

Topic	Learning to Love other's Well
Reference	Matthew 22: 34-40
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"Love in practice is a harsh and dreadful thing compared to the love in dreams."

We are hardwired to love and to give love. Love out in the world nowadays is toxic and today God gives two commandments and everything we do hangs on that.

The text is interesting because Jesus is being setup. Before the Sadducees come and try to set him up, so basically the way, the question is being setup by this expert of the law, is that there are over 300 laws in the Old Testament, so which one is the greatest. It is a question to set it up, it is not with good intentions, but here is a point. Let's start off with the basis of obedience. It is in many people is like, you are a bad boy, you better come to church, or God is going to punish you, you better do all this Christian stuff, or you are going to burn in hell man. That's not coming from love, that's coming from fear. We know perfect love cast out fear. The other one is the obedience which Chinese people understand. I do this, I scratch your back you scratch my back. So, God I come to church, deal. I come, and I give money, deal. I do this and do that, please prosper me. That is not obedience either. So, Jesus gives you the underpinning reason why we do everything we do is love and if it is not starting from that, two chapters down the road, he calls the pharisees hypocrites. So, let's get that right.

If I stand here and if it is not coming from these two commandments, I am a hypocrite. You could do anything for the church and be so absorbed in it, if it doesn't come from these two commandments, you are a hypocrite. We have two lessons today. I found this very helpful for my life.

1. Unless you love God wholeheartedly, you cannot love others healthily.
2. How and who you chose to love reveals how much you really love God.

John picks it up and he says

1 John 4:20 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.

So, you love God with your heart and your mind and with your soul, this derives every action I do. There are two of these verses are found in the Old Testament. The first and greatest commandment is found in Deuteronomy 6:5. The second one is found in Leviticus. Lets look at the first one,

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ **38** This is the first and greatest commandment. **39** And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ **40** All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

In simple English with every fiber of your being and then he explains how this is being done. God is supposed to be the air we breathe in, he is your everything. So, it begs the obvious question, John said it, I don't see God, I really have difficulty loving a person I see you ask me to love an invisible God, what kind of religion is this.

Why do we love some people so much? What triggers it?

Because we remember how they loved us. So, you think about it. All of us have people in our lives that we love very-very deeply, it could be a spouse, it could be parents, it could be kid and when you pause and you think of that person, this thing just wells up inside you, because you know that person, we call it a relationship. Then you think of that person and what that person has done and you then feel very deeply in love. So, unless you feel, how wide God's love is, how deep, how long, how high that surpasses knowledge and takes you to the fullness of God, you are not going to be able to love God, because he is invisible. This is something that Holy Spirit helps us to do and how do we plug God out and you know it is not just, wow I got filled up with the music this morning, I put up my hands and I say everything became shadows in the light of you, I worship you.

In the New Testament it is the gospel. So, God so loved the world, he gave his one and only begotten son. So, this is not something you and I do naturally. It is telling us, it is something that is not just caught, it is something taught. It says later on tie

⁸Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

Why go to such an extent?

Because the Israelites forget, and we often forget. See the way it goes, they have come out of Egypt, they have been saved, to obey, not obey then cross the

red sea. You have been saved, now obey in response from a thankful heart. If you say, God love you so much like the song says, it comes from a grateful heart. So, this is something that is not just caught, it is taught. That's why you read your bible, that's why you pray, that's why you go to live groups, that's why you fellowship. Loving God is a duty.

Spend time knowing God, spend time making God your anchor.

7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home

This means that discipleship is primarily not the work of the church, it is the work of the family. Discipleship begins at home. Discipleship is intergenerational. You pass it on, it is mentoring.

9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

So, it begins at home. Loving parents, loving children is a contradiction. Confucius picked this a long time ago and he had five relationships. They are in a hierarchy.

- The son must obey the father,
- the youngest son must obey the older son,
- the wife must obey the husband.
- Overriding all of this, the emperor is king.

So, if the husband tells the wife to do something but the king tells the wife to do something else, she is supposed to listen to the king. If the oldest son tell the youngest son to do something but the emperor tells the younger son to do something else, the younger son obeys the king. Confucius was onto something. You find a lot of this grounded in the Ten Commandments.

The first four all deal with God. Commandment 5 to 10 all deal with people. Commandment 6-10 is your neighbor. Commandment 5 is interesting, it is neither your neighbor and neither God. They call this the bridging commandment.

How do I honor my mother and father in commandment 5? By not murdering, by not committing adultery, by not stealing, by not giving false testimony, by not coveting. The Chinese culture understands this, you bring shame to your family.

What happens when you father is a thief?

So, commandment 5 just puts you in a conflict because your dad is a thief, the dad just broke commandment 8. So commandment 5 goes back to commandment 1 which overrides everything else, you should have no other gods before me. The moment you love your dad more you are making your father your god. So, what the commandments are telling us is that you love God first, everything else goes after that. That's why Jesus says when he will come, he will divide families.

