

Happy Valentine's Day!

Today I am re-running a previous Valentine edition. It's an opportunity to do a self-check: is our eternal priority of loving one another carrying over to our eternal practices?

You don't have to be married for this to be a priority. Jesus said, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

He didn't say, "Love those who are easy to love." He didn't give us exceptions for people who annoy us or are hard to get along with. And, though I've looked for loopholes myself, every single person you know falls under the category of "one another."

Who is the Lord calling you to love today?

Praying for you in His perfect love,
Jennifer

*"Don't the Bible say we must love everybody?"
"O, the Bible! To be sure, it says a great many things;
but, then, nobody every thinks of doing them."*

Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

Love is a choice.

It's not simply a feeling or an emotion.
It's not something we can fall out of.
It's not something we can out-grow.
It's not something that fades away.
It's not something that changes with the wind.
It's not something reserved for holidays.

Love is a choice we make every day.

It's choosing to be better and not bitter.
It's choosing to honor and respect.
It's choosing to be patient and to put the needs of others before ours.
It's choosing to protect and to stand by, to never give up.
It's choosing daily to forgive, to show grace and overlook offenses.
It's choosing to speak honest words of kindness.
And, it's choosing to not speak when we can't do that.

Love is a choice God commands us to make.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, your soul, your mind and your strength.

Mark 12:30

Love your neighbor as yourself. *Mark 12:31*

What choice will you make?

A Few Things to Remember on Valentine's Day

- ♥ Your husband cannot read your mind. He also does not know your "special female code language," no matter how long you've been married.
- ♥ Don't say you don't want anything (or anything big, or anything special) unless it is true.
- ♥ If your hubby isn't into spending big bucks on flowers that will be dead in a week or doesn't want to wait in long lines to eat BUT is a good and wonderful husband the other 364 days of the year, count yourself blessed and let him off the hook.
- ♥ Husbands aren't the only ones who can make the day special. Wives can too.
- ♥ The never-fail present for your husband? A wife who thinks he's hot and sexy and wants to show him.
- ♥ The always-wrong present for anyone who is not your husband (even if you don't have a husband)? Thinking they are hot and sexy and wanting to show them.
- ♥ At the end of the day, if you have been let down by someone you love, choose to overlook the disappointment. Focus instead on the perfect, true and everlasting love of Christ. The Lord Jesus is now, has always been, and will always be the greatest lover of your soul. If you are alone or sad on Valentine's Day or any other day, turn to Him. Pour out your heart to Him, give it all to Him. Draw near to Him and let His perfect love wash over you and comfort you.



Dig Deeper

Grab your notebook and Bible and get ready to explore. **Don't rush through!** Take your time to wander through the scripture and let God speak to you.

Looking for earlier lessons? You can print them at
http://www.hopeinthelord.org/Downloadable_PDF_Bible_Study_Files.html

Pray for God's wisdom and then begin.

Lesson 1

1. Read Mark 12:28-34.
 - a. What did Jesus say was the most important commandment (v. 30)?
 - b. What does this commandment mean to you?
 - c. According to John 14:15, 14:23, and 14:24, how is love for God expressed?
2. Based on the Mark and John passages:
 - a. Are obeying the "most important commandment"? Why or why not?
 - b. What will you do *today* to obey this commandment?
 - c. What changes do you need to make to *regularly* obey this commandment?
3. Based on Mark 12:28-34
 - a. What is the second most important commandment?
 - b. Are any of God's commandments greater than these?
 - c. Why do you think these are the greatest/most important commandments?
 - d. What did Jesus say about the man who believed this (v. 34)?
 - e. What do you think that means?

The religious people of Jesus' day had a long list of more than 600 rules and regulations they had to follow. But Jesus gave them just two commandments: love the Lord your God with all that you are and love each other.

Today it seems there are fewer rules than ever and most anything is acceptable. But for Christians nothing has changed. We are still called to love God above all, which means obeying Him, and to love

others. Our primary concern isn't following religious rules that make us look good on the outside or say the right things, but with the attitude of our heart.

When our heart is filled with love for the Lord we love others because Christ loved them. Think about your friends' kids. You love them, not because they are great and wonderful and better than other kids, but because you love their parents. Everyone on the planet is a child of God. So when we love the Lord with all we are, we love others too.

Lesson 3-2

1. What did you learn or apply from the last lesson?

2. In your own words, define love.

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 twice.

3a. List the four things love is (v. 4-5).

3b. List the four things love isn't (v. 4-5)

4. What is the relationship between love and evil? Love and truth? (v. 6)

5. What does love always do (v.7)?

6. What does love never do (v. 8)?

7. How does is this description of love similar to yours? How is it different?

8. What changes do you need to make in your choices for the actions of your love to match the actions given in this passage?

Read 1 John 4:7-12 twice.

9. In your own words, what does v. 7-8 say?

10a. How did God show His love to us (v. 9-10)?

10b. Write a prayer of praise and thanks telling God what this gift of love means to you.

11. What does v. 11 say we should do? Why?

12. Meditate on v. 12. What thoughts are in your heart as you focus on this?

13. Based on what you learned today, is love a feeling, an emotion or an action? Why?

Spend some time alone with God now, letting Him speak to your heart.

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May God bless you mightily and fill your heart with love,
Jennifer