

Cultivate Relationships, Part 2

Loving People, Matthew 22:34-40

There are four key words or phrases that we must understand clearly if we are to honor Christ's command to love people.

Word/Phrase #1 - You Shall

Not someone else, you. This commandment is aimed directly at you. Turn to the person sitting near you and tell them: "Hey, God is talking to you!"

So often when we read the Bible and see what God says, we think He's just making a small suggestion. That's not the case here. The word "shall" is a strong command. It's like when Mom used to tell you to clean up your room. She wasn't giving you an idea of what you might do, she was giving you an order and great were the consequences if you didn't do what she said to do!

Word/Phrase #2 - Love

Now we covered this word in great detail last week, but it's interesting that God tells us to love people with the same kind of love we are to give Him.

If you remember, this isn't a casual or brotherly type of love. It is a love which recognizes someone's value or worth and esteems them highly. It's the same word used in John 3:16 which describes God's love for us. This is the kind of love we should have for others.

Word/Phrase #3 - Your Neighbor

Yes, we're talking about that irritating person who lives next door, or across the street who has frequent parties and makes lots of noise. It's that person who walks their dog who likes to leave his calling card on your front lawn. That's the person God says you and I are to love.

But wait, it actually gets more interesting. When we turn over to Luke's gospel for his recording of the Great Commandment, we find there a more detailed description of who our neighbor is. Let's take a moment and turn to Luke chapter 10.

In answering the lawyer's question about who is our neighbor, Jesus answers it with a parable. The bottom line: Our neighbor is anyone we meet who is in need.

Word/Phrase #4 - As Yourself

In the first half of the Great Commandment, Jesus taught us we are to love God and then He illustrated how that love should look: with all our heart, soul and mind. Here in the second half of the Great Commandment, Jesus does the same thing. He tells us that we should love people and then He tells us how that love should look: As Yourself.

I must love my neighbor as much as I love myself. In other words, I should give a selfless love to others.