

September 12, 2010

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## **Monday**

1John 4:12 No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.

Two commands: Love God, Love your neighbor. Which is harder? For most, the second one is harder. When we focus upon loving God, we generally focus upon our feelings for the Savior, our thanksgiving, our praise. If we feel inclined toward God, we believe we have loved Him. Our neighbor brings real love into focus. There is nothing about 'feeling' in this command. It is all about action. Do you love your neighbor? How do you love your neighbor? Will you love your neighbor? In truth: unless you love your neighbor by acting on his behalf, you do not love your God.

## **Tuesday**

Mark 12:30-31 Jesus answered, "**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. YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.**" There is no other commandment greater than these."

God's command to love your neighbor spans both Old and New Testaments. It is in the Law of Leviticus and repeated in Matthew, Mark, and Luke verbatim. John does not quote the law but restates it in both his Gospel and in the Epistles. Paul writes of its requirement, as well as James and Peter. The sheer weight of its mention proves its importance to God. Yet we have not made the command central in our own lives. We too seldom think of those in our midst as neighbors and hardly ever act for others in Jesus' name. How do you need to restructure your priorities to meet God's expectations for ministry in your 'neck of the woods'?

## **Wednesday**

John 1:14 The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Jesus saw the world as His neighborhood. He laid down His robes of splendor and took up carpenter's tools. He entered into the realm of our lives and began to minister with hands-on care. He showed himself to be the neighbor of the Jew and the Gentile, of the publican and the Pharisee. God so loved His neighborhood that He gave His only begotten Son that whichever neighbor would receive Him might be received as family. That's loving your neighbor. That mirrors God's call upon your life as well. He has sent you into your neighborhood as His envoy.

## **Thursday**

Luke 6:32 "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them."

Scriptural neighborhoods do not merely consist of the few houses surrounding yours, but of every place where God has given you connection and influence. So, your work is your neighborhood. Your classrooms and social groups. Where you regularly shop is your neighborhood, where you buy gas perhaps, where you eat out. And the people you meet in each of these places, they are your neighbors. Jesus made it clear, anybody can love his or her friends, but the child of God will find a way to love his/her worst neighbors.

## **Friday**

Gal. 5:14 For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "**YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.**"

Do you want to fathom the heart of God? God loves your neighbors. He loves them as much as He loves you. He died for them. He suffered for their sins that they too might be forgiven. He even says that the extent of your love for them reflects whether you really love Him. Today begin to pray for your neighbors. Intentionally begin to make them a part of your thoughts, your vision, your love.