

Scripture Points: Love
Dr. Art Lindsley

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 “Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”

- ❖ Jesus points to this as the greatest of God’s commands (Matthew 22:36).
- ❖ We are to love God with our whole being—heart, soul, and strength.
- ❖ This is later said to sum up all the Law and Prophets (Matthew 22:40).

Leviticus 19:18 “...you shall love your neighbor as yourself...”

- ❖ This is referred to by Jesus as the second part of the “great” command.
- ❖ “Love God” (Deuteronomy 4:5) could be said to sum up the first half of the Ten Commandments (1-4) and “Love neighbor” (Leviticus 19:18) the second half (5-10).
- ❖ In the preceding verse (17) we are commanded not to hate, though we can reprove our neighbor.

Matthew 5:43-48 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor, but hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax-gatherers do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, what do you do more than others? Do not even Gentiles do the same? Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

- ❖ The “hate your enemy” was added by those in the Jewish tradition that did not want to include foreigners or Gentiles as those they must love.
- ❖ Note we are to not only love enemies, but pray for those who persecute us—a tall order.

- ❖ Our love is rooted, grounded and motivated by God’s love. We are to love because He loves. In fact “God is love” (I John 4:8).
- ❖ Everyone loves family and friends who do good things for us (reciprocal relationship) but Jesus calls us to a broader love.
- ❖ Love brings us to maturity (or completion or “perfection”).

Ephesians 5:1-2 “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.”

- ❖ We are to love just as Christ has loved us.
- ❖ He loved us by giving up his life for us, so we are to give our lives for each other.
- ❖ We are to imitate God’s character and way of acting.

Ephesians 5:25-28 “Husbands love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that he might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself...”

- ❖ Again, the model for how we are to love is the cross. The cross as Jesus’ willing self-giving is at the center of the New Testament idea of love.
- ❖ The more we know what Christ did for the church, the more we ought to love our wives.
- ❖ Since husbands are united, one with their wives, to love your wives is to love yourself.

I John 4:7-12 “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God and every one who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

By this the love of God was manifested in us that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might love through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought to love one another. No one has beheld God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.”

- ❖ Note that love is the mark of the believer—if you don’t love, you don’t know God.
- ❖ Again, our love is modeled on what God has done in Christ.
- ❖ God is love—this is an utterly unique claim—one not paralleled in any other religion. Atheism (materialism) and pantheism (All is One) have no basis for love at all.

John 13:34-35 “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

- ❖ Note Jesus’ new command that goes beyond the great command (love God and neighbor) that we are to love as Christ loved.
- ❖ Note that people will know we are disciples if and only if we love other believers (as well as neighbors and enemies).
- ❖ If we don’t love each other, others may not know the truth of Jesus. One of the greatest obstacles to people knowing Jesus is Christianity (and Christians) who don’t manifest love.

I Corinthians 13:1-13 “If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy going or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I deliver my

body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing. Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy; they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. When I was a child, I used to speak as a child; think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known. But now abide faith, hope, love, these three—but the greatest of these is love.

- ❖ This is the great love chapter and many sermons have been preached on it. Note no matter how great our gifts, how noble our actions, or how lofty our achievements, without love they come to nothing.
- ❖ Meditate on each one of the characteristics of love (vv. 4-7).
- ❖ The whole of the Christian life can be summed up in the great theological virtues—faith, hope, and love. We are to put on all three as armor (daily) (I Thessalonians 5:8).