

Studies in Christianity Christian Love #5

S#1.

An Outstanding Debt

S#2.

Text : **Deut. 22: 1-4 ; Rom. 13: 7-10 ; Matt. 22: 35-40**

A. We are studying the very core principle of the Christian religion. LOVE S#3.

1. In His essence, God IS love. (*Thus, godly = loving.*)
2. The 'new creature' that the Christian becomes must be like Him .. LOVE.
3. We saw that the love one has for God must be a 100% commitment – all consuming.
4. One knows he/she loves God by the effect it has on his life.
 - a. It is proclaimed and gives courage to stand, strength to overcome and confidence.
 - b. Being IN love with God isolates one from love for the world. (*not friends w/*)
 - c. Creates within one the desire to obey God – commandments don't seem restrictive

B. With this lesson we will begin to look at the second greatest commandment. S#4.

1. **Matt. 22: 39** – The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'
2. Because the next statement of Jesus :
Matt. 22: 40 – On these two commandments depend
the whole Law and the Prophets
3. Some consider this second great command to be the consideration of the second tablet of the Law.
4. By this division, the great command dealt with the commandments about God. S#5.

a. One God	c. Respect His name	e. Respect His agents,
b. No idols	d. Respect His day	i.e., our parents

Matt. 22: 36 – You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
and with all your soul, and with all your mind.'
This is the great and foremost commandment

5. The second tablet would then be commands pertaining to other people. S#6.

a. Don't murder	c. Don't steal
b. No sex outside marriage	d. Don't perjure (lie)
e. Don't covet other people's stuff	

Matt. 22: 39 – The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

C. One can't really love God without loving all those created by Him. S#7.

I John 5: 1 – Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God,
and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him.

D. By this first lesson on loving others we will observe that :**S#8.**

1. One must love himself before he can love others.
2. One must not have an overemphasis on self.
3. The best way to be loved is to love others.

I. One must properly love himself before he can love God or anyone else.**S#9.****A. Love for one's self is the standard by which he measures his love for others.****S#10.**

1. **Matt. 22: 39** – 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'
2. We are instructed to treat others as we think we should be treated.
Matt. 7: 12 – In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.
3. Thus, the one who does not think he should be treated well, won't treat others well.

B. People with very low self-esteem are incapable of loving others.**They tend to be :**

1. Socially withdrawn and lacking in self-confidence, social skills, etc.
2. Disturbed by anxiety, emotional turmoil, often develop eating disorders
3. View things negatively, especially self, so they have difficulty receiving compliment

C. Sadly, even more common are those who go to the other extreme.**S#11.**

1. **Narcissus**, was a hunter in Greek mythology, this son of the river god was distinguished for his beauty. Many were attracted to him, but he was disdainful of all advances. His mother was told by the blind seer Tiresias that he would have a long life, provided he never recognized himself. However, because of the curse of the gods, He fell in love with his own reflection in the waters of a spring and pined away or killed himself by falling in the water and drowning. Legend has it that the flower which bears his name sprang up where he died.
2. In Freudian psychiatry and psychoanalysis, the term *narcissism* denotes an excessive degree of self-esteem or self-involvement, a condition that is usually a form of emotional immaturity.
 - a. When children compete ALL are given trophies.
 - b. There must be safe zones on university campuses so students won't be offended.
 - c. The P.C. movement is so "snowflakes" aren't melted by the words of another.
 - d. People who disagree with you are not just wrong, they are evil.
 - e. We're driven to the brink of civil war b/c people can't accept losing an election.
 - * f. These are all signs of classic ungodly narcissism.

3. It comports itself with the prophecy of scripture.
 - a. **II Tim. 3: 1** – But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. **S#12.**
2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, **3** unloving, irreconcilable, ...
 - b. This describes our current culture as if it could have been written yesterday.
 - c. People are so narcissistic so in love with self that our culture barely functions.

II. One must not have an overemphasis on self.

S#13.

A. The scriptures teach that one should think highly of himself, but not too highly.

1. It is the fleshly nature of people to think of themselves first .. *Look out for #1.*
2. The scriptures teach us that we must get a handle on our fleshly nature.

