

How To Walk In Love

We are in a series where we have learned how to walk as a friend of God, walking with a tender heart, walking by faith, and now we are going to learn how to walk in love. That is a Biblical statement. Ephesians 5:1-2 is where we will start. Verse 1 says,

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. Ephesians 5:1-2 (NASB)

Verse 1 tells us that we are to be imitators of God. Christians are encouraged to imitate God. That is amazing. I think most of us are familiar with a mime, someone who imitates somebody else. We understand the concept. Now here we are told to imitate God.

Then we are told that we are to “walk in love, just as Christ loved us.” The message is that since God and Jesus Christ love us, we are supposed to imitate His love. He loves us and died for us, giving Himself up for us as an offering, a sacrifice.

We are to love other people as He loved us.

LAWYER ASKS ABOUT ETERNAL LIFE. Rather than visiting a long list of verses in the New Testament and showing you different examples of love, I want to choose just one example of love. Please go to Luke 10:25. There we find that Jesus was talking to a crowd when a man stood up. We are told,

And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test . . .

Now the “Him” is Christ. Then the text reads,

. . . saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? Luke 10:25 (NASB)

I have to admit that I am really surprised how many times this question occurs in the gospels. Jesus is asked this question again and again: “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” Now what is eternal life? Some people think that eternal life is living forever. But here eternal life does not mean living forever. If you are wondering if we live forever, yes, everybody will live for eternity. That is the message of Matthew 25:46.



These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” Matthew 25:46 (NASB)

The verse says that some will experience eternal punishment and others eternal life. That is, everyone will live forever. Therefore, the question is, where will you live? Eternal

life does not refer to a quantity of life but to a quality of life. That is, where will you spend your eternity? So when this man asked Jesus, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” he was asking, “What shall I do to go to heaven?” The lawyer had asked a great question.

He then stood up and put Jesus to the test. Now that is

interesting. He is not just asking a question. He is not just interested in getting some information. He is testing Christ. This is incredible. This man tests Christ with a question. He wants to discover how Jesus will respond.

When it says “lawyer,” you might be thinking “an attorney at law.” My wife and I have a will. An attorney at law, an expert in our state’s laws, created the will for us. But that is not the kind of lawyer we are talking about here. The story is told about one lawyer who walked into a court where they were getting ready for a jury trial, One lawyer looks at the other lawyer and calls him a liar. That lawyer responded and called the other lawyer a thief. The judge said, “Okay, now that the lawyers have identified one another, let us proceed.” They both had impugned one another’s integrity, but the judge says, “Okay, it is time to proceed.” That is not the type of lawyer we are talking about here in Luke 10. We are not talking about someone who goes to court, or someone who deals with legal issues. This lawyer was a religious lawyer in the rabbinic system. He was supposed to be an expert in the Scriptures, an expert in the Mosaic Law. So the message is that if anybody had a dispute, or someone had a difficult question about the Law, this lawyer could provide the answer. This lawyer was an expert in the details of the Old Testament scriptures. So, he stood up, looked at Jesus, and asked the question, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” It was a test from this lawyer who was an expert.

LOVE GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART. You can be confident that the lawyer had his own view about what was required for eternal life. This was a test. He was not truly looking for information. He was not wanting to find out how to obtain eternal life. He already had his view. He was testing Jesus. In verse 26, we discover Jesus’ answer to the question,

And He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?” Luke 10:26 (NASB)

The lawyer asked Jesus, “How does it read to you?” Jesus’ reply was “What do you think is the correct answer?” Verse 27 adds this,

And he answered, “ YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR

GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND . . . Luke 10:27a (NASB)

Then Jesus added,

“ . . . AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.” Luke 10:27b (NASB)

So, what is the answer? The lawyer said the way a person gains eternal life is to love God with your whole being—with everything, and also your neighbor! You love them as yourself. No difference. Now this expert of the law gave Jesus a very remarkable reply. Many people would have said the Ten Commandments. Most of us would probably say, “We are supposed to keep the Ten Commandments.” Scripture says that if you love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength, and you love your neighbor as yourself, then you will have fulfilled the Ten Commandments.

