

The Importance Of Love

Mark 12:30-31

Love is the most wonderful word. The Apostle Paul writes, "Faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love" (1 Corinthians 13:13). The greatest two commandments, Jesus says, is "you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second is this, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." There is no other commandment greater than these. (Mark 12:30-31).

What does it mean when Colossians 3:14 says "beyond all these things" put on love?

Lacking in love is a serious matter. We are not obeying Christ who says, "This I command you, that you love one another" (John 15:17). Furthermore, it is said that "the one who does not love does not know God" (1 John 4:8).

Certainly, love is the most important word in the realm of Christianity.

What happens to someone who does not love God (1 Corinthians 16:22)?

Love Defined

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

We need to understand the meaning of love if we are going to love (the two Greek terms translated love in the Bible are *αγαπαω* and *φιλεω*). Paul aptly teaches us the definition of love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, "Love is patient, love is kind," and "It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres." Conversely, he writes, love "is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth." Love is not hypocritical and "does no wrong" to others (Rom 12:9; 13:10).

Which of these attributes do you find difficult to keep in these lists defining love?

When we say that we love someone or something, typically we mean the person or thing makes us happy. If we love God, however, we will do what He asks us to do. Jesus says, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word ... he who does not love Me does not keep My words" (John 14:23-24). Our love of God is "that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3).

Do you think love is a word of feeling, a word of action, or both (see 2 John 1:6)?

“God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16). God loved us so much that He was willing to sacrifice His only Son in order to save us. In fact, “One will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for a good man one would dare even to die. But God shows His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:7-8).

What can separate us from God’s love towards us (Romans 8:38-39)?

Our response, as you may expect, should be to love God. “We love, because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19). To love God with our whole being is, after all, the greatest commandment. Keep in mind, this word love means we do His commandments.

What is taught about our love God and the material things of this world (Luke 16:13; 1 Timothy 6:10)?

What are we not to love (1 John 2:15; John 15:19)?

“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. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 John 4:10). Not only should we love God, but also fellow Christians. “Everyone who loves is born of God and knows God” (1 John 4:7). We are told to “through love serve one another” (Galatians 5:13).

How much should we love each other (John 15:12; 1 Peter 1:22)?

How long has God wanted His people to love each other (1 John 3:11)?

But love goes beyond loving those with a common faith. We are to love our neighbors as ourselves. This includes a “love [for] your enemies” (Luke 6:35). For “if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them” (Luke 6:32). The Apostle Paul writes, “Let all that you do be done in love” (1 Corinthians 16:14).

What do you think the Apostle John means when he writes, “Let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth” (1 John 3:18)?