

DEVELOPING AN ATMOSPHERE OF LOVE

1) God wants us to love each other and develop an atmosphere of love

God wants LOVE to be our top priority, our primary identity, and the dominant characteristic of our lifestyle!

Matthew 22:34-40: "... which is the greatest commandment in the Law? Jesus replied, "**Love the Lord your God** with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: **Love your neighbor** as yourself. **All** the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commands".

John 13:34-35: "A new **command** I give you: **Love one another**. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this **all men will know you are my disciples, if you love one another**."

Ephesians 4:32-5:2: "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and **live a life of love**, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God".

- God's dominant attribute is love, He first loved us, and wants us to love others! (I John 4:7-21)
- God wants us to love each other deeply, from the heart (I Peter 1:22)

2) Love has benefits!

- a) Love covers a multitude of sins/wrongs (I Peter 4:8)
- b) Love and truth are catalysts that spark spiritual growth (Eph 4:15)
- c) Love is foundational for relationship building (Romans 12:9-16)
- d) Loving people develops God's love within us, and draws us closer to God (I John 4:7-12, especially verses 12 & 16)
- e) Love can help restore fallen people (2 Cor 2:5-8)
- f) Love attracts others, including unbelievers (John 13:34-35; Acts 2:42-47)
- g) Love _____

3) God has taught us how we should love, and how we can develop an atmosphere of love!

Luke 10:25-37: The Parable of the Good Samaritan

THE STORY (PARABLE) OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Cast of Characters:

Robbers

Man (Jew) traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho (a 17 mile trip and a descent of 3300 feet), who was robbed and badly beaten by robbers.

3 Men who had opportunity to help this Jewish man:

- 1) **Jewish Priest** – a professional religious leader
- 2) **Jewish Levite** – a lay religious leader/associate
- 3) **Samaritan** – Samaritans were considered enemies of the Jews; Samaritans and Jews hated each other. Samaritans were considered inferior because they were of mixed Jewish and Gentile descent. They were also in religious disagreements, such as different bible (Jews = all Old Testament; Samaritans = Pentateuch only); and different places of special worship (Jews = Jerusalem; Samaritans = Mt. Gerizim). At one time the Samaritans had built temple on Mt. Gerizim, but the Jews destroyed it.

Luke 10:25-37: The Parable of the Good Samaritan

25: On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

26: “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

27: He 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.’

28: “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

29: But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

30: 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.

31: A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.

32: So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

33: But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him.

34: 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.

35: 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.’

36: Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

37: The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

What are some observations about the behavior of the 3 men who had opportunity to help?

Jewish Priest & Jewish Levite:

Samaritan:

What can we learn about Biblical love from this story?

We should demonstrate love to _____ (Matthew 22:34-40; Luke 6:27-36)

Characteristics of Biblical love:

Choice
Caring/Compassionate
Unconditional
Sacrificial
Actions (not only words)
Meets Needs

The Golden Rule

Matthew 7:12 “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the prophets”. (fyi – shorter version found in Luke 6:31).

The Golden Rule is **inclusive** (“in everything”), **proactive and action oriented** (“do”), **positive** (“do to others what you would have them do to you”), and it’s **personal** (“you”).

Characteristics of Love from I Corinthians 13

Great giftedness and great works without love have minimal value (verses 1-3)

What Love is and what Love is not (verses 4-8):

Love is patient ... is kind

Love does not envy ... does not boast ... is not proud not rude ... not self-seeking ... not easily angered

Love keeps no record of wrongs

Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth

Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres

Love never fails

Love is supreme (verse 13)

Other biblical teachings:

- **Love includes Actions (I John 3:11-24)**
- **Our love for each other needs to grow (I Thes 3:12, 1:3, 4:9-10)**
- **Love comes from a pure heart, good conscience and sincere faith (I Tim 1:3-5)**
- **We need to meet together regularly and stimulate each other to Love and Good Works! (Hebrews 10:24-25)**
- **We need to keep on loving each other as brothers/sisters (Hebrews 13:1)**

CASE STUDY: the brothers James & John. From “Sons of Thunder” to loving leaders (Mark 3:17; Luke 9:51-56; I John)