

The Object of Love

Matthew 22:34-40

The life of believers included being humble, peaceful, obedient, faithful. These characteristics are considered important moral principles. But the greatest of these is love. 1 Cor. 13:13 reads “And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.” Peter emphasizes in Corinthians that love is the most important virtue.

1 Cor. 12:31 reads “And now I will show you the most excellent way,” after this verse it describes what love is. Therefore love is not only a gift but a foundation of every action we take. So the highest peak of our religion is not faith or hope; it is love.

But some believers seek other thing instead of love. Like happiness, things that go well, gifts, power, faith, blessings, miracles, or healing, and so on... Sometimes as believers we forget that love is extremely important.

The reason that we forget about love or think that it is no important is because we do not know the full power of love. The truth is that love contains faith and hope. Love not only includes faith and hope but scripture also teaches us that love includes promised grace, blessings, healing, gifts, power and miracles.

1. If that is the case; who is the object of our love?

Our first object of love is God. Matthew 22 vs. 37 reads “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”

God created heaven and the earth and he made us in his own image. Then when the men were corrupted; God so loved us that he sent his only begotten Son to save us. The same God who loves us so much doesn't ask us for anything in return except for us to love Him.

In today's scripture one man who is an expert in law ask Jesus which is the greatest commandment and Jesus teaches us that “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. And this is the first and greatest commandment.”

Then, how do we love our God? Scripture teaches us how to love God concretely. First we need to love our brothers and sisters in Christ and that is the love of God.

1 John 3:23 reads “To believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to the love one another as he command us.” This simply says that we need to believe Jesus and love one another.

And if we really love God; we need to worship with all our hearts, pray continuously, obey and listen to God's word and the Holy Spirit. And if God wants to use us, we should be able to surrender everything and do his will-that is what it means to love God.

The father of all nations Abraham is good example of how to love God. One day God asked him to sacrifice his son, whom he loved, on the mountain of Moraiah. Abraham obeyed his command without hesitation. Why did he obey him without hesitation? Because Abraham loved God.

Of course God didn't want to kill Isaac he just wanted to test Abraham's heart. If you love God, when God asks for it you need to be ready to give up things that he ask us for. Sometimes we need to surrender our times, hobbies, or power.

2. Second love of our possessions is to love ourselves.

In vs.39 it reads "And the second is like it: 'love your neighbors as yourself.'" Looking closely at today's scripture you will find not only to love your neighbor but also to love yourself. In other words love someone as you love yourself. Many people however, have poor self-esteem and as a result think or feel less of themselves. Some people continuously compare themselves with someone else in regards to how they look, how much knowledge or education they have, or the life styles they live.

But we have to realize that we are the image of God and we are the pottery that will glorify him. And also, when we realize as we are insufficient being God uses us in precious way; when we understand that we are the treasures of God. We have to remember we are the precious children of God and he loves us continuously. From that we give God praise, thanks, and that happiness follows.

3. The third object of our love is to love our neighbor.

In vs.39-40 it reads "And the second is like it: love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Who is our neighbor? With the Exception of yourself, everyone else is your neighbor. Brothers, sisters, relatives, people around you and also your spouse are your neighbor. We need to love such a neighbor as we love ourselves. Love as you love yourself. Concretely, how do we put love in to practice? The upper most love is to spread the Gospel. The reason is because if you do not tell them about the Gospel their soul will fall into hell.

One of the good ways to love is to pray for them. Because, one of the foundations for love is prayer.

Understanding someone is also love. Walk in their shoes, listen, and share their pain.

In the church, we have a broad variety of people and personalities. With this comes personality issues which can potentially result in conflict. This is a time that we should love one another as is and this should not shake our faith. We should accept them as who they are and love one another.

When we have issues with other people, sometimes we resort to not speaking with that individual any more. Is that really the right thing to do? That does not show God's love-God what's us to

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love one another not hate one another because of a disagreement. The Christian way is not to pay back evil with evil.

In addition love is not excluding people from hanging out with us. People tend to feel alienated and unwanted by this and as a result get hurt by it. As Christians, we have to be considerate and need to make a strong effort not to be exclusive and love everyone no matter who they are.

So, what is love? We are probably all familiar with 1 Cor. 13:4-7. It reads “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.” These verses do not describe a theory; they provide an example of how we should love one another and how it should be put into practice.

Dear congregation! No matter how much we know and have heard about the message of love, it does us no good unless we put it into practice. It is very important that love be put in to action. Let us love God like Jesus loved us and love our neighbor as ourselves. I pray in Jesus name.