

Discipleship Series for New Believers

Lesson 8: The Two Greatest Commandments

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The Two Greatest Commandments-Why

A new believer would benefit from learning the two greatest commandments which are, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” The second one is “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” The first commandment shows the new believer the way their relationship with God should be, and the second one shows the way their relationship with God should impact other people. The basis of a believer’s relationships with people should be love. The love they express should entail going to the same lengths to accomplish things for others as they would go to for themselves. Learning about the way believers should love God and others will give new believers a solid foundation to build the rest of the teachings of Scripture upon.

The Two Greatest Commandments-How

Everything God asks us to do as Christians can be summed up in two commandments. If we just remember these two commandments before we do anything then we will fulfill the law. Jesus said these are the two greatest commandments, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it; ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Laws and the Prophets,” (Matthew 22:37-40). If you think about loving God and loving your neighbor before you do anything, you will not steal from your neighbor, you will not make a graven image, you will not commit adultery, etc., because you will not be loving God or your neighbor if you do any of these things. The same is true of what God was trying to get through to His people in the prophets. Everything that the Lord had against His people in these books was that they did not fully love God or each other. If they had turned and done those two things, then God would not have had to judge His people like He did.

I John 2:15-17 shows a hindrance to loving God with all of our heart. The scripture says, “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away and the lust of it, but he who does the will of God abides forever.” When we love the world, we cannot love God. If our desires are set on worldly things, we do not have time to love God. The world keeps us so busy, and there are only so many hours in a day; no more and no less. And if we spend all of our time desiring and seeking after worldly things, then God gets left behind. Another thing is the way the world does things is contrary to the kingdom of God. In the world, people show favoritism to wealthy people, but in God’s kingdom He does not look upon the outward appearance but upon the heart. The world says if you want to be first then you will have to have a lot of people serving you. The kingdom of God says if you want to be first then you have to become a servant of all. If we keep doing things the way the world does things, we are

not loving God. So, the first way to love the Lord with everything we have is to choose His way over the world's way and to make sure to spend time with Him.

I John 2:10-11 shows us an enemy to loving our brother. It says, "He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes." Simple anger, bitterness, unforgiveness, or hatred towards someone, even if we do not know about it, will keep us from loving our brother. It will poison and hinder growth in our relationship with God and our brother. Even if someone hurts us in our lives, we cannot choose to hate them. It will not hurt the other person if we hate them, but it will hurt ourselves. The consequences are walking in darkness instead of the light and allowing ourselves to become spiritually blind. So, if we are angry with someone, we need to lay them before the Lord in prayer. We should pray for those who we may be angry at and choose to release them from our anger and unforgiveness and show them the love of Christ. If we fulfill the two commandments of loving God and our brother, then we will be fulfilling righteousness. The devil will not be allowed to gain any foothold in our lives. We will walk before God in humility, life, and peace.