



Life Principles Notes™

Living the Extraordinary Life

Part 8: A Life of Love

Summary:

My friend, let me ask you to identify the most important emotion in your life. You might suggest that it is fear, for fear helps us remain safe. The Word of God gives a different answer. It says that love is the most significant emotion, but it is also the greatest power in the universe. The extraordinary life is a life characterized by powerful, unconditional love.

The teachers of Jesus' time tried to entrap Him by asking Him which was the greatest commandment. Jesus quickly replied with a remarkable

statement. He said that every single law or commandment depends upon the principle of loving God with one's entire heart, soul, and mind—and loving others as we love ourselves.

In the New Testament, there are two primary words used to describe love. One refers to a friendly or brotherly affection. The other is more powerful, more demanding, and more godly. This is the sacrificial kind of love, which is self-giving and committed. This is the way Jesus commands us to love Him and to love one another. It is the way our lives should be characterized. We were made to love and to be loved God's way.

Scriptural Principles:

1 We must learn to receive the love of God. There are several lessons of love that help us understand how God designed us to live. The first lesson is more difficult than it sounds. We receive His love not simply for our salvation; we must receive it emotionally and allow it to completely transform us. Most of us talk about the love of God, but do you really feel it? True love is not simply some intellectual concept or fact. It is a transforming experience. It is something we feel powerfully. Many believers today fail to realize that they have never genuinely accepted the love of God other than as an idea. We can never genuinely love someone else until we have truly received God's love.

2 The definition of God's love. There is no perfect definition of love, because it is a mystery beyond our human comprehension. We can, however, summarize the Bible's description of it. God's love is His unselfish giving of Himself to us for the purpose of bringing about blessings in our lives, in spite of the fact that we are unlovely and undeserving. For you and me, the most important fact of all is that God's love is unconditional. It depends upon no contingency. God simply loves us because of who He is. In the same way, He calls upon us to love each other without conditions or demands. We may struggle to accept this kind of love, because we know we don't deserve it, but God's love is absolute.

3 We must learn how to express our love toward God. How do you love the Lord? Scripture makes it very clear that love must be greater than talk. It is more than simply praying or going to church. We can do many things in the name of God without truly loving Him. Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (John 14:15). He went on to underline this same truth several times in that same discussion with His disciples. Quite clearly, He was teaching that love is expressed in

obedience. When we regularly do what God asks us to do, He receives it as love. The Christian life is a commitment to Jesus Christ—to walk in His ways every single day, and to please Him however we can.

4 We must be willing to love ourselves. It can be very hard to follow this law of love. The command to love ourselves sounds like a contradiction, but Jesus says to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:39). It is healthy to be able to say, “I respect myself, therefore I have the right attitude toward myself.” This healthy self-love is not proud or selfish. It involves caring for our health, because we know we are God’s children. On the other hand, it is unhealthy to be self-absorbed through a sense of insecurity. Failing to realize how deeply God loves them, some people fail to care for themselves properly. Healthy self-love means trying to be the best people we can be, simply to honor God.

5 We must learn to reach out to others in love. It is not enough simply to live in the overflow of God’s love. The natural consequence of being loved is to love others in the same way we are loved. Jesus told His disciples He was giving them a new commandment: “that you love one another, even as I have loved you” (John 13:34). The word *commandment* means that this instruction is not an option. We have two crucial reasons to reach out to others: first, because He wants us to be compassionate and forgiving toward others, with the same love by which He has forgiven us; second, because we know that loving an enemy protects us from the self-destruction of anger and bitterness. Loving others doesn’t always mean liking them. It means being obedient to God in the way we regard them.

6 The character of our love toward others. When we love others as God commands, what will life look like for us? First, we will be committed to the happiness, security, and well-being of others. This does not mean we will approve of every detail of their lives. We will simply be committed to serving and supporting the people we love. We will also relate to them in a manner that enables them to feel three particular things: a sense of belonging, a sense of worth, and a sense of competence. All of us need those feelings. As we begin to love people with God’s kind of love, we will find that we are not self-centered but other-centered. Our thoughts gravitate toward how we can serve the people we care about. And while no one enjoys the terrible pain of rejection, we must risk it to love others in the powerful way that God has designed us to live and to love.

7 How to express your love. Those who love in a godly way find that love is something which seeks regular expression—they are always looking for ways to demonstrate the loving commitment they have made. Such individuals are not satisfied simply to say, “I love you.” The first thing they do is to accept others unconditionally. They are quick to forgive. Then they look for opportunities to express encouraging words—the kind of language that strengthens those who need it. Loving people know how to use physical touch in a godly way. They use gentle gestures (perhaps a hand on the shoulder) to show that they are really listening and really care. They demonstrate their love through acts of service or by offering gifts. Above all, love is demonstrated by a willingness to spend time with others in a meaningful way.

Conclusion:

In the light of these reflections, you should ask yourself an important question: *Is there anyone in my life today to whom I could say, “My soul is rich and my life is beautiful, all because of you”?* Is there anyone who could say that to you?

God made us to live within the beauty and grace of such relationships with each other. Best of all, He made each of us to enjoy that same rich, unconditional love directly from Him. It is God and God alone who loves us perfectly and who

gives us the capacity to share His love with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

I wonder whether you are basking in this life of love today—or whether you are coping with anger, bitterness, and resentment, as so many hurting people do. The loving Father longs to shower you with joy and compassion, and to restore you into fellowship with Him. Will you reach out today and allow His love to encompass you? 🙏

Contact us:
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