

Beyond Our Limits

Mark 10: 17-22 The rich young ruler

We love God, to a point. We love each other, to a point. We believe Him, to a point. We will obey Him, to a point.

That point is the wall between where we are and where God wants us to be. All of us have a limit. Some of us have been at this point for many years with no growth.

Our faith and obedience has a limit. Our love has a limit. It stops somewhere. It's at that place that we allow fear in. We allow self-will and reason to take over. At this point, familiarity and comfort zones kick in. These limits are self-imposed.

Mt. 26: 31-36 Jesus told his disciples they would fall away that night. All denied they would. He was right. They were wrong.

Does God want us to move beyond our limits? Yes. Is it possible? Yes. The better question may be, are we willing? We're not always willing, even though we may say we are. If we're really willing, we must learn how.

Once we get beyond our limits, we will never be the same. We will find a new level of living, of loving God and one another, of believing God, and of obeying God.

There is risk involved. There may be some that may not appreciate or reciprocate love when we show love. That's a risk we have to take. It's the risk that Jesus took on us. If He loved us, we also ought to love one another (I John 4:11).

Another risk is that we might believe and not receive, or at least not right away. This does not have to stop our faith. It may redirect it and leave some things in God's hands. But our faith can still be as strong.

But when we live beyond our current limits, it affects everything. Our holiness increases. Our love for God increases. Our faith grows. Our love for people is easier as we see them through God's eyes. And our

obedience to God is more consistent as we become more sensitive to His Spirit.

Are we really willing to change? How do we do it? Where do we begin?

These changes are first spiritual (Zech. 4:6). Therefore, the change begins in the spirit and affects the natural. This means we must allow our spirits to lead, under the control of the Holy Spirit.

Second, we must learn to use God's word as our guide to get there. The word is life-giving. It has power to move us beyond our limitations. His word is spirit, and it is life (John 6:63).

Third, it takes time and deliberate effort. So let's take the time.

It's like exercise. We all know there is a certain point we reach where we can't do any more. That's our limit. However, we also know that it's possible to go beyond that limit with time and effort. It's the same thing with our spiritual lives.

The way to go beyond the point is to put first things first, and the other things will follow. There is an order, and we must follow the order. God gives us the order in His word. It must start with love. This is the primary thing.

We need faith, but faith works by love (Gal. 5:6). In life when all else fails, three things remain, faith, hope and love. And the greatest of these is love (I Cor. 13:13). So moving beyond our limits starts with love. And it doesn't even start with loving one another. It starts with loving God.

Jesus said the first and greatest commandment is to love God (Matt. 22: 36-37). Loving our neighbor is the second commandment and is like the first, but the first is to love God. So it is here we must start.

The order is: Love, faith, and obedience. Specifically, loving God, loving one another, believing God, and obeying God.

Faith works as it should when love is in place. When love is limited faith is limited as well. But when our love gets past its current limit, our faith grows.

And when our faith gets past its current limit, so does our obedience. And then everything else follows. We become greater. Our capacity to accomplish things becomes greater. We see things in a less limiting way. We see God more often in more things. We talk to him more intimately. And we see His blessings overtaking us, as He said they would (Deut. 28:2).

Here are the keys to loving God beyond our limits.

1. Pray

Keep asking for more. Don't be satisfied. It begins with our desire. You've got to want MORE. More love. More power. More of His presence. More of His grace. Keep wanting more. Seek, and you will find (Matt. 7:7-8). Keep asking, keep seeking, and keep knocking.

2. Pursue

The evidence of passion is pursuit. Identify the limit. Where do you stop loving God? What is that point where you don't go any farther? Once you identify that place, pursue change. Go after it. Do what you've never done in loving God.

3. Practice

Be deliberate and intentional. Practice the presence of God, practice the praises of God. Practice loving God. We do this by keeping our hearts open to Him. By repenting of all known sin in our lives. By spending more time with Him than we do now. By talking with Him more than we do. By following Him more closely.

It's hunger in prayer, passion in pursuit, and diligence in practice that takes us beyond our limits. Before we know it, we're at a new place in our love for God.

