

 ***“Love Your Neighbor as Yourself!”***

***Love God – Love One Another Series (Part 6)***

**Text: Matthew 22:37-40 - TWO COMMANDMENTS:**

***Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment.***

***And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'***

***On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."***

**> Jesus said, “*And the second is like it,” like what? – LOVE is an ACTION on our part, LOVE is always giving!***

**- LET’S REFLECT ON GOD’S LOVE - The Bible records the greatest love story ever written, which is God's unconditional love by sending His Son Jesus Christ to die on the cross (John 3:16; 1 John 4:10) for sinners.**

**Love is not only one of God's attributes; it is also an essential part of His nature. The Bible declares *"God is love,"* (1 John 4:8,16).**

**God’s love is *everlasting* (Jeremiah 31:3), *free* (Hosea 14:4), *sacrificial* (John 3:16), and *enduring* (John 13:1).**

**> 2nd Commandment: *“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”***

**- Jesus quotes and summarizes Leviticus 19:9-18 in the 2nd Commandment - *"When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am the LORD your God. You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another. And you shall not swear by My name falsely, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the LORD. You shall not cheat your neighbor, nor rob him. The wages of him who is hired shall not remain with you all night until morning. You shall not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind, but shall fear your God: I am the LORD. You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor. You shall not go about as a talebearer among your people; nor shall you take a stand against the life of your neighbor: I am the LORD. You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD"***

> **Defining - *“LOVE your neighbor”*** – **This *LOVE* is *Agape* - It is the noblest word for love in the Greek language. “Agape” is not kindled by the merit of worth of its object, but it originates in its own God-given nature. God is love. It delights in giving. This love keeps on loving even when the loved one is unresponsive, unkind, unlovable, and unworthy. It is unconditional love. “Agape” desires only the good of the one loved. It is a consuming passion for the well-being of others. “Agape” love is used approximately three hundred and twenty times in the New Testament. A word to the wise from Warren Wiersbe, “We are to worship God, love people and use things, but too often we use people, love self, and worship things.”**

**> SEVEN WAYS TO TRUE LOVE:**

**#1- Love is IMPARTIAL! - Deuteronomy 10:19-11:1- *Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. You shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve Him, and to Him you shall hold fast, and take oaths in His name. He is your praise, and He is your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen. Your fathers went down to Egypt with seventy persons, and now the LORD your God has made you as the stars of heaven in multitude.***

**#2- Love is UNSELFISH! - Matthew 22:39-40- *And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."***

**#3- Love is the Proof of DISCIPLESHIP! - John 13:34-35- *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."***

***#4- Christ’s Love is the STANDARD!* - John 15:12-14- *This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.***

***#5- Love is SINCERE!* - Romans 12:9-14- *Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.***

***#6- Love is ABOUNDING!* - 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13- *And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.***

***#7- Love is FERVENT!* - 1 Peter 1:22-23- *Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever***

**> LOVE IN ACTION! – Luke 10:25-37 (Micah 6:8 - *“He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?”*)**

**Jesus said in John 13:34-35 - *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.***

***-* Dearest Christian, most beloved of God, let’s LOVE GOD and LOVE ONE ANOTHER! Active *AGAPE***is inhaled and exhaled.

**> LET’S LEARN HOW TO PRACTICE AGAPE: -** **1 Corinthians 13:4-8 - *Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.***

**> Let’s make the grade (A B C D F) in the space provided:**

***\_\_\_\_\_\_ “Love suffers long” –*** To be long-spirited, i.e. forbearing or patient.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ ***“Love is kind”*** – The word used here denotes to be good-natured, gentle, tender, affectionate, to show oneself useful, courteous, i.e. to act benevolently.

***\_\_\_\_\_\_ “Love does not envy” –*** A feeling of resentment and jealousy toward another person because of his possessions or good qualities.

***\_\_\_\_\_\_ “Love does not parade itself” –*** The idea is that of boasting, bragging vaunting. This spirit proceeds from the idea of “superiority” over others; and is connected with feeling of contempt or disregard for them.

***\_\_\_\_\_\_ “Love is not puffed up” –*** This word means to blow, to puff, to inflate with pride, and vanity, and self-esteem.

***\_\_\_\_\_\_ “Love does not behave rudely”*** – To act unseemly or unbecoming. To speak in a condescending or crude manner, to be discourteous.

***\_\_\_\_\_\_ “Love does not seek its own”*** – True love is not selfish, self-centered, or self-absorbed. We are to love others, to seek their welfare with self-denial, to respond with personal sacrifice and toil.

***\_\_\_\_\_\_ “Love is not provoked”*** *-* To be quickly stirred to anger, to have a short temper.

***\_\_\_\_\_\_ “Love thinks no evil” –*** That is, to have a continual belief that the motives and heart of another is for the good. Meaning, that your love is not malicious or desires to find fault in others, but your thoughts and speech will dwell upon the good. (Philippians 4:8)

***\_\_\_\_\_\_ “Love does not rejoice in iniquity” –*** Love does not rejoice in sinful practices of our world, nor do we take delight when a fellow believer falls into sin. Christians find pleasure in hearing others accused of sin, and in having it proved that they committed it. But true love will pray for repentance, reconciliation and restoration.

***\_\_\_\_\_\_ “Love rejoices in the truth” –*** Love rejoices in virtue, godliness, righteousness, and goodness. It does not rejoice in the "vices," but in the "virtues" of others. Love rejoices when others "do well."

***\_\_\_\_\_\_ “Love bears all things” -*** The Greek word for “bears” is *stegei,* which means to "cover," "hide," "conceal," not to make known. This means that love is disposed to hide or conceal the faults and imperfections of others, not to publicize them.

***\_\_\_\_\_\_ “Love believes all things” –*** This love has a disposition to believe that brothers and sisters in Christ are actuated by good motives, and that they intend no injury; and that there is a willingness to suppose, as far as can be, that what is done is done consistently with friendship, good feeling, and virtue.

***\_\_\_\_\_\_ “Love hopes all things” –*** God’s love is an optimistic, not pessimistic. We have hope for today in Christ, hope for change by the power of the Holy Spirit, and hope for eternity as we look forward to heaven.

***\_\_\_\_\_\_ “Love endures all things” –*** This Holy Spirit produced love bears up under any stress or strain. It sustains us, and does not complain. This love endures all persecutions at the hand of man and will keep on loving no matter the event.

***\_\_\_\_\_\_ “LOVE NEVER FAILS!” -*** “Fails” is *ekpiptei* in Greek**,** meaning to drop away; to be driven out of one's course; figuratively, to lose, to become inefficient. In other words God’s love through us never fails or falters, but will have its powerful effect upon everyone and every situation.