

## CCC LOVE MATTERS MOST Part 2

### 40 Days of Love

Start off with Memory verse: 1 Corinthians 16:14

“Everything you do must be done with love”

If you want your life to count you have to focus it. You don't have time for everything. I think everyone here would agree with that? You don't have time for everything. And not everything is of equal value.

Jesus said there are two things that are more valuable in life than anything else. He said its love. Loving God and loving each other.

Last week we looked at this verse. It's called the Great Commandment when we were talking about five definitions of love. If you missed last week, I highly recommend that you go listen to last week's message on the web site because a lot of what you've been taught about

love is just flat out wrong. And you need to listen to that message on building healthy relationships.

One of the verses that we looked at last week is where Jesus was asked, what is the most important command? And Jesus replied *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. The second most important is similar: Love your neighbor as much as you love yourself.”*

Circle *“most important”* and *“second most important.”*

God says these are the two things that matter most in life. Love for God and love for people. He says if you get these two things you've got it.

When God created you and you committed your life to Him, have you ever thought why didn't he just take you to heaven? Why did he just put you on earth? Why didn't

God just create you and take everybody to heaven? Why did he put us here on earth for eighty or so years?

The Bible is very clear about it. That God put you here on earth to do two things: to learn to love God and to learn to love other people. Life is one giant lesson in love. Life is not about acquisition – how much I get. It's not about accomplishment – how much I do. It's not about achievement – how much I earn. It's not about all the other things we're told life's about. Because all of those things you're going to leave behind. You're not taking your career to heaven. You're not taking your car to heaven. You're not taking your house to heaven. But you are taking the very character you are. You're taking *you*.

God put you on earth for eighty to a hundred years so you can learn to love. Life is all about learning how to love. Jesus says here the two most important things in life are

learn to love God with all your heart and learn to love everybody else. He says you get that, you've got life. If you don't get that, wrong answer. You just wasted your life.

That's what I want to point out today. We're going to talk about the priority of love.

We know love's important but we forget it. And we get so distracted by other things. This morning we're going to look at what I call the three laws of love. If you're going to ever be a great lover, if you're going to learn to really love God and learn to love other people, you've got to learn and keep in your mind the three laws of love.

**1. Law number one: The best use of life is love.**

That's law number one. God says you need to make learning how to love your number one priority, your primary objective, your greatest ambition, your life

purpose. More than anything else he says you need to say, I want to learn, I choose to learn... how to be a loving person; how to love God and how to love other people.

**WHY?** Why does he say that? There four reasons why love is more important than anything else.

### **1. Love validates my faith.**

You may ask just what does that mean, love validates my faith? It proves that I really am a child of God, that I am in God's family. It proves that I really am going to heaven. It proves that I am saved; that I have been born again; that I'm a part of the family of God; and I am going to spend eternity with Him in Heaven... Why, because God says the proof of that is love. It validates your faith.

order for you to get into heaven, you have to validate your identity. You have to prove that you really are a child of

God; that you have trusted Christ; that you know him; that you have a relationship with God.

How do you validate that identity? The Bible says that God looks at your lifestyle and says, "Do you love? Do you love God with all your heart? Do you love your neighbor as yourself?" The Bible says "*Whoever does not love does not know God. [That's pretty clear.] Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.*"

1 John 4:8 (NIV)

The reason why God wants you to learn to love on earth is because he wants you to become like him. 1 John 4:20 says, "*If we say we love God, but we hate other, we're liars. [That's pretty blunt.] For we cannot love God, whom we have not seen, if we do not love others, whom we have seen.*" See Love validates your faith. It proves I really am a child of God.

The second reason why love is more important than anything else.

## **2. Love integrates my life.**

In other words it becomes the dominant life principle, which we talked about last week, by which everything else in my life is integrated. My social life, my financial life, my church life, my work life, my sex life, my friend life.

Every other part of my life becomes integrated by love.

