

christian virtue.

LOVING PEOPLE

@rjquest

Developing ourselves to *love others well* is a big part of spiritual growth. There are times where we (intentionally or unintentionally) love others with strings attached. Our love is sometimes attached to things like appreciation or a change we hope to see in their life. In today's discussion, we will be focusing on the story of the Good Samaritan and what it means to love people without expectations in return.

Luke 10:27-35 (NIV)

²⁷ He answered, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind”^[a]; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’^[b]”

²⁸ “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

²⁹ But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

³⁰ In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out

two denarii^[c] and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

John 13:34-35 (NIV)

³⁴ "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

1 Corinthians 13:4-13 (NIV)

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

⁸ Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. ¹¹ When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. ¹² For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

¹³ And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. God calls us to love as He loves. As you read the passages above, how would you describe God's love in your life? Do you see a difference between how God loves and how you love? How so?
2. Often times we love and unconsciously expect something in return (appreciation, a change in their life, a commitment to Christ) for our efforts. How can we develop a love that freely gives and deeply cares with no strings attached?
3. Oftentimes we read the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10) we unconsciously tend towards a divided people group mentality; Jews vs. Gentiles, believers vs unbelievers. Instead of developing an *us vs them* mentality, how can we develop a more united, inclusive "US GROWING TOGETHER" mentality as we share God's love to those around us?
4. Who are some people God is currently calling you to see (take notice of) and love?
5. What are some practical ways you can live out this renewed - *inclusive, no expectations in return* perspective of loving others?