

LOVE IN ACTION — CONTINUED

Knowing It Isn't Enough — Love Requires Action

Mark 12:28–34

28 Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, “Which is the first commandment of all?” **29** Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments is: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. **30** And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment. **31** And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” **32** So the scribe said to Him, “Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He. **33** And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one’s neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” **34** Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” But after that no one dared question Him.

Jesus was asked which commandment is the greatest. His answer brings us back to the foundation of this entire study:

First — Love God.

Second — Love your neighbor as yourself.

Jesus told the man that he was **“not far from the kingdom of God.”** He understood the truth—but knowing the truth is not where it ends. What we know needs to become something we live out.

Compare this with James 2:17–20: **17** Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. **18** But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. **19** You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! **20** But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

Faith without works (action) is dead. Genuine faith produces action.

THINK ABOUT IT: It's possible to know what God says and agree with it, but His Word is meant to change how we actually live.

LOVE ONE ANOTHER

John 15:12–13: **12** This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. **13** Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.

Jesus tells us to love one another as He loved us.

Philippians 2:3: 3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

We are to walk in humility, esteeming others better than ourselves. That has been the common thread through everything we've studied.

What does loving one another look like?

Serve one another • Care for one another • Bear one another's burdens • Build one another up • Encourage & comfort one another • Pray for one another

All of these require us to look beyond ourselves and consider someone else. This list is how we love one another.

Now let's look at a few more ways Scripture tells us to put love into action.

1. FORGIVE ONE ANOTHER

Ephesians 4:32: 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

“And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”

Notice the order: We were forgiven first → therefore, we forgive.

Forgiveness isn't something God asks us to give without first having given it to us. When forgiving someone feels difficult, we can remember the mercy and forgiveness we ourselves have already received from Christ.

Colossians 3:12–14: Paul tells us to put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering, bearing with and forgiving one another. Then he brings everything together: **“But above all these things put on love.”**

That matters. **Forgiveness isn't separate from love. Forgiveness is one of the ways love becomes visible.**

Compare this with 1 Corinthians 13:1–3 even impressive spiritual actions lose their value when they aren't motivated by love.

1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. **2** And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. **3** And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

Matthew 6:14–15: 14 “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. **15** But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Jesus connects receiving forgiveness with our willingness to forgive others.

THINK ABOUT IT: We aren't giving someone something we've never needed ourselves. **We forgive from what we have already received.**

Forgiveness isn't about pretending the wrong didn't happen or saying that it was acceptable. It's refusing to hold onto unforgiveness when God has extended such great mercy to us. There is no longer a debt owed.

The Unforgiving Servant — Matthew 18:21–35

Peter asks Jesus: **How many times do I have to forgive?**

Jesus answers and then tells the parable of a servant who owed his king an enormous debt. The servant couldn't pay it. He begged for mercy, and the king forgave the entire debt.

But that same servant went out and found someone who owed him a much smaller amount. Instead of extending the mercy he had just received, he demanded payment.

That's the heart of the parable. He received mercy—but didn't allow that mercy to change the way he treated someone else.

KEY: We need to remember the size of the debt God forgave us. Forgiven people should be forgiving people.

2. BE PATIENT WITH ONE ANOTHER

Love also shows itself in the way we respond to people's weaknesses, shortcomings, and differences.

Ephesians 4:2: “With all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love.”

Patience isn't merely waiting calmly for something to happen. Sometimes patience means continuing to walk in love with a person who isn't changing as quickly as we'd like them to.

Colossians 3:12–13: Again, Paul connects: **Humility → Meekness → Patience → Bearing with one another → Forgiveness**

These qualities work together. If we're going to live closely with other believers, there will inevitably be opportunities to practice them.

1 Thessalonians 5:14: “...be patient with all.”

Not just with the people who are easy to be patient with. **All.** The Greek word for all means “all”.

Why Should We Be Patient?

Because the Lord has been patient with us.

God didn't wait until we had everything figured out before He loved us. So when another person requires patience, we can remember:

I have needed God's patience too. Still do.

3. HONOR & PREFER ONE ANOTHER

This takes the principle of putting others before ourselves even further.

Romans 12:9–11: **9** Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. **10** Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; **11** not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;

Paul describes genuine love and tells believers to be: **“kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another.”**

Love isn't constantly asking: **“What do I deserve?”** It learns to ask: **“How can I honor this person?”**

Compare this again with **Philippians 2:3 — esteem others better than yourself.**

1 Peter 2:17: **“Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.”**

Honor isn't reserved only for people we admire or agree with. There is a basic honor and dignity we extend to people because God values people.

Compare — 1 Samuel 2:30: **30** Therefore the Lord God of Israel says: ‘I said indeed that your house and the house of your father would walk before Me forever.’ But now the Lord says: ‘Far be it from Me; for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.

— God says, **“Those who honor Me I will honor.”**

Matthew 25:40: **20** “So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’

— Jesus teaches that what we do for others can ultimately be regarded as something done unto Him.

That changes how we see people.

1 Corinthians 10:23–24: **23** All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify. **24** Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being.

Not everything that is permissible is beneficial. Paul tells us: “Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being.”

Christian love asks a different question than: “Am I allowed to do this?”

Sometimes the better question is: “Will this help the other person?”

KEY: Honor and preference require us to move from: Me first → Others matter too.

And once again, that brings us back to Philippians 2:3:

Love chooses humility over self-interest.

THE HEART OF LOVE IN ACTION

Everything we've studied continues to fit underneath one central command:

LOVE GOD

Matthew 22:37–38: 37 Jesus said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and great commandment.



LOVE ONE ANOTHER

And because we love one another, we:

Serve one another • Care for one another • Bear one another's burdens • Build one another up • Encourage & comfort one another • Pray for one another • Forgive one another • Are patient with one another • Honor & prefer one another

These aren't nine unrelated Christian duties.

They are nine expressions of LOVE.

We serve because we love. • We care because we love. • We forgive because we love. • We're patient because we love. • We honor because we love.

And even deeper than that:

We love because Christ loved us first.

THE PATTERN

Christ gives to us → We receive from Him → His love changes us → We give to others what we've received

That's what turns the command to **“love one another”** from something we simply know into something people can actually see in our lives.