

VALUING LOVE

Ten Values for God's People

Hillsboro Presbyterian Church

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Pastor Michael McCall

Exodus 20:17 *"You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet you neighbor's wife, or his manservant, or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."*

This is the last in a series on Values. Behind each of the 10 Commandments is a Value for God's People: Responsibility (to God), Trust (no idols), Self-control (no cursing), Balance (schedule & life), Respect (begin with parents), Forgiveness (compassion), Purity (commitments), Fairness (integrity), Honesty (truth), and Love (goals). Christian values guide Christian conduct. This is how "ought-tos" become "want-tos". And we almost made it through this series without doing this exercise: "You're in a raft with a friend. You just survived a shipwreck. You have - a set of flares, enough food for a week, and five gallons of water. You can't make it to land without throwing one thing overboard. What would you throw overboard?" If you said, "My friend" - I'm glad you're here...you need this message!

Jesus was asked a values question: **"Which is the greatest commandment?"** *Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself." All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.* **Matthew 22:36-40** Love God. Love others. The value behind all the commandments is love.

The 10th Commandment (don't seek things) brings us back to the 1st Commandment (seek God). Covetness basically means greed...wanting what we do not have (see James 4:1-3). Do we find satisfaction in things or in God? Only God truly satisfies - and what God offers us is a relationship, not a possession. To help us learn to value love, ask God what love is and how to put it into practice.

FIRST) ASK WHAT LOVE IS * Why is it so important to ask? Love is one of the most misunderstood words in our language today. I can say I love my kids and I love pizza; I hope you know there's a difference in the way I use those two terms. But there's no way in our language to tell. Love is sanitized, romanticized, and plasticized by the media. It's great entertainment. We all suffer from some real misconceptions about what real love is.

The Greeks had four words for love: affection, attraction, friendship, unconditional regard towards another. This last word is the word that's used here. Agape. God's love. God's people are to value God's love. When we get up in the morning, we make a choice: we are going to love people today with God's love. It is a choice. It's not just an accident in our lives. Jesus never commanded us to feel a certain way...he did command us to **love one another** (John 15:12). The only love that is beyond a feeling and that moves us beyond selfishness is God's love.

SECOND) ACT LIKE LOVE ACTS * A simple list that God gave is found in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. It's as if God knew we were going to say, "How does it work? What do I do?" God gave a list: Here's what love does. Here's what love doesn't do. Love isn't just something you just talk about. It's something you do. If I want to act like love acts, I've got to . . .

1. BE PATIENT. 1 Corinthians 13:4 **"God's love is patient."** Patience...that's the first word God uses when it comes to love. You spell love with four letters (not the ones you think) -- T-I-M-E. Love takes time. It takes patience with other people. Why? Because waiting is so much a part of all of our lives. Part of loving somebody is waiting with them for important things that you want to see happen. That is part of love. God does that for me and God does that for you. PBPGINFWMY...Please be patient, God is not finished with me yet.

2. BE KIND 1 Corinthians 13:4 **"God's love is kind."** Kindness is caring for someone in the practical and the small details of life. Kindness is taking the great hope you have in a hospital nursery and translating them into changing dirty diapers. That's what genuine kindness is all about. It can make a difference. It can make an impact on a person's life. In a nationwide survey a couple of years ago, people were asked, "What is the number one quality you look for in a leader?" One of the things at the top of the list was "Someone who can encourage your heart." That's what kindness does.

3. BE SECURE 1 Corinthians 13:4 **"God's love doesn't envy. It doesn't boast. It's not proud."** This verse is talking about insecurity. If I've got security in being loved I don't have to envy what you have. If I've got a security in my love, I don't have to boast about what I have. Security makes all the difference. Security is one of the number one issues in relationships. If you add a little bit of insecurity into any relationship it will tear it apart. This is why God is so clear in His word about how secure we are in His love once we come to Him in Christ. That's why you have verses in the Bible like Romans 8:38-39 where it says, **"(Nothing) can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."** God knows the value of security when it comes to love.

4. BE SELFLESS 1 Corinthians 13:5 **"God's love is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs."** Rudeness is a sign of selfishness. "Self-seeking" is a sign of selfishness. Being "easily angered"... that word really means being irritated easily. "It keeps no record of wrongs." It's so easy to have this little book in the back of your brain that when you're losing the argument you can bring it out. God's love doesn't do that. God has selflessly loved us all and some of us have never loved Him back. Love is the greatest risk you'll ever take. There is no greater risk; there is no greater adventure in this life. I know people who will strap a snow board to their feet and jump out of a plane in the sky, who are afraid to take the risk to love. They're scared to death to take the risk to love. It is the greatest risk in life. It also provides the greatest benefits in life, the greatest joys in life and also some of the greatest hurts. But it's through this value of love that God changes us and changes the world around us.

5. BE LIFE GIVING 1 Corinthians 13: 6 **"God's love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth."** Evil is all that robs us of life...it is "live" spelled backwards. Jesus, the truth of God (John 14:6), came that we might have life (John 10:10). But people can be cruel, hurtful, spiteful, controlling, intimidating, even abusive - all in the name of love. But not God's love. If you want to see God's love, look at Jesus. Jesus always improved the lives of the people he touched and taught. If we value love, as the people of Jesus, we should too.

6. BE FOUND IN GOD'S LOVE 1 Corinthians 13:7 **"God's love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."** Some of you look at this and say: "always?" How is that possible? With humans it is impossible. I know for me it is impossible. But God's love never ends.

Remember Jesus said there are two priorities of love. The second one we've talked about most of this message -- **"Love your neighbor as you love yourself."** The first one Jesus said was **"Love God. Love Him with all you have."** We try to do the second without ever getting the first in place. And the first -- loving God -- is where the power comes from to do the second. **"Abide"** or **"remain"** in God's **"faith hope and love"** (1 Cor.13:13). This for Christians IS **"the most excellent way"** (1 Cor.13:1).