



# First Baptist Church Selmer

COMMANDED! • THE SECOND GREAT COMMANDMENT •  
MARK 12:31; LEVITICUS 19:9-18; JOHN 13:34-35 • 8/17/2025

## MAIN POINT

A genuine love for God is reflected in our attitudes and actions towards others who were created to bear His image.

## INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**Do you spend equal amounts of time reading the Old Testament as compared to the New Testament?**

**Do you ever feel like the Bible is two completely separate books (OT vs NT) with different messages?**

Although we do live in the New Covenant with God rather than that of the Old Testament (OT), the guiding principles and truths remain very much the same. It is generally agreed upon that over 280 direct references are made in the New Testament (NT) from the OT, while there are almost 1,000 passages that allude or indirectly reference it.

Last week, we saw that Jesus directly quoted Deuteronomy 6 while answering the question in regards to the Greatest Commandment. We will also look back at the Old Testament (Leviticus 19) again this week as Jesus tells us the Second Great Commandment.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MARK 12:31

31 *"The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." (ESV)*

**How are the Greatest Commandment and the Second Great Commandment related to one another?**

**In what way are all of God's commands throughout Scripture summarized in just two?**

Jesus does something here for the first time in all of Scripture. Jesus takes these two separate commands and combines them. It may seem rather odd to do this, but with closer examination, we see even in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20), these two commands emerge. The first four commands relate to mankind's relationship with God, and the last six commands are in relation to mankind's relationship with others.

It should come as no surprise to anyone that the Word Himself was able to understand and bring cohesion to these seemingly different commands of the OT. Let's look today as Jesus goes back into the Old Testament to quote a specific passage about loving others.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LEVITICUS 19:9-18

9 *"When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. 10 And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the Lord your God.*

11 *"You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; you shall not lie to one another. 12 You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the Lord.*

13 *"You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired worker shall not remain with you all night until the morning. 14 You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall fear your God: I am the Lord.*

15 *"You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor. 16 You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life of your neighbor: I am the Lord.*

17 *"You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. 18 You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord." (ESV)*

**What do verses 11-13 remind you of? (Hint: Moses and some tablets)**

**How are guidelines on how to treat others vital to the health of the nation of Israel?**

**Verse 18 is a direct quote of Jesus in Mark 12. How does loving someone "*as yourself*" help us in understanding how to love others?**

Leviticus 19 outlines some of the Israelites' conditional instructions from God on how to live in the soon-to-be-acquired Promised Land. There are always expectations that must be agreed upon for living in community with others, but one principle must elevate above them all. How do you want to be treated? Fairly? Justly? Honestly? Respectfully? Then, if you desire that from others, you must treat them that way too.

We got it, right? We are to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Now let's look a little deeper into this command because we later see Jesus (John 13) add a qualifier to our command to love others as ourselves.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 13:34.

34 *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another." (ESV)*

**In what way are we supposed to love others? In other words, whose example are we to follow in loving others?**

The night before Jesus' crucifixion, Jesus delivered to His disciples a "*new*" command. The biblical command to love our neighbors as ourselves is not a new commandment (Leviticus 19:18) in and of itself. By the time Jesus spoke John 13:34-35, He had already cited love for neighbors as one of the two greatest commandments (Matthew 22:34-40; Mark 12:29-31). Jesus even taught us to love our enemies (Matthew 5:43-48). So what was new about the command in John 13:34? The answer is in Jesus' words: "*just as I have loved you.*" The disciples were to love one another according to Jesus' example of love. But little did they know the depth of love that Jesus was about to demonstrate on the cross.

**What did Jesus mean when He said for the disciples to love one another in the same way He loved them?**

**How might thinking deeply about what Christ has done for us cause us to love others differently?**

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 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 ramifications of Jesus' statement in this verse? What's riding on our ability to demonstrate love?**

**What message do believers give to the world when they show love for one another? What message do they give when they fail to show love for one another?**

As followers of Christ, our motivation for expressing love is Jesus' example, which means our love, too, must be demonstrated through action. Loving one another through humble, sacrificial service can be a powerful witness to the world that we are His and that it is good to be His. Through our visible expressions of love, non-Christians should be able to see the love of an invisible God.

