

Love Neighbour as Yourself Means?

Jesus, when he was asked what the greatest commandment of morality was, replied as follows.

“The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these” (Mark 12:29-31, King James Bible).

Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. It is not, "Love yourself and love your neighbour as yourself."

Also, Jesus is partly quoting an Old Testament verse that talks about love of neighbour. The verse is Leviticus 19:18, Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.

Jesus said he advocated love your neighbour as it was in the law of God - the law is clear that this law does not exclude killing adulterers or homosexuals. He was not taking the command out of context. He said he was using the commandment as the law gave it. The command comes from Leviticus 19 the most murderous book God ever allegedly wrote. The book gives several exceptions when you may not love. The rule is about how people should act from day to day not about how the law should be applied. So the commandment in essence means, "Be good to your neighbour except when the law tells you."

The neighbour in Leviticus 19:18 is an Israelite and then the command to love him as yourself is not unconditional. And the command to love him would be quite literal for there is no respect for females in the pages of God's Law.

You may point to the bit where God says Israel must not persecute the Egyptian because Israel once was in his country. But that is not logical and not sincere. Living in a country in itself is no reason for treating those who were born there and how they are now in your country well. See how the text makes it about Israel! And that is odd if the story that Israel was treated terribly by Egypt is true. It is clear from other texts that foreigners could not have equal rights with the Israelites. For example, some races were banned from joining Israel for several generations.

Love of neighbour as in not bearing grudges is what is meant in the text. If you are looking after yourself you will not make enemies. So it could be paraphrased as "Revenge and grudges make you enemies so if you are looking after yourself you will not encourage them." And it is clear that the rule only applies among the people of Israel. Remember Jesus is talking about the commandments of the law so we are supposed to check out what the commandment actually means by going to the context. Christian liars ignore this and make out that it is about making huge sacrifices of love for your neighbour when in fact it is not. It is only about fostering civility. But avenging was allowed nevertheless through the proper "legal" channels. The rule bans taking the law into your own hands.

This verse was not treated as central in the law like the command to love God with all your power was. The Jew had to recite the latter frequently. And the command to love neighbour is just treated as if it were another commandment in the text. It does not textually stand out. The love of God is the biggest commandment. If it is 98% important then the other is 1% important with the rest of the commandments barely registering in comparison.

God tells his people that when they attack a town to offer it peace and if the town accepts then the people can enslave the inhabitants (Deuteronomy 20:10-11). That is a warning against taking words like peace and love in a wishy washy way.

APPENDIX FROM ENCYCLOPEDIA OF BIBLE DIFFICULTIES - SELF LOVE IS A SIN

Does Matthew 22:39 teach a godly love of self? Matthew 22:39 contains Christ's quotation of Leviticus 19:18: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself (NASB). Some have inferred from this that Jesus taught a godly love of self, for one cannot very well love his neighbor unless he also loves himself. There may be a measure of truth in this, but it involves a somewhat different understanding of the word "love" than what is normally used. Certainly the second great commandment involves a proper regard, acceptance, and respect for oneself; but it seems to be quite misleading—if not altogether dangerous—to speak of the Bible as teaching self-love. Interestingly enough, there is only one passage in Scripture that speaks of self-love explicitly, and that is 2 Timothy 3:1–3: "But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self [philautoi], lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving" (NASB). It is interesting to see the categories of character weakness and sinful perversion in which this