Rom 12: 3 – For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you **S#14.**
not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

B. Love causes one to overcome this fleshly nature and live for God

1. **II Cor. 5: 14** – For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that **S#15.**
 one died for all, therefore all died; **15** and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

2. The very definition of love indicates that it is directed outward, not for self.
I Cor. 13:4 – Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag **#16.**
 and is not arrogant, **5** does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered,

3. Even in our lifestyle choices Christians are to consider how it affects others.

I Cor. 10:24 – Let no one seek his own good, but that of his neighbor

C. Our battle against the flesh is a continual struggle.

1. A victory today does not insure a victory tomorrow.
Rom. 7: 21 – I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who **S#17.**
 wants to do good. **22** For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, **23** but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.

2. We must all exercise discipline over the evil thoughts which pop into our minds.

Gal. 5: 16 – But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire **S#18.**
 of the flesh. **17** For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

III. The best way to be loved is to love others.

#19.

A. Why do you love God ?

#20.

1. God demonstrated His love toward us and we responded to His love.
I John 4: 10 – In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.
2. **I John 4: 19** – We love, because He first loved us.

B. So how do we establish a loving relationship with our neighbor ?

1. The Jewish leader asked Jesus to define neighbor.
 - a. The Jews were fond of quantitating and limiting.
 - b. Peter asked, ‘How many times must I forgive a brother ? Seven times ?’
 - c. The Pharisees set a specific number of steps as a “Sabbath Day’s Journey.”
2. Jesus defined “neighbor” by telling the parable of the Good Samaritan.”
 - a. Whoever you observe to need assistance is your neighbor.
 - b. The Samaritans were enemies of the Jews.
3. Loving your enemy can be an evangelistic act ... influence observers.
 - a. **Prov. 25: 21** – If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; **22** For you will heap burning coals on his head, and the Lord will reward you. #21.
 - b. The motive must be love. (*Story of woman taking cakes to bad neighbor.*)
 - c. Those who observe acts of love are affected by them.

C. The trouble with us is that we do not even know our neighbors.

#22.

1. Many live next door to people for years and don’t even know their name.
2. Love requires interaction. (*Admiration can happen from afar, but love is a verb.*)
3. God arranges everything according to HIS will ... that includes your life
 - a. **Eph. 1: 11** – In Him **11** also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, (*Personal .. cf .. Psa. 139*) #23.
 - b. God determines where people live. (*not move them like lot’s family .. Gen.19*)
Acts 17: 26 – ... He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; **26** and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, **27** that they would seek God, #24.
4. Your neighbors are opportunities that God has placed near you.
They are tests of our spiritual integrity.

D. Christians love proactively, not reactively.

#25.

1. We are expected to follow the example set by God / Jesus.

a. He loved us while we were hostile toward Him and rebellious.

Rom. 5: 8 – But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. **9** Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. **10** For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. #26.

b. We are commanded to do likewise.

Luke 6: 27 – But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, **28** bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. (*Jesus on cross, Steven being stoned*) #27.

2. This was not a new concept with Jesus.

Exod. 23: 2 – If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey wandering away, you shall surely return it to him. **5** " If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying helpless under its load, you shall refrain from leaving it to him, you shall surely release it with him. #28.

3. Our response is not what the world expects. **We are light in the darkness.**

CONCLUSION :

A. Christianity is a proactive lifestyle ... not one that reacts to the world. #29.

1. We love our neighbors, i.e., others who are near or those who need help.

2. We must have a genuine care and concern for others above ourselves.

B. Being proactive in love is the best way to earn the love of others.

C. Jesus placed us where we are to be the light house that leads to Him. #30.

Matt. 5: 14 – You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; **15** nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. **16** Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

INVITATION :

Jesus is waiting for you to requite His love.

#31.

S#32. ... Communion slide

Lesson Text :**Deuteronomy 22: 1-4**

1 You shall not see your countryman's ox or his sheep straying away, and pay no attention to them; you shall certainly bring them back to your countryman. **2** If your countryman is not near you, or if you do not know him, then you shall bring it home to your house, and it shall remain with you until your countryman looks for it; then you shall restore it to him. **3** Thus you shall do with his donkey, and you shall do the same with his garment, and you shall do likewise with anything lost by your countryman, which he has lost and you have found. You are not allowed to neglect them. **4** You shall not see your countryman's donkey or his ox fallen down on the way, and pay no attention to them; you shall certainly help him to raise them up.

Romans 13: 7-10

7 Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

8 Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. **9** For this, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." **10** Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Matthew 22: 35-40

35 One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, **36** "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" **37** And He said to him, 'You shall love the lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' **38** This is the great and foremost commandment. **39** The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' **40** On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."