Matthew 22:37 quotes the first and foremost law. We will start with verse 35, and notice that a different lawyer asked this question. We need to be aware that there was not just one lawyer. Verse 35 says,

One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him. Matthew 22:35 (NASB)

This is another test.

“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And He said to him, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR OUR MIND.’ This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’ Matthew 22:36-39 (NASB)

So what did Jesus say? The number one commandment is to love God with your whole being. Then there is nothing left for you to give to God. In other accounts, the commandment

reads, “With all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength”—but not here. Then He added, “Your neighbor as yourself.” The first time that the Ten Commandments are recorded is in Exodus 20. This is the list of the Ten Commandments. Verse 3 records the first commandment.

“You shall have no other gods before Me.” Exodus 20:3 (NASB)

So what happens if you love God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength? Would you fulfill this commandment? The answer is yes. If God has your entire heart, are you going to worship another god? The answer is no. You love God so much that you will not want to give anything or anyone else your full love.

The second commandment is given in verse 4.

“You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.” Exodus 20:4 (NASB)

Verse 5 adds to it,

“You shall not worship them or serve them.” Exodus 20:5 (NASB)

Are you going to do that if God is number one in your life? The answer is no.

Verse 7 gives us the third commandment,

“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain.” Exodus 20:7 (NASB)

Would you slander God’s name if you love Him? The answer is, “No!” Who slanders their father?

The fourth commandment is,

“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.” Exodus 20:8 (NASB)

If you really love God, would not you want to worship Him? The answer is yes. That is also true of the first, second, and

third commandments. Those commandments are all directed toward God.

The next six commandments in verses 12–17 are about others. That is, you shall your neighbor as yourself.

“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

Exodus 20:12-17 (NASB)

So if you are loving others as yourself, would you be doing those things? The answer is no. Jesus and the Gospels make the point that the Ten Commandments hang on the command to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength, and then love your neighbor as yourself. So the lawyer answered correctly. The lawyer understood and quoted the first and second greatest commandments accurately. If you are interested, the Old Testament passages for these two commands are Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. This is important.

WHY YOUR GOOD DEEDS SEND YOU TO HELL. In Luke 10:28 we are told that the lawyer wanted to know who was his neighbor. This is truly odd since he was supposed to be an expert in the intricacies of the Old Testament. Verse 28 says,

And He said to him, “You have answered correctly; **DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE.**” Luke 10:28 (NASB)

Jesus said to him, “You got it right.” Then He added, “Do this and you will live. Do this and you will have eternal life.” Someone might ask, “Really?! If I love God with all my heart, all my soul, all my strength, and all my mind, and my neighbor as myself, will I be given eternal life?” The answer is yes, That is what Jesus said. Jesus said if you want to try to get to heaven

that way, you can try to do it. However, do you know what Jesus is really saying? If you can do that, then you will go to heaven. But there is a problem. The problem is that neither you nor I could ever do that. It is not possible. Why? Because in order to do it, you have to love God and others as perfectly as God the Father does.

Matthew 5:48 is an amazing verse. It follows verses 46-47. Here are verses 46-47:

“For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?” Matthew 5:46-47 (NASB)

Jesus said that if we only greet those who greet us, we favor those who favor us. If we look at verse 43-44, we learn that we are also to love our enemy.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” Matthew 5:43-44 (NASB)

Jesus has been talking about love. Now look what happens in verse 48. He said,

“Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” Matthew 5:48 (NASB)

What is the message? The message is that if you want to enter heaven by loving God and others, then you had better perfectly love others if you want to get to heaven that way. If you want to get to heaven by doing good works—at least what we think are good works—you had better be perfect. If you are not perfect, you cannot go to heaven that way.

