

Love Thy Neighbor

Part 3

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Matthew 22:37-40 ESV

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 first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

The Bible declares that it is by love that people will know we are followers of Christ. John 13:35, *³⁵ By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*" (ESV)

What are the characteristics of divine love?

To align my words and action with the characteristics of divine love, I must first understand what sets divine love apart.

A. Divine love endures forever and will bear up under everything that comes against it. *⁷ Love bears up under anything and everything that comes, is ever ready to believe the best of every person, its hopes are fadeless under all circumstances, and it endures everything [without weakening].* 1 Corinthians 13: 7 (Classic AMP)

B. Divine love takes no account of a suffered wrong. 1 Corinthians 13:5, *Love (God's love in us) does not insist on its own rights or its own way, for it is not self-seeking; it is not touchy or fretful or resentful; it*

takes no account of the evil done to it [it pays no attention to a suffered wrong].

So what does that mean?

Our life is our primary pulpit.

A. Loving others starts with the ability to love yourself as God loves you.

B. When you learn to love yourself with the divine God kind of love, there is nothing selfish about. Loving ourselves is founded upon our ability to see ourselves as God sees us.

Bottom line regarding self-love? We are to love ourselves as someone who is:

Fearfully and wonderfully made; worthy of blessing, love, adoption, and forgiveness; a Child of God; and someone being made in the very image of Christ.

C. Marriage is the most intimate relationship we can have with another person and above all other relationships, it should reflect the divine love of God.

a. When the divine God kind of love is present in a marriage, that marriage will be marked by forgiveness.

b. The golden rule should guide every decision you make toward your spouse.

D. How do we teach our children to operate in the God kind of love?

1. Model healthy self-love.

2. Learn to say no.

3. Discipline is an act of love.

- a. Proverbs 13:24 (NIV) Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to **discipline** them.

Proverbs 19:18 (NIV) **Discipline** your children, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to their death.

Proverbs 15:32 (NIV) Those who disregard **discipline** despise themselves, but the one who heeds correction gains understanding

Questions for reflection:

What is your spiritual curb appeal?

Do I exhibit the characteristics of the divine God kind of love?

Do I genuinely love myself?

How can I better express the Divine God kind of love to my spouse, children, and immediate family?