philautoi appears. And it should be carefully noted that “lovers of self” are grouped with the “unloving” (astorgoi —lacking the natural affection toward one’s own flesh and blood), “haters of good,” and “lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.” There can be no question but what the term “self-lovers” is presented here as a serious character weakness, a trait of sin. For this reason there is little justification for a Christian minister or a Christian counselor to speak with approval of “self-love.” Are we ever justified in praising what Scripture condemns? Hardly. Rather, because of the self-deceptiveness of the human heart (Jer. 17:9), we would do well to allow ourselves to be taught by Scripture in this matter, rather than falling into a fallacy that comes from a sophistic juggling of terms. The first appeal to self-love to be found in the Bible occurs in Genesis 3:4–5, where the satanic serpent poses as the friend and helpful counselor of man: “You surely shall not die [despite what God may have said to you]! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God [or ‘gods’], knowing good and evil” (NASB). So saying, he stirred up a strong realization of self-love on Eve’s part, and she felt moved to partake of the forbidden fruit. Satan has been appealing to self-love in fallen man ever since. The influence of self-love and self-will has been to lead away from the will of God into a life of shameful bondage to evil. “Self-love” is the name of the disease of our soul; it cannot possibly be the correct label for its cure! How, then, are we to understand Matthew 22:39: “Love your neighbor as yourself”? We should observe that it commands the very opposite of self-love, for self-love dictates the love of self in preference to others. This second commandment bids us to do the very contrary of this: we are to put the rights and needs of others in the very same level as our own. Hence this is a negation and a rejection of self-love (in the sense of self-preference). The same idea is brought out very clearly by Christ’s “Golden Rule” in Matthew 7:12: “Therefore all things that you wish men to do to you, do even so to them.” We are to treat them with as much consideration and love as we should like to have them do to us. This again is the very antithesis of self-love. When the early Christians of the Jerusalem church sold their property and gave the proceeds to be distributed among all the church members as each might have need, this was a distribution of love to all alike; it was anything but a manifestation of self-love. Self-love would have dictated a retaining of one’s wealth for personal advantage and enjoyment. Fallen mankind already knows this kind of self-love and needs no exhortation or encouragement by professional counselors —Christian or otherwise—to further self-love. What really concerns the Christian counselor is that tendency towards low self-esteem or outright self-rejection that he often encounters in people who are emotionally disturbed. Often they have disappointed themselves in a vain attempt to achieve their own personal goals; and they condemn themselves for their failure, out of a feeling of wounded pride. Or else they have been so rejected and put down by others that they end up despising themselves. The psychologist seeks to counteract this self-contempt or self-rejection by a totally different concept of self—and so he should. But the remedy is not found in resurrecting the same vice that may have contributed to their downfall in the first place. Self-love is not the answer; rather, it is Christ-love. “For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died [i.e., all believers united to Him by faith died with Him as He suffered for them on the cross]; and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves [as all self-lovers do], but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf” (2 Cor. 5:14–15, NASB). The fact that the Son of God loved me enough to die for me confers on me a standing of privilege and glory far higher than anything a self-lover might seek to gain for himself. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:3–4, NASB). If God has loved us, delivered us, showered such blessing on us, and guaranteed a place for us up in the glory of heaven above—all because of His free grace and not because of any merit or goodness in us—how can we condemn, reject, or despise ourselves? “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect?” asks Romans 8:33. If no one else in heaven, earth, or hell can bring any charge against those justified by the blood of Jesus, no more can we despise or abhor ourselves. That amounts to a rejection of God’s own judgment of love toward us (who by faith are in His beloved Son, Jesus). Self-contempt and self-hate are completely excluded by the mighty love of God, which He has showered on us. He has entrusted us with a high and holy calling; He has summoned us to be ambassadors of the court of heaven, commissioned to preach Christ and reconciliation to God through His atoning death (2 Cor. 5:19–20). He has consecrated our bodies to be temples of His Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19). What higher dignity, what greater glory is possible for any man? I must daily, hourly, present my body as a living sacrifice to Him on the altar of devotion; I must constantly draw on Him for His enablement to fulfill my stewardship in a worthy and appropriate manner. But I will never, never despise myself or reject myself if I truly believe what God has said about me in His word. This kind of self-assurance and self-esteem is derived completely from Jesus by faith and lifts me immeasurably above the level of “self-love.” I am lost in the love of Christ, and in Him I find myself again!