

**Loving Your Neighbor
Its Easier Said than Done
Mark 12:29-31**

29 Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. 30 And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. 31 And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." NKJV

I think it was John Ortberg that said everyone is normal until you get to know them. I think we could also say everyone is easy to love until you get to know them. That is the problem in new marriages. The couple think they know each other but they do not. Six months after the wedding they will know each other much better, but then the friction starts. Children are easy to love when they're small or asleep. But let them get an opinion and an attitude and it takes much more effort to love them than before. Then how is a Christian supposed to love all these unlovable people? Does God really expect us to love one another?

I. We Can Overcome Our Natural Disposition by the Power of God.

A. We Tend to Focus on Ourselves

1. Because of our fallen nature we always look out for number one first.
2. From the time we are children, we are more concerned with ourselves than anyone else.
3. For many people it is their greatest downfall
4. People who center their lives on themselves mostly self destruct as we see with many of the movie stars.
5. Most people as they grow older take responsibility for others in their lives and must give up some things in order to do that.
6. But it is still for us, for our children, our mate, etc.
7. Jesus said that those who seek to save their lives would loose it.
8. Lu 9:24 "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.

B. Jesus Has Promised to Answer Our Prayers.

1. We are more likely to pray for material things than to pray that God would help us to be more loving.
2. In our prayers the problem of self continues to surface.
3. But God desires that we would be concerned to be more like Jesus in our lives.

4. Becoming rich is easier than being humble and self-sacrificing.
5. Being healthy is easier than taking up Christ's cross and following Him.
6. But if we pray, which prayers do you think God would be more pleased to answer.
 - a. Health or sacrifice.
 - b. Riches or humility.
 - c. Power or service.

C. The Holy Spirit That Works Through Us Is Powerful.

1. We can love our neighbor when the Holy Spirit works through us.
2. We do not have the ability, the strength to do it alone.
3. But the power of God in us can do all things.
4. Phil 4:13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.
5. 1Jo 4:4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

II. We Can Learn to Give of Ourselves by Taking Jesus as Our Example

- A. Jesus Set Aside the Glory of His Heavenly Throne for Us.
- B. He Came to Serve and Not to Be Served.
- C. Jesus Had Compassion for Most People (The Multitudes)
- D. He Had Empathy for Them.
- E. He Looked Beyond Their Sin, Their Arrogance, the Pride, Their Stupidity.
- F. He Wept over Jerusalem.
- G. He Asked Forgiveness for His Persecutors.
- H. He Suffered and Died for Us.

III. We Can Learn to Love Others by Looking at God's Love for Us.

- A. It Was His Love That Brought Him Here
- B. It Was His Love That Led Him to the Cross.
- C. It Was His Love That Kept Him from Calling the Angels to Set Him Free.
- D. It Was His Love for Us That Satisfied Our Shortfall to God.

- IV. We Can Love Our Neighbor by Channeling Our Love Through Jesus
 - A. What Ever You Do in Word or Deed to All for the Glory of Jesus
 - B. Do for Men as Though You Were Doing it for the Father.

- V. Understanding God's Grace for Us Gives Us Pity and Compassion for Those Lost in Sin at the Results of It.
 - A. Understanding were we were when God found us gives us empathy for those still in that condition.
 - B. Seeing where we would have been had god not reached into our hearts one day...
 - C. Seeing what god saved us from we can have compassion on those who have not yet surrendered to his love and grace.

Loving our Neighbor depends not on our power or our sweet spirit, but upon the Lord working through us. It is a matter of giving ourselves over to God's will. Only by crucifying the flesh can we put on Jesus Christ. Only by the power of God can we live the Christian life.