**Why is it essential that we live in community with other Christians if we hope to cultivate Christlike love for others?**

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**How might faithfully participating in our group help us to be intentional in the way that we love others?**

**What are some practical ways we could demonstrate love for one another in our group? How might our group express love for the larger body of Christ at our church?**

**How is loving one another in the church essential to our witness to those outside the church? What needs to change about the way you love others so that you might be a better witness for Christ?**

## PRAYER

Close by asking God to perfect His love in you and help you better appreciate Jesus' sacrificial act of love on your behalf. Pray for the opportunity to put your Christ-like love

into action this week, and pray for love to become the mark for which our church is known in our city.

## COMMENTARY

### | LEVITICUS 19:9-18

19:9–18. This series of prohibitions is directed at promoting harmony and holiness between Israelites (your neighbor, vv. 13, 15–18), but the command to love your neighbor as yourself (v. 18; cf. Matt. 5:43; 19:19; 22:39; Mark 12:31, 33; Luke 10:27; Rom. 13:9; Gal. 5:14; James 2:8) is expanded in Leviticus 19:34 to “Love him [the resident alien] as yourself.”

The regulations promote honesty, so that God’s reputation will not be tarnished (vv. 11–12), nonexploitation of the weak, the laborer, and the handicapped (vv. 13–14), justice in the courts of law for both the poor and the great (vv. 15–16), and a behavior toward all that is motivated by genuine love (vv. 17–18).

*F. Duane Lindsey, “Leviticus,” in The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 202.*

### | JOHN 13:34-35

Jesus invited His followers to embrace His love and to express His love through their interactions with each other. His commandment to them was not new in the sense that it was different in substance. Rather, it was new in application—one’s neighbor was anybody. It also was new in its model—Jesus’ self-sacrificing love, especially displayed later on the cross. In an encounter with a scribe, Jesus summarized the commandments in the Mosaic law (Mark 12:28-31). Stated in two Old Testament passages (Lev. 19:18; Deut. 6:4-5), the Mosaic commandments directed believers to love God wholeheartedly and to love one’s neighbor as one’s self.

As Jesus prepared His disciples for their future in His body, the church, He yearned for them to experience the new commandment in their relationships. He had corrected their earlier ambitions over position and greatness by His own humble service of washing their feet. As Judas left the Passover supper the disciples were eating with Jesus, He focused attention on their covenant commitments to one another. Three times in two verses,

Jesus repeated the essence of His teaching. To love one another was the supreme means of identification for His disciples.

The kind of love Jesus commanded the disciples to give was not merely the brotherly love of human fellowship. Even unbelievers related to others on that level of love. Jesus wanted His followers to experience and to express God's love. Each of the four occurrences of the Greek word translated "love" and "loved" in John 13:34-35 uses a Greek word meaning God's kind of love. This love seeks the good of another rather than benefit for self. It sacrifices without condition and serves without motive of personal gain.

The source of such love is the Lord Himself. Jesus knew human nature does not love sacrificially and unconditionally as God loves. He reminded the eleven disciples of the way He loved them. The words just as meant they were to love one another in the same way and to the same degree He loved them. Their only hope for success in loving this way lay in their relationship with Him. As they were channels, receiving and passing on Christ's love, they could fulfill His intention for their lives.

The object of the disciples' love was one another. Jesus certainly was not excusing the disciples from loving other people who were not His disciples. He was not suggesting they form an exclusive club in which they loved each other but not those outside their group. Rather, Jesus was setting a new standard for love among believers.

The disciples' purpose in showing godly love was to witness for Jesus. According to Him, only the disciples' love for one another showed the world they were His disciples. Only by love would they endure together and impact their world.

Jesus calls Christians to love one another, as He said, "Just as I have loved you." We who have received Christ's sacrificial love are to extend that same love to others. His love transforms our hearts so we cannot help but love. If we fail to love, we should examine ourselves to see if His love truly resides in our lives (1 John 4:7-8).

Love among believers provides the foundational testimony to the lost. Unbelievers may criticize Christians, but many do have high expectations of those who claim Christ's name. They look for holy lifestyles among believers and love in their relationships with one another. Weak love among believers results in weak witness to nonbelievers. Worse, when Christians argue and fight with one another, lost people use their bickering as an excuse to reject Christ. The world judges our love for God by the love we have for one another.

Christians should love one another to glorify God. Just as children's behavior reflects on parents' character, even so our love paints a portrait of our Heavenly Father. Just as you are glad when people comment on the good behavior and loving attitudes of your children, so our Heavenly Father rejoices to see His children living in harmony and love.