It is impossible for us to get to heaven by doing good works. You will not get there that way. Do you know why? Jesus said in John 8:24 that we are all sinners. What does that mean? That means that each one of us sins. Then ten verses later in verse 34, Jesus said that we are not only controlled by sin, He said we are the slaves of sin. That is the actual wording; we

are the slaves of sin. The Greek word for slaves in verse 25 is *doulos*. It has the idea of controls. We are wrestling with sin in our attempts to not sin. We can do some good, but our act of love is never perfect. For example, we can give somebody a gift at Christmas. We can give somebody a gift for their birthday. We can say something nice. We can send a nice little note and give someone some money. But did you know we cannot do anything that is good enough to get us into heaven? Jesus said we are all sinners. He said we are controlled by sin. Even our best act of love is flawed.

In Psalm 14:2-3, we are told that no one seeks after God. People usually struggle with that and say, “But people seek for God all around the world.” Yes, but not the true God. I like to make the point that we design our own god. That is what the cults have done, That is what the different religions have done. They have designed their own god. They worship the god that they have created. It is like somebody making an idol. They make an idol and what do they do? They worship the idol. You might think that is crazy, but it happens all the time. I have had people tell me, “That is not the god that I worship.” Yet, many people state that they have a different concept of god than the God of the Scriptures. So, they change him and worship the god they created.

Psalm 14:2-3 says nobody really seeks for the true God. The passage also says no one does good. So if you are wondering if you are really going to do good, notice what the verse says. No one does good. Not even one person does good.

Jeremiah 17:9 says,

**“The heart is more deceitful than all else
And is desperately sick;
Who can understand it?”
Jeremiah 17:9 (NASB)**

The verse says our hearts are very deceitful. Had you realized that your heart is deceitful? Did you know that what you think about yourself is not accurate? Did you know that your perceptions are often wrong? That is the message if you are a non-Christian. But it is different for a Christian because the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin. The Holy Spirit helps you have a right perspective about yourself. But before you become a

Christian, you might think that you are a good person. It is very common for people to think they are a good person. Sin has deceived them into thinking that they can do enough good things to get into heaven. This occurs because Jeremiah 17:9 says we deceive ourselves. Have you ever done something and then wondered what your motive was for doing it? This verse says you are going to have a difficult time understanding your real motive because you deceive yourself. In fact, we usually want to justify ourselves. Then the verse says, “and you are desperately sick.” The idea is that you cannot be fixed. “And who can understand it?” The message is you cannot understand.

HOW WE CAN ENTER HEAVEN. Scripture says we do not seek after God. We deceive ourselves. We are incurably sick. So in Matthew 19:17 Jesus told the rich young ruler that there is only one who is good. He is God. When Jesus said that only one is good, that means you are not. I am not. When Jesus said that, He was trying to help the man realize he cannot enter heaven by his own efforts. Jesus told the man, “You have it wrong. You are the expert, but you have it wrong. You cannot earn eternal life by doing good works.” Now Jesus is going to help him understand how to gain eternal life. Here is verse 29:

But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” Luke 10:29 (NASB)

Now this is amazing. The man asked, “Who is my neighbor?” We are told why he asked the question. He realized he was in trouble. He realized that Jesus had answered his question correctly. So he wanted to justify himself. Watch what happens. Verse 30 begins the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Jesus replied and said, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead.” Luke 10:30 (NASB)

A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. The text reads, “going down” because Jerusalem is higher in elevation than Jericho. Jerusalem was about 2,500 feet in elevation. Jericho is about 1,000 feet. The road between Jerusalem and Jericho is called the Ascent of Blood. You can check that out in Joshua 15:7. (Adummim means red for blood). It was known

as a notorious place where criminals would hang out along this road and rob people. So Jesus uses an illustration of something that would have been very familiar to them. They would have known about and understood the perils of the road from Jerusalem to Jericho.

Notice what the robbers did to him. They stripped him. The Greek word for “strip” means to remove all of his clothes. Also, they beat him. Not only do they take his money, but they took his clothes. Why would they want the man’s clothes?! Why take whatever belongs to him and then beat him? We are told he was half dead or almost dead. What incredible greed! What an incredible hatred for men and women, for life—unbelievable!

Verse 31 adds,

And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.” Luke 10:31 (NASB)

A priest was walking by and saw the man. The priest was not interested in helping the wounded man.

