

TO LOVE GOD IS TO LOVE OTHERS

One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

Mark 12:28-31 (NIV)

❖ Love Your Neighbor As Yourself

"Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord."

Leviticus 19:18 (NIV)

1. The Bible is clear that the sins we commit against others show our LACK of LOVE.

The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Romans 13:9

2. It is also clear that all of the Law and Commandments are proven by our LOVE. *The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."*

Galatians 5:14

3. James goes on to say that this is a "Royal Law", which means, it is at the HEART of GOD.

If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right.

James 2:8 (NIV)

❖ "Jesus, Who is My Neighbor?"

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "What is written in the Law?" Jesus replied. "How do you read it?" The Jewish expert answered: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' " "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

Luke 10:25-29 (NIV)

1. For most Jews a neighbor could only be ANOTHER JEW.
"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy'."
 Matthew 5:43 (NIV)

2. Jews didn't just consider themselves BETTER than others, they DESPISED others.
The Jews answered him, "Aren't we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?"
 John 8:48 (NIV)

3. The Religious Leader is asking what "QUALIFIES a person to be my neighbor?"
The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)
 John 4:9 (NIV)

❖ How Do I Love My Neighbor as Myself?

In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."
 Luke 10:30-37 (NIV)

1. The first thing we must do is: REPENT of any wrong feelings toward someone else.
Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord,
 Acts 3:19 (KJV)

Repent: "To repent; to turn from one's sins; to change; to turn; to change one's mind; to turn one's life around."

2. The second thing we must do is: Seek RECONCILIATION with others.
Leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.
 Matthew 5:24 (NIV)

Reconciliation: *"A change from enmity to friendship. It is mutual, i.e., it is a change wrought in both parties who have been at enmity toward one another."*

3. Next, we must consider: How to RESPOND PROPERLY to the needs of our neighbor.

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

Matthew 25:34-36 (NIV)

"Do all the good you can, By all the means you can, In all the ways you can, In all the places you can, At all the times you can, As long as ever you can."

John Wesley