

Love Your Neighbor As Yourself?

April 27, 2016

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

Just in the past few weeks I have had the honor (yes, I consider it an honor when God Almighty chooses little ole' me to speak into any of his children's lives) of being used by God to speak into a few believers lives. What I am noticing is if I had not overcome the depression and anxiety which stemmed from not learning to love myself I would not have been able to speak into these dear ones the Lord brought me to.

1 John 4:7-8 - Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

The first step in learning how to love is having God first in our life. What does this look like in the natural? I had an extremely volatile temper (I'm still not perfect but I am far better than I used to be). When I began my relationship with the Lord (accepting the Lord and becoming a believer is totally different than having a relationship with Him) I would take deep breaths and pray to Him whenever I felt I was about to boil over. Now I am in a place where it takes a lot longer for me to get steamed because I pray His love and peace long before I get to that point (again, still a work in a progress). This act of praying to Him and speaking his love and peace into my situations is an example of putting God into my situations and allowing Him to take control of those situations. This is an exercise of learning to love the Lord with all my heart, soul, and mind. Once I started to grasp the Truth that God is love and He can help me in my self-control, I started to come into the realization that He loves me exactly where and for who I am and He alone by His Spirit changes my heart. This Truth of loving myself as He does started the process of me loving my fellow man (neighbor). This does not mean we have to let people mistreat us or abuse us in any way (mentally, physically, verbally, or

emotionally). It simply means that we begin to understand that when others lash out or try to belittle us it has nothing to do with us but has everything to do with where and who they are at that moment.

When we come to put the Lord first in our life and begin to receive His enormous love for us, we begin to love ourselves in a new way. Only when we begin to love ourselves can we truly love our neighbors. Loving each other has nothing to do with our giftings, nothing to do with how busy we keep ourselves for the Lord's work, and nothing to do with how spiritual we are or think we are. Love in itself is our greatest gift. When we ask ourselves if we are loving each other we must first ask do we love ourselves. Have we allowed God's love (God Himself) into our hearts? Have we truly surrendered our all to God?

1 John 4:16, 18 - And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him....18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=cFJ5qCmvPkY>

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