

## Lesson 2-5 - Love your Neighbor

1. In lesson 2-4, we discussed the first and great commandment: Love God with all your heart, soul, and mind. Jesus said that the second was "like unto" the first commandment: Love your neighbor as yourself.

Read:

Matthew 22:37 And he said to him, Have love for the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.

Matthew 22:38 This is the first and greatest rule.

Matthew 22:39 And a second like it is this, Have love for your neighbor as for yourself.

Matthew 22:40 On these two rules all the law and the prophets are based.

Note: The Bible gives us the definition of love in I Corinthians 13

2. What do you think it means: "all the law?"

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3. In your opinion, what does "and the prophets" mean?

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4. On a scale of 1 to 10, how important is it to God that we love Him?

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5. On a scale of 1 to 10, how important is it to God that we love our neighbor.

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6. For the purpose of this lesson, we will consider our neighbor as any other human being. Do you agree? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Some people are easy to love: those who love us, those in our family, those who are kind to us, those who are famous, and those who build us up. We won't deal with these.

Read:

Matthew 5:46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

8. Whether you agree or not to item 6, we know that we must love those who are our enemies, those who hate us, those who persecute us and those who spitefully use us.

Read:

Matthew 5:43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'  
Matthew 5:44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you

9. Do you have those who hate you, use you, curse you or persecute you? Put down their initials if you like.
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10. Pick the worst one and ask yourself, "Can I love him/her?"
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11. From our experience, this is one of the most difficult things to do. It can take years to be able to say "yes I can." Can you do it now - be honest?
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12. Also from our experience, you cannot love unless you forgive and you cannot forgive unless you have faith.

Read:

Mark 9:23 ..... all things are possible for one who believes."

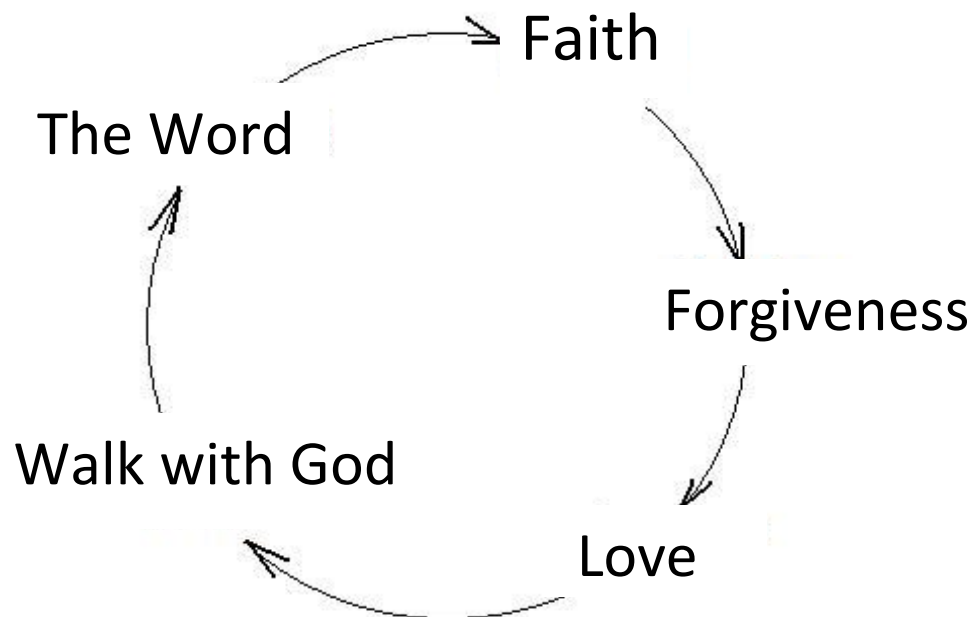
13. Do you have any idea why God wants you to forgive and love your enemies? Does it make sense?

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14. On a scale from 1 to 10 how hard is it for you to forgive and love your enemies?

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15. circle of love diagram:



16. Can you love someone without forgiving them?

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17. How do you forgive your enemies?

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18. What do you think they would say, if you told them you forgave them?

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19. Do you think they want forgiveness?

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20. Will they change if you forgive them?

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Note: We have found that it is very complicated in confronting those who have sinned against you. Sometimes it is better to not deal with them. We recommend that you consult the Holy Spirit (See lesson 2) before confronting them.

21. Does God make your forgiveness of others conditional?

Read:

Matthew 6:14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you,  
Matthew 6:15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

22. To love someone, do you need to have a relationship with them or even talk to them?

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23. Consider your worst enemy, someone who has greatly hurt you. What would be the very best thing that could happen to them: that would be a benefit for them eternally?

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24. would you want them to have the answer to item 23?

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25. If you forgive your enemy, who benefits? God? Your enemy? You?

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26. who benefits the most?

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27. How would you feel if every time you laid hands on someone, they were healed?

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28. what would people think of you if you could do spectacular miracles-like move a mountain?

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29. Read:

1 Corinthians 13:2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

30. would you rather have items 27, 28, and 29 or love for your enemy?

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**31. Conclusion: God commands us to love everyone including our enemies. We can do this by faith, and only by faith. This is the basis for the church and our Christian interpersonal lives.**

Read:

1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.  
1 John 4:12 No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.