



GROWING SPIRITUALLY

Lesson 6: Becoming a More Loving Person

Last Week: Luke 11:1-10

"Lord,
teach us
to pray,
just as
John
taught
his
disciples."
"

- ❖ Our prayers should contain both praise and requests.
- ❖ We are to be persistent with our prayers.
- ❖ We are instructed to pray for “everything”.
- ❖ The Spirit assists us with our prayers.
- ❖ Our prayers are for the glory and praise of God.
- ❖ Pray with the proper motivation (God’s will be done).
- ❖ Prayer should be vital part of your daily life. It is an essential part of “growing spiritually”.

Today's Lesson

- ❖ Today's lesson is titled: "Becoming a More Loving Person"
 - ❖ Experience God's Love – Eph 3:17-19
 - ❖ Forgive your enemies – Luk 6:27-31
 - ❖ Think Loving Thoughts – Phil 2:4-5
 - ❖ Act in Love – John 15:12-17
 - ❖ Expect the Best – 1Cor 13:4-7
 - ❖ Memory Verse

Love defined

- ❖ We find 2 Greek words for “love”, used in the NT (verb/noun):
 - ❖ Phileo/Philanthropia – emotional affection; friendship; brotherly love
 - ❖ Agapao/Agape – unconditional, giving, sacrificial love (God’s love for us)
- ❖ When the Bible speaks of God’s love for us and the kind of love we are to have for him, it is always “agape”
- ❖ Agape signifies a commitment to act

“Love” is easily misunderstood

- ❖ The word “love” is easily misunderstood
- ❖ We use the word love so much that it has lost its meaning
- ❖ We use it to describe many things: I love America; I love pizza; I love my dog; I love you.
- ❖ It is difficult to give or receive love, when we do not know what it is.
- ❖ Common misconceptions:
 - ❖ Most people think that love is a feeling
 - ❖ Love is uncontrollable

Much more than a feeling

- ❖ Love does produce feelings, but it is much more than a feeling
- ❖ Love is a matter of choice
 - ❖ Col 3:14 - And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. NIV
 - ❖ It is something that we “put on”
 - ❖ It is something that we choose, therefore we can control it
- ❖ Love is an action, not a feeling
 - ❖ 1 John 3:18 - Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. NIV
 - ❖ It is something that we do; an action, not a feeling

Eph 3:16-19

- ❖ 16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge — that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. NIV

#1 - Experience God's Love

- ❖ We are rooted and established in love. (vs 17)
 - ❖ Remember the “vine”?
- ❖ We must grasp (feel and understand)LB how deeply God loves us (vs 18)
- ❖ And that we know (experience)LB that his love surpasses knowledge (vs 19)
- ❖ Why is it important to feel loved by God?
 - ❖ Unloved people are often unloving people
 - ❖ If I do not feel loved, then it is difficult for me to give love
 - ❖ We need to experience God's love ourselves

Question:

- ❖ Is it possible to love someone that you do not like?
- ❖ Yes, we are commanded to love one another (not like them)
- ❖ It is easy to love people who are kind and loving, but it may be challenging to love someone that is harsh, rude, mean spirited, argumentative, etc.
- ❖ Sometimes God puts people around us that we do not like in order to teach us to love.

Luke 6:27-31

- ❖ 27 "But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. 29 If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. 30 Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. 31 Do to others as you would have them do to you.
NIV

#2 - Forgive your enemies

- ❖ We are to forgive those who have hurt us
 - ❖ Col 3:13 - Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. NIV
- ❖ If you are angry/upset with someone, you cannot love them fully
- ❖ You cannot give love to others when you are angry with someone else
- ❖ It is impossible to love when your heart is divided

Love those we do not like

- ❖ We may not like:
 - ❖ The way some people talk
 - ❖ The way some people act
 - ❖ The way some people dress or appear
 - ❖ People that do not like us
- ❖ We do not have to like everyone, but we do have to love everyone!
- ❖ So how do we do that?

John 15:12-17

- ❖ 12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command. 15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit — fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. 17 This is my command: Love each other. NIV

#3 - Think Loving Thoughts

- ❖ What do you think it means to think loving thoughts?
 - ❖ It means that we focus on peoples needs and not just our own.
 - ❖ Phil 2:4 – Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. NIV
 - ❖ Rom 12:20-21- 20 On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. NIV
 - ❖ Look beyond peoples faults and see their needs.
 - ❖ The least loveable people in the world need love more than anything else.

#4 - Act in Love

- ❖ Jesus' command is to "love each other" (John 15:17)
 - ❖ The Greek word here is "agape"
- ❖ Choose to love others (whether you feel like it or not)
- ❖ If we begin to act lovingly, we will soon feel more loving
- ❖ This all begins with how we think.
- ❖ Jesus tells us to act in love even to those that do not love us (Luke 6:27)
- ❖ When we act lovingly we are displaying the fruit of the spirit

1 Cor 13:4-7

- ❖ 4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It is not rude, 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. NIV

1 Cor 13:4-7 further defines “love”

- ❖ Patience and kindness are love in action
- ❖ Note that this passage defines love by telling us what it is, and also what it is not.
- ❖ Love is:
 - ❖ patient, kind, rejoices with the truth, protects, trusts, hopes, perseveres
- ❖ Love is not:
 - ❖ envious, boastful, proud, rude, self seeking, easily angered, a record keeper, does not delight in evil

#5 - Expect the Best

- ❖ Expect the best of even those you don't like
 - ❖ 1 Cor 13:7 - If you love someone, you will be loyal to him no matter what the cost. You will always believe in him, always expect the best of him, and always stand your ground in defending him. TLB
- ❖ We influence others by how we treat them
- ❖ So treat others like you:
 - ❖ believe in them,
 - ❖ expect the best of them,
 - ❖ are ready to defend them.

Summary:

Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. (1 John 3:18)

- ❖ In order to love, we need to experience God's love for us
 - ❖ If I do not feel loved, then it is difficult for me to give love
- ❖ Forgive those who have hurt you
- ❖ Think loving thoughts
 - ❖ Look beyond peoples faults and see their needs
- ❖ Act in love
 - ❖ Choose to love others (whether you feel like it or not)
- ❖ Expect the best, even of those who do not love you



Memory verse: 1 Cor 13:4-7

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