

*There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.*

**1 John 4:18**



## Why LOVE Is the Most Important Thing

“Love makes the world go around.” goes the old saying. But would Jesus say this? Out of everything that we are about as human beings, is love *really* the most important thing? Let’s take a look from a New Testament prospective:

- ✓ The very nature of God is Love.

**1 John 4:16** *We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.*

- ✓ Jesus put special emphasis on “love one another”.

**John 13:34-35** <sup>34</sup> *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. <sup>35</sup> "By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

- ✓ Jesus defined our life purpose as love.

**Mark 12:29-31** <sup>29</sup> *Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; <sup>30</sup> AND 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.' <sup>31</sup> "The second is this, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other commandment greater than these."*

- ✓ God’s greatest act of love was directed to everyone, regardless of any attitudes, lifestyles, or actions on our part. And that love cost God everything. It was freely given, without any “strings” attached.

**John 3:16** *For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*

So if God loves freely, unconditionally, and sacrificially, we too are invited by God to love in the same way. That means that when people come into our lives who make us uncomfortable or feel threatened, we are to extend love toward them

without judgment. Jesus tells us not to even resist an evil person (Matthew 5: 39) and continues to say....

**Matthew 5:44-45** *"But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup> so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.*

So we are not to judge or otherwise “fix” another person’s life when it conflicts with ours (Luke 6: 41-42; Romans 2: 1-5). Our greatest witness to another person is to simply and profoundly live out the Good News of Jesus *in our own life*. The kindness and generosity that we sow into others’ is the most compelling evidence that Jesus is alive! The joy that we bring to our own daily living will motivate others to be thirsty for that joy too! The peace we exhibit in challenging circumstances will invite people to ask, “Where do you find such calm in such chaos?”

Such a question invites a personal response and a measure of trust. They do not need a lecture or religious fix. They want something honest and humble and real. And, somewhere in your fumbling for words, they will meet Jesus.

Real love means waiting patiently for someone to first ask the question (1 Corinthians 13: 1-10). Real love lets go of trying to change people but lets the Holy Spirit of Truth do His job (John 16: 13-14). Real love trusts deeply that God is working in **all** people, at **all** times, in **all** circumstances.

So the next time God brings someone along your path and you want to “help” them clean up their “issues”, think again. Try approaching that person as if they were Jesus Himself and serve them with the same “no-strings-attached” love that Jesus has been pouring over you your whole life! (See Matthew 25: 34-40). The kindness and patience and generosity you give out will come back to you. Of course, that is also true if you give out judgment and impatience and rejection. That’ll boomerang too. Either way, you get back what you put out there (Mark 4: 24-25).

Practice love **toward** others and you will catch more love **from** others.

*Having some difficulty loving some people in your life? You’re not alone! We are here to support you. Feel free to call the Church Office and we’ll help you or a loved one find the help they need: 906-493-5233.*



Lighthouse Christian Church