

Prayer Corner 45

Love God, Love Your Neighbor

By David Cochran



A scribe asked Jesus, “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

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
New International Version

Love God and love your neighbor. It’s so easy to say these words, but so hard to put them into practice. We might think that loving God is a no-brainer. Why wouldn’t we love our creator? Then things happen in life, and we wonder if God has abandoned us. We wonder where this God, who we are supposed to love, is.

Neighbors aren’t just those who live near us. They can be in adjacent towns, states, or even countries. We may not know or agree with our neighbors, which makes it hard to

love them. It takes self-discipline and commitment to God's laws to love our neighbors, but God wants us to do just that.

When Jesus spoke The Great Commandment to his followers in Judea, he wasn't talking about suggestions. These are statements originating in the Old Testament—Love God (Deuteronomy 6:5), Love your neighbor (Leviticus 19:18). Jesus called them commandments because this wisdom came from God, the great commander.

To live the Great Commandment, we must step outside ourselves and shed our self-centeredness. We must acknowledge that we don't have all the answers to life's problems, nor can we control every situation in which we find ourselves.

We are challenged to listen to God's voice and follow his direction. One way to show our love for God is to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. God wants us to get along with them so we can have peace in our country and the world. God's peace allows us to use our constructive talents to do good things. Without it, we create destructive energies that produce anger, frustration, and disharmony.

The Great Commandment is simple in its statement, but difficult in its implementation. Nevertheless, we must ask ourselves, "What kind of world do we want to live in?" If we want a peaceful, constructive world, the solution is to listen to God spoken through the words of Jesus, "Love God and love your neighbor!"

"If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other."

— Mother Teresa

Pray this petition to God by Edwin Hatch (1878) in response to The Great Commandment

Breathe on me, Breath of God.

Fill me with life anew,

that I may love the way you love,

and do what you would do.

Amen

Listen to this song and read its lyrics:

[Love God, Love Your Neighbor](#)

Song created by Lee Veliko Bekir