

# ☞ What does the Church do?

Everything in Love

☞ 5 Key practices: **Worshipping; Evangelizing; Serving; Fellowshiping; Discipling**

☞ **Matthew 22:37-39** (greatest commandments) **Everything in Love**

Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

☞ **Love God**

Love = agapao – **the deliberate choice to love no matter what.**

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. 9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Love for God should be at the very core of who we are. We are to love him with all of our hearts and minds. Not only a little, but completely. Love for God needs to be all consuming.

*--Oswald Chambers... No one could have had a more sensitive love in human relationship than Jesus; and yet he says there are times when love to father and mother must be hatred in comparison to our love for him. (Luke 14:26)*

1 John 4:19

We love because he first loved us.

If you really think about what he has done for you, it will inspire your love for him. He died for you; he keeps on forgiving you; he's watching over you.

☞ Love for God means **making him your number one priority:**

Luke 16:13

"No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money."

There is nothing evil about owning the things we need. But we can become driven by our material desires, always wanting more. Jesus said that serving God and serving wealth are incompatible goals. Any desire that becomes too important in our lives can cause us to lose sight of God's love. Let's keep him our number one priority.

☞ If we love God, we will **love his Word**:

Psalms 119:72

The law from your mouth is more precious to me than thousands of pieces of silver and gold.

Suppose a man is separated from his sweetheart and receives a letter from her. His first action will be to eagerly open the letter and pore over its contents. His love for his her will naturally cause him to love her correspondence with him. The same is true with our love for God's Word. Because we love the Author, we love His message to us. We read it avidly and often, we hold it close, and we hide its words in our hearts.

☞ Love for God means **obeying him**:

1 John 5:3

This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome...

What does loving God really mean? According to the Bible, loving God means **totally**

☞ **surrendering ourselves to Him**—"with all [our] heart and with all [our] soul and with all [our] mind." This kind of love is not just an emotional feeling, but what we relinquish our lives to. It's what we put first in our lives.

Now, if I asked you, "Do you love God?" most of you would automatically say, "Yes, of course I do!" But if you are really honest with yourself, how often do you seek to put His will and His desires above your own?

Loving God means no longer living for ourselves. Loving Him is a demonstration of complete selflessness. Our motive in surrendering ourselves to Him and in doing acts of kindness for others is *not* to earn His approval or earn our way to heaven, but simply because we want to please Him as an act of love. This entails continually setting aside our own thoughts, emotions and desires, and doing what He wants.

☞ **Love Others**

Leviticus 19:18

Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.

Love = same kind of love as described above

Neighbor = one close by

*Leaving the sanctuary, a church member comments: "I'd like to see you love MY neighbor."*

*The Bible tells us to love our neighbors, and also to love our enemies; probably because they are generally the same people.*

☞ **As yourself** = in the same manner

How do you love yourself? \_\_\_\_\_

--Georgia Harkness... *Christian love links love of God and love of neighbor in a twofold Great Commandment, from which neither element can be dropped, so sin against neighbor through lack of human love is sin against God.*

--C.S. Lewis... *I remember Christian teachers telling me long ago that I must hate a bad man's actions, but not hate the bad man: or, as they would say, hate the sin but not the sinner. For a long time I used to think this a silly, straw-splitting distinction: how could you hate what a man did and not hate the man? But years later it occurred to me that there was one man to whom I had been doing this all my life--namely myself.*

*However much I might dislike my own cowardice or conceit or greed, I went on loving myself. There had never been the slightest difficulty about it. In fact the very reason why I hated the things was that I loved the man. Just because I loved myself, I was sorry to find that I was the sort of man who did those things.*

*Consequently, Christianity does not want us to reduce by one atom the hatred we feel for cruelty and treachery. We ought to hate them. Not one word of what we have said about them needs to be unsaid. But it does want us to hate them in the same way in which we hate things in ourselves: being sorry that the man should have done such things, and hoping, if it is anyway possible, that somehow, sometime, somewhere, he can be cured and made human again.*

☞ **5 Love Languages:**

**Quality Time; Words of Affirmation; Gifts; Acts of Service; Physical Touch**

1 Corinthians 14:1

Follow the way of love

☞ **The Way of Love Is Waiting**

1 Corinthians 13:4

Love is patient

Colossians 3:12-14

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, ☞ kindness, humility, gentleness and **patience**. 13 **Bear with each other** and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

*Patience is the ability to put up with people you'd like to put down.*

*Faults are thick where love is thin.*

*Forbearance* could be explained as showing patience, even though a thing is owed to us. It is holding back or restraining the self from doing something that is normal to do. It is **controlling oneself when provoked or offended.**

### ☞ **The Way of Love Is Willing**

*Love is **willing to honor & serve others***

Romans 12:9-10

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.

☞ ESV says, "**Outdo one another in showing honor.**"

Paul is saying that the church should be a place of unparalleled honor; a place where honor is mutually and lavishly exchanged. Honor comes with words like, "I'm grateful to have you in my life;" "I really appreciate how God has gifted you;" "It encourages me to see you serve in that way."

1 Peter 4:8-10

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. 9 Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. 10 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

☞ *Love is **willing to sacrifice for others.***

John 15:12-13

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.

I think many would be willing to stand between a gun-wielding intruder and your loved ones. That action could literally cost your life and you would lay down your life for them. But what about laying down your life in the day-in, day-out? Will you sacrifice your preferences and your desires for the benefit of others?

### ☞ **The Way of Love Is Work**

1 John 3:17-18

Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but **with actions** and in truth.

--Saint Augustine... *What does love look like? It has hands to help others. It has feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like.*

1 Thessalonians 1:3

We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

*--John Powell... Love will ask much more of us than the law could ever require. True love can never say, "I have done enough. I have now fulfilled all my obligations." Love is restless, drives us on. Love asks us to walk many miles not demanded by justice or legalism.*

### **The Way of Love Is a Witness**

John 13:34-35

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

*--C. Neil Strait... Love is the one ingredient of which our world never tires and of which there is never an abundance. It is needed in the marketplace and in the mansions. It is needed in the ghettos and in the governments. It is needed in homes, in hospitals, and in individual hearts. The world will never outgrow its need for love.*

*Love is the one treasure that multiplies by division. It is the one gift that grows bigger the more you take from it. It is the one business in which it pays to be an absolute spendthrift. You can give it away, throw it away, empty your pockets, shake the basket, turn the glass upside down, and tomorrow you will have more than ever.*

### **What is the Church called to do? Love!**

**Love God wholeheartedly above everything else.**

**Love others as yourself; sacrificially; with honor.**