Why is this important in application?

There will be days where the love of a husband, the love of a wife, the love of parents, the love of children will be very cold and it will be very painful and you will wake up and you will feel deeply hurt and what takes you through those storms, it is when God's love so anchors you, it gives you clarity to go through.

Love your neighbor as yourself.

Love is strange, because women are better at this, because men know how to talk a lot, but women are very smart, they can size up, they can smell. You can be charming, but you are not sincere. Let's go to Leviticus again

Twice it is repeated, I am the Lord. That is coming again from the recalling of the Exodus, I am the Lord your God. So, this is the first commandment. So here loving your neighbor is tied to that. The second thing is we ask ourselves, like we did for the first commandment, how do you love God, we now ask ourselves, how do we love your neighbor. He tells you, how you love your neighbor. How do you do it? By not perverting justice, by not showing partiality, not showing favoritism.

Martin Buber says, everything in life is about relationship, you take away relationship life has no meaning. Relationships between people is 'I' and 'thou'.

Now it is quite interesting because it says, human beings instead of looking as me and you and you here, Martin Buber says, you are in the image of God. When I see you, I see you in a relationship in the image of God, that's the first commandment coming behind me every time I am talking to you, or when I am connecting to you. What most of us do is not I and thou, it is 'I' and 'it'. He says, we look at people not as people but as objects. We dehumanize people. How do we do that? Because we break the Leviticus commandment. How do we break it?

This is how we break it. I break it when I use you. I break it when I manipulate you. I break it when I am so dependent on you for my life, you are basically my

bank. You are basically my crutch. I break it when I exploit you. I am very nice to you but I am actually paying you peanuts. I break it when I slander you and when I am threatened by you.

Leviticus is telling you that the world is wired on a commodity and commercial transactional relationship and why the first commandments says, wholeheartedly is because we tend to compartmentalize our life. Here is a very simple test? List down your friends you hang out with. List down who you are close with. You will find none of this are in the list, because you are using all of them. You invited them because you want something from them. So, Leviticus is trying to tell you, this is how you love your neighbor. It is beyond just being kind to people. There is one very sensitive point in Leviticus that Matthew picks up,

You love your neighbor by rebuking them.

Matthew 5:17-20

17 Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

Matthew 7:12

12 So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

So, this is telling you to love your God with all your heart and mind, all your soul and to love your neighbor as yourself, basically is the DNA of Matthew. Now this is very important, why, because when you read a verse like Matthew 18, you have to read 15-20 in the context of loving your neighbor and loving God and I want to humbly propose, a lot of us fail to do this.

- We often don't know how to give rebuke in love
- And we often don't know how to receive rebuke in love

Peter Scazzero gives a very-very good way of breaking this down. He says you got to look at this, between us when you come to a confrontation, remember that space is sacred.

Most of the time we don't come with grace, we don't come with forgiveness, we don't come with reconciliation, we come to ka chow each other. We don't know how to give it, we don't know how to say it. Let me break this down because Leviticus gives you many ways of going around it.

The truth is we fail to confront, not because we love others too much, but because we *love ourselves* too much. We fear others misunderstanding us or being angry with us. We are afraid of what others will think. **We don't want to endure the hardships of honesty because we love ourselves more than we love our neighbors.** Yet we know that the depth of love in a relationship can be judged by the degree of honesty that exists. Biblical rebuke is motivated by the Second Great Command.

Paul Tripp, Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands.

How do you rebuke your neighbors frankly?

You judge your neighbor fairly. Scripture is telling us to go to that person and ask him the reason, because that could be a simplest pace you misunderstood me.

Leviticus tells us first thing, learn to ask the correct questions. The second thing, we slander people without thinking. It is like we are blind to our blindness.

Do not hate a fellow Israelite in your heart

Christians tend to be very fake. We are supposed to love people, so we put on a mask. So, we have a very subtle way of hating people. Until we clear up the little subtle sins, we become blind and we are not loving our neighbor. It is a very subtle grudge. Peter Scazzero says, it is right from the bottom, you just see the surface, you put on a smile but inside there is a word, it is just called resentment.

Rebuking is the missing key in our relationship. We are all on a journey to learn. The more we are able to give this in love and receive it in love, we love God more. So, make this our culture and loving others is always in the context of redemptive relationship and Paul Tripp says this again, embedded in a large story of redemption is a principle we must not miss.

The great commandment changes me to be able to carry out the great commission. We ask ourselves who is your neighbor. Unless you love God wholeheartedly, you cannot love others properly.

How and who you choose to love reveals how much you really love God.

Loving others is a paraless journey. You will get hurt but no price too high than the God who died for us.