

CHAPTER 6B – LOVING GOD AND NEIGHBOR

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

“Teacher, 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 commandments.” (Matthew 22:36–40, NIV)

BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

Matthew 22:34–40; Luke 10:25–37

What do Oxford University, the Red Cross, and Harvard Medical School have in common? They were all founded as Christian institutions. Since Jesus established the church, it has been the source of education, social care, and medical skill around the world and through the ages. At the heart of the Christian life is a powerful motivation to care for others as well as encourage public and private morally responsible behavior.

Let’s look at two scriptural passages that take us to the heart of these social and spiritual riches. Please read Matthew 22:34–40.

1. The poets and song writers of the world are right: love really is the most important thing in the world. Compare and contrast Jesus’ teaching on love with your sense of the poets’ and musicians’ message on love.

2. Jesus' teaching on the love of God is comprehensive, mental, and passionate, that is, it encompasses the heart, soul, and mind (v. 37). Who comes to mind when you think about people who love God? How have those people affected you?

3. How does the love of God shape your life, both your thoughts and actions?

4. Jesus says that the Law and the Prophets, that is, the Old Testament, “hangs” on loving God and neighbor (v. 39). How does this square with your understanding of the spirit and central theme of the Old Testament?

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5. Loving God precedes loving your neighbor. What happens if the order is reversed, or if the love of God is left out?

6. How does Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan, in Luke 10:25–37, illustrate his teaching on love?

7. How can social prejudice inhibit our practice of love and its expressions of compassion toward others?

8. Jesus is inextricably tying together morality, social responsibility, and devotion to God. How are these three woven together in your life?

9. Jesus addresses our motivation. What is the difference between moral behavior and social compassion motivated by love and that motivated by duty?

10. As in this parable, love throughout the Bible is not primarily an emotion but a motivation and action. How might this make a difference in the way you love God and others?
