

**Making Love My Highest Goal**  
**Next Steps Devotional Guide**  
**Sermon Series: Are You A Good Neighbor?**  
**July 31, 2022**  
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**Instructions:** This devotional guide can be used individually, by families or in a small group as a way to reinforce the biblical truth you learned from the sermon. If you are using this at home, spread the discussion question throughout the whole week. If you are using this in a small group, divide people up into sub-groups to discuss and share and bring them back to the whole group to share. Do not force anyone to share. Be sure to pray in your group.

1. Read 1 Corinthians 14:1 in your sermon notes. What would you say are some of your top goals in life? If loving God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength as loving your neighbor as yourself, is not your highest goals, what would it take for you to make them your highest goals?
2. Read Luke 12:16-21 from your sermon notes. Why do you think God took this man's life? Now read verse 21 again. There is a phrase in verse 21: *"rich in what matters to God."* What do you believe this means to you personally or how can you be *"rich in what matters to God?"*
3. Read Galatians 5:6 from your sermon notes. In our culture, what matters most are accomplishments, achievements, accolades, acclamation and acquisition. God says expressing your faith in love is what matters most. What is the connection between faith and love and how do we express that?
4. Read 1 Corinthians 13:1 from your sermon notes under point #1 under the heading, *"If I Do Not Live A Life Loving God & Loving Others."* Through the centuries there have been speakers who called people to greatness such as Winston Churchill and Billy Graham. There have been speakers who have called people to atrocities such as Hitler, Stalin, Mao, Ben Laden and others. We are easily impressed with eloquence and charisma. Why do you think we are easily impressed by great speakers and great communicators? God says, *"If I do not live a life of making my top goal loving God and loving others, then nothing I say will matter."* Why?
5. Read 1 Corinthians 13:2a from your sermon notes under point #2 under the heading, *"If I Do Not Live A Life Loving God & Loving Others."* We are smarter, more educated and have better technology than any generation before us, but we still have the same old problems — war, terrorism, crime, abuse, prejudice, hatred, and violence. Why? God says, *"If I do not live a life of making loving God and loving others my top goal, then nothing I know matters."* Why do you think we put such a premium on knowledge, learning, and education and less on loving God and loving others?
6. Read 1 Corinthians 13:2b, James 2:19 and 1 John 4:20 from your sermon notes under point #3 under the heading, *"If I Do Not Live A Life Loving God & Loving Others."* God says, *"If I do not live a life of making my top goal loving God and loving others, then nothing I believe matters."* God says, *"We cannot love Him whom we have not seen if we do not love others whom we have seen."* We are easily impressed with peoples' credentials. To say we love God but not others, God says we are a liar. The Bible says you can't say you are right with God and out of sorts with others. How do you measure up to this?
7. Read 1 Corinthians 13:3 from your sermon notes under point #4 under the heading, *"If I Do Not Live A Life Loving God & Loving Others."* God says, *"If I do not making my top goal loving God and loving others, then what I give does not matter."* Many people give for selfish reasons — they want something in return. We call it politics. Is it possible to give without expecting anything in return? if so, when have you see this and/or done this? If not, why?
8. Read 1 Corinthians 13:3 from your sermon notes under point #5 under the heading, *"If I Do Not Live A Life Loving God & Loving Others."*
  - a. God says, *"If I do not making my top goal loving God and loving others, then what I accomplish does not matter."* We all have heard or read about people who were on the cover of Fortune, or Forbes or People or who won a Nobel Peace Prize, but their personal life stunk. It's not the size of your bank

account or how many degrees you have but how intentional you are at building bridges to God and people. How would you describe your bridge building to God and to your “neighbor”? Why?

- b. God says, *“You can have the eloquence of an orator, the knowledge of a genius, the faith of a miracle worker, the generosity of a philanthropist, the achievements of a superstar, but if you don’t have love in your heart, it is worth zero.”* It doesn’t count. The only thing that matters to God is do I love Him with all my heart, soul, mind and strength and do I love other people (my neighbor). It’s the old adage that says, *“Keep the Main Thing — the Main Thing.”* Why do you think our culture is so saturated with lust for sex, money, power, privilege, position and etc. rather than simply loving God and people?
9. Read 2 John 1:6, John 13:34-35 and 1 John 2:4 from your sermon notes under point #1 under the heading, *“What is love according to God and Scripture?”* One misunderstanding about love is we often think love is a feeling or an emotion. You cannot command a feeling, but you can command an action. Why do you think we confuse this?
10. Read 1 Corinthians 14:1 from your sermon notes under point #2 under the heading, *“What is love according to God and Scripture?”* God says that love is a choice. Yet, the second misunderstanding we have about love is: we tend to think love is uncontrollable. People say, “I fell in love” as if it is like falling in a ditch. What are some of the hard choices love has to make at times? Have you?
11. Read 1 John 3:18 from your sermon notes under point #3 under the heading, *“What is love according to God and Scripture?”* God says that love is a conduct — it is something you do. Every minute of the day God is putting around you opportunities to grow in love. How would you rate yourself on doing this?
12. Read 1 John 4:16 from your sermon notes under point #4 under the heading, *“What is love according to God and Scripture?”* God says that love is a commitment. God says our relationship to Him is largely affected by our relationship to other people — how you treat them and love them. When have there been times your commitment was stretched, strained or almost snap completely. What does this say about love?
13. Read Mathew 22:37 and 1 John 4:7-8b in your sermon notes under point #1 under the heading, *“Five Practical Actions You Can Take to Make Love Your Highest Goal.”* All relationships require: T-I-M-E. This is especially true of our relationship with God. If you feel God is not close, guess who moved away? It wasn’t God. How consistent are you at having a daily devotional time with God? — not a ritual you do, but a genuine relationship you build with God? If do not know how to do this, take Class 201.
14. Read Joshua 4:19-24 in point #2 in your sermon notes under the heading, *“Five Practical Actions You Can Take to Make Love Your Highest Goal.”* The Bible has numerous stories of where people erected something to remind them to grow their relationship to God or to be thankful to God. Besides using the “Calendar App” and “Reminder App” on your cell phone, what other reminders could you do to remind yourself to love God and love people (your neighbor)? — Get creative, think outside the box.
15. Read 1 John 4:8 and 1 John 4:20 in point #3 in your sermon notes under point #3 under the heading, *“Five Practical Actions You Can Take to Make Love Your Highest Goal.”* Isn’t it amazing how many songs we hear on the radio we memorize or how many movie lines we remember such as from the movie, The Field of Dreams — *“If you build it . . .”* Or Forrest Gump — *“My mama said life is like a . . .”* Use a Bible lexicon or Bible dictionary and look up Bible verses about love and relationships. Which of these could you select to memoize to motivate you to love God and love your neighbor as yourself?
16. Read Matthew 7:24-27 in point #4 from your sermon notes under the heading, *“Five Practical Actions You Can Take to Make Love Your Highest Goal.”* Anyone who becomes good at anything has to practice, practice and practice. The truth is: there are no natural lovers. So, how do we practice loving people?
17. Read Ephesians 5:2 and 1 John 4:18 in point #5 from your sermon notes under the heading, *“Five Practical Actions You Can Take to Make Love Your Highest Goal.”* Getting support to love God and to love others from other godly people who are loving is a bonus. Who would that be for you? Would you ask them to help you? Why or why not?
18. Read 1 Corinthians 13:13 in point #5 in your sermon notes under the heading, *“Five Practical Actions You Can Take to Make Love Your Highest Goal.”* Why do you think love is greater than faith and hope?