Verse 32 now introduces us to a Levite,

“Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.” Luke 10:32 (NASB)

A Levite was someone who helped to maintain the tabernacle and later the temple. You can check that out in Exodus 4:14 and Numbers 3:6-9. He was a descendant of Levi. Notice that these two are religious men. Two religious people walked by and obviously they had a heart problem. You might think that being religious men, they would have wanted to go to the side of the road and help him. But not these men.

Verse 33:

“But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion.” Luke 10:33 (NASB)

The Greek word for “compassion” has the idea of great affection, really deep emotion. So this Samaritan saw this half dead Jew on the side of the road (v. 30). He felt great compassion for him. Now this is something you would *not* have expected

because we are told in the gospels that the Jews had nothing to do with the Samaritans, and vice versa (John 4:9). The Jews hated the Samaritans.

So here was a Jew beside the road, and the Samaritan had great compassion for him and stopped. Watch what happened. Verse 33-34 say,

“But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. Luke 10:33-34 (NASB)

The wine would be for medicinal purposes to help heal the wound. He put him on his own animal, and brought him to an inn and took care of him.

I want you to stop and think. First, the Samaritan stopped and took a bandage. Where did he get the bandage? He did not go down to the Walgreen’s or CVS pharmacy and buy a bandage. He took it out of his own belongings. Where did he get the oil and wine? Again, he used his own belongings. Then we are told he put the injured man on his own animal. He then took him to an inn. We should add that he sacrificed some of his own time. The Samaritan took time, gave some of his own possessions, and took care of the man. What did the priest and Levite do? Nothing! They looked at him and walked by. That is all they wanted to do.

Verse 35 reveals more of the Samaritan’s heart.

“On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay.” Luke 10:35 (NASB)

On the next day the Samaritan took two denarii. A denarii was a day’s wage. He took two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, “Take care of him”. The Samaritan loved this man, even though the man was someone who probably hated him. The Jew probably would not have helped the Samaritan, but the Samaritan helped the Jew. Now what do you think this lawyer, who wanted to know about eternal life, was thinking? Do you think the lawyer was eager to be an example and do

exactly what the Good Samaritan did?

THE LAWYER’S QUESTION IS OUR QUESTION. In verse 36, Jesus is asking the lawyer a question.

“Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers’ hands?” And he said, “The one who showed mercy toward him.” Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do the same.” Luke 10:36-37 (NASB)

Jesus asked a good question. The question put to the lawyer actually becomes our question. The question is, “Which are you? Are you like the priest, the Levite, or the good Samaritan? Which are you? “ Do you know what the lawyer would have discovered had he tried to do what the good Samaritan did? He could not have done it perfectly. We cannot love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, with all our strength, and our neighbor as ourselves. We cannot love like that. It is not possible for us to love everyone like that. Something will go wrong. Jesus tried to help this man understand that he could not obtain eternal life by loving everyone like this. We do not have this perfect love. It is not possible.

So how does a person obtain eternal life? Look at Romans 10:9 . It says,

If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; Romans 10:9 (NASB)

The last part of the verse means that we must believe Jesus died for our sins. When Jesus died He took our sins upon Himself and paid the penalty that you and I deserve which is spiritual death—eternity in hell. If you truly believe that Jesus died in order to forgive your sins, then you will become repentant of your sins and seek His forgiveness. In Luke 5:32, Jesus said that He did not come to save the righteous, but sinners. He is looking for individuals who are sorrowful over their sins and are ready to repent over their sins. Because they seek God’s forgiveness, they will then submit to Christ and acknowledge him as their Lord. So, the first part of the verse says that he/she will confess that Jesus is Lord. That is, with all their heart,

they truly believe this. If all of this is true of you, then you have obtained eternal life.

That is the message that Jesus gave to this man. But what is the message for us? We started by talking about walking in love. This is an illustration of how we walk in love. First, we love God with our entire being. Second, in response we imitate Christ. What did Christ do? He loves us, and because of that, He died for us, and we are to love others just as Jesus Christ loves us. That is how we are to walk in love.