having God as Father and pass on the burdens of doing life with his family. And the Bible says if you say that—you demonstrate that you actually don't love God.

1 Jn 4:2-21, "If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. 21 And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother." Now realize this isn't talking about being a loving person in general—this is talking about love for believers. You and I have been adopted into a spiritual family and the evidence that God as father is if we love our brothers and sisters—to say it differently the evidence that we belong to God's family is if we love God family. The negation is also true—namely that if we don't love God's family, we have no reason to believe that we belong to it.

Let's look at another picture, in Jn 21. This is conversation comes after Jesus has been raised from the dead, and he's talking with Peter. Now you'll remember Peter crashed and burned a few days earlier—told Jesus he was willing to die for him but then denied even knowing him three times exactly as Jesus had predicted. And now there having a little one-on-one and Jesus asks a question that would be very natural to ask in light of Peter's denial. "When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Now listen to what Jesus says in response. This is amazing. I would have said, "Then don't deny me again! or "Then you go back and tell all those people that you do know me." Jesus wants proof of Peter's love for him but it's not what you might expect...

He said to him, "Feed my lambs." 16 He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." 17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."

Love for Jesus necessarily results in love for His people. In fact in Jn 13:35 Jesus says "by this everyone will know you are my disciples—if you love one another." So I'd just want to challenge you if you've heard the love Jesus but skip the church vibe, don't be deceived. That's not a thing. We're called to love God's people and frankly not only are we called to love but to belong to God's people. **Membership Class**. So, we're called to love God's people and I want to talk for a moment by what I mean by love. Let's get a working definition of love here:

- Loving someone is a commitment to having righteous thoughts, words, and actions toward them. (1 Jn. 3:15-18; 1 Cor. 13:4-7)

Huge topic. Dissertations on this topic... "18 Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth." Words, and actions. 17 But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? So love isn't just words and actions, we should be doing things with the right heart, the right motives and the reasons why I'm doing this. (Prov. 27:4 "Blessing...cursing") Paul goes so far as to say, "If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing." You could give all you have to win Nobel Peace Prize or Time magazine person of the year. So when we're talking about loving others, we mean having right words and actions flowing from a right heart—godly motives or reasons. You're going to talk more about that in small groups—no way you could really absorb all of that in two minutes and that's not my intention, and you'll flesh this out in small groups—but I do want you to point out two things (1) This is for everybody—you might add more but you can't take away. (2) It doesn't mean you have to be everyone's friend or like everybody.

Now most of us are probably on board at this point—we probably all agree that we should love, you might even love the idea of being a loving person. And that’s all good and wonderful until loving others starts to be painful. Starts to be difficult.

The Difficulties of Love...

Tyson “Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the mouth.” This is far from sentimental. We need to count the cost up front...

- Love requires having an open hand with your comfort and convenience. (1 Jn. 3:16; 1 Cor. 13:4-5)

One of the reasons loving people is so hard is our obsession with ease and efficiency. I kick the ice under the refrigerator sometimes. No Grub Hub—what is this 2014? We love convenience and comfort which means we even in the church we’re tempted to develop habits and rhythms in our interactions that keep us at a safe distance from people’s needs. Happy to come and shake hands and be seen but investing and meeting people where they’re at, it just get’s messy and difficult. The sermon and worship feel like a gift but “doing family” feels like a job. It is. Gal. 6:2 says “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” He did not mean insulate yourself from people’s burdens so that your life can be hassle free. He’s calling us to love other as ourselves. Doesn’t mean I give people all my preferences... Phil. 2:3-4, “3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.” In the final analysis, their life counts more than mine.

You and I must have a posture that recognizes what’s been done for Christ and in love for others be the kind of person who runs toward others in their brokenness not away. It means we realize that Christ has died for me not so that I can have a comfortable life but a meaningful one. So I hold my comfort and convenience with an open hand and I don’t insulate myself from everyone’s needs but rather move toward them so that I can extend the rescue that’s been extended to me. Staying up late, going to bed early, taking a phone call, helping with your resources.

○ Love’s Posture: “You first, me later.”

- Love demands pointing others to that which is true over that which is easy. (1 Cor. 13:6) Part of being a loving neighbor and friend is the willingness to say the hard right over the easy wrong. “it [love] does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.” (1 Cor. 13:6) Love for others propels them toward what is true not necessarily what is comfortable. American Idol auditions. Couple weeks ago we said that it’s a commonly accepted idea that “love unites” but that it’s very controversial very divisive to define what love is. And in our culture, love is, “You doing what I decide is best for me.” If you’re not affirming me and helping me towards what I want, you’re not for me and you’re probably judging me.

But friends true love—that is biblical love—is not I do what you decide is best for you. True love is me doing what God has said is best for you.” True love isn’t helping people toward what feels best but helping people toward what is right. In 3 Jn has uses this great phrase “I cannot tell you I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.” (3 Jn. 1:4) Love is helping people walk according to the truth. Staying in marriage. Denying desire. Keeping the pregnancy. This is the kind of people you should want around you. Someone who will stay up late, sacrifice your comfort, help you buy groceries and tell you that you can’t sing. So we have a tall order here, and we’ve got to bring this to a close by asking and answering the question we always have to answer: how are we going to do this?

We said last week that the law doesn’t empower what it commands; that telling you what to do doesn’t give you the power to do it. And the fact is that there are people in your life—believers in your life—who are very difficult to love. In-laws, siblings, co-workers, people in our church, maybe people in a ministry or

church group that you're a part of. People who are exhausting, annoying, life taking and you've heard that you have to love them, but hearing that doesn't give you the power. So, what do we need? And I think we need at least three things we need to realize if we're going to love folks...

The Power to Love Others...

- God's love for us fuels our love for others. (1 Jn. 4:19)

Everyone wants to be loved. We need our love tanks filled so we fill others in hopes they'll fill ours. And what happens is that I'm loving you because I need you to love me. The motivation for loving you is being loved in return. And the problem with that is, if your motivation is generating reciprocal love, you'll only love people who love you back. But Jesus calls us to much more than that. Mt. 5:46 "For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?" So how can I do that and the answer lies in how much we're loved in Christ. You *do* need to be loved and you have been loved and are being loved by God—this is the power to love. 1 Jn. 4:19 "We love because he first loved us." We don't love out of need, but out of fullness. I loved you when you didn't love me. Jonathan Diggs's wedding. So when your faced with someone who's difficult remember that you have everything you need to love them.

- God's love for others fuels our love for others. (Rom. 14:15)

This is important especially with exhausting difficult people—and I'm thinking specifically here of believers. When you get that exhausting person, you have to remind yourself of who they are. And they may be a thorn in your side, but if they are a believer, they're not a thorn in God's side. He's not more for you than them. Not more in your corner than theirs. God loves them, chose, them bled for them, will glorify them! C.S. Lewis "remember that the dullest most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship." Remind yourself that they're in the family and are heirs to the kingdom, and through Christ's death and

- We will receive eternal reward for our acts of love. (Heb. 6:10; 1 Tim. 6:17-19; Lk. 14:14)

(Lk 14:13-14) 13 But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, 14 and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just."

1 Tim. 6 "18 They the rich are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, 19 thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life." "For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do." (Heb. 6:10)

Not selfish to do it for reward. Don't be more spiritual than Jesus.

How to deal with hard people:

C_{ross}

A_{doption}

R_{eward}