You need to have something at the core of your heart that draws your life together. Otherwise your life is just fragmented. You do a little of this, a little of that, a little of this, a little of that... When your life is fragmented, when your life is segmented you lack integrity. Integrity means your whole life is integrated. It's a whole. It's one.

Last week we talked about everybody's got a dominant life principle. That means everybody builds their life around something. Some people build their life around money, getting rich. Some people build their life around fame, becoming popular. Some people build their life around success. Some people build their life around sex. Some people build their life around a hobby. There's lots of things that you can make your dominant life principle in your life. But what you need is something that's so strong at the center it's not going to fall apart when the trials come. When tribulation, when problems, when the road ends, the emotional earthquakes and the financial hurricanes. And all of the things of life hit you and batter you, you better have something at the center of your life that's going to hold you together or you'll come apart.

The Bible says the only thing strong enough to do that is love. Love for God and love for each other. It becomes the center and it brings everything else into focus.

*“Love is more important than anything else. It is what ties everything else together.”* It ties it all together. It integrates my life. There third reason why love is more important than anything else.

### **3. Love compensates for my sin.**

This is really good news when you understand it. It means when I blow it, when I make mistakes, when I sin, when I have faults and fumbles, that God says, “My first question is not, did he sin? God’s first question is, does he love me? Does he love my Son Jesus Christ? If she/he does we’re just going to cover over that sin. We’re going to compensate for it. We know he/she’s imperfect. But what matters most is, do they love me?”

1 Peter 4:8 *“Most important of all continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins.”*

What does that mean? Love covers a multitude of sins.

It has two meanings. **First**, it means when you love Jesus Christ and he loves you it covers up all your sins that you’ve ever done. When Jesus Christ came to earth and died on the cross, he stretched out his hands and said, I love you this much; this is how much I love you. I’m willing to die for you. I’m willing to take the punishment for all the laws you couldn’t keep, the moral laws that you’ve broken. I’ll take your rap. I’ll do your time. I’ll serve your sentence. I’ll pay your debt. Jesus says because I love you everything you’ve ever done and everything you ever will do that is wrong, will be forgiven. Is that good news? That is good news! *That is very good news!*

The Bible says that the love of Jesus Christ covers my sins. He says like a blanket we're just going to cover it all up. Jesus says, I will go to earth, I will die for them. I will die on the cross. I'll show them how much I love them. My love, if they will accept my love, it will cover all their sins so they don't have to pay for them any more. That's good news.

The second thing this means when it says, "*Love covers a multitude of sins,*" See once I've been forgiven God gives me the power to let other people off the hook to forgive them I've been forgiven and I can forgive others. He gives me the ability to let people off the hook. To cut others some slack.

Love covers a multitude of sins. When you really love somebody and they blow it, love doesn't rub it in. Love

rubs it out. That's the mark of love. Love doesn't rub it in. Love rubs it out.

God says I want you to experience my love so you can pass it on to other people. You can be gracious and forgiving and merciful and cut people some room when they blow it and they make mistakes. Love covers.

The history of the world is that God uses imperfect people. He uses "sinners" to get the job done. He uses everybody who is imperfect but, who loves him.

One of the great stories in the Bible is the story of King David. He was the king of Israel. David was not exactly a perfect guy. In fact, he blew it a lot. He lied. He cheated. He stole another guy's wife. He committed adultery. Then he had that guy murdered to cover up his sin. Not exactly a nice guy.

But the one thing about David is when David blew it he admitted it quickly and he would repent quickly of his sins. He said, “I’m so sorry God. I shouldn’t have done that. I blew it but I really love you God and you know my heart that I love you.” David, even in the middle of all of his mess ups, he loved God. He said I want to do what’s right, Lord, but I don’t always do and if it matter to you God, I love you, Lord.

You want to know what God called David a man who messed up big time many times. God said David, is a man after my own heart. To me that’s both confusing and comforting. It’s confusing because how can God say that, “That David’s a man that lied, cheated, stole another guy’s wife, committed adultery. How can God call David a man after God’s own heart.” How? Because David loves me God says, and I am love...

You have to get this Get this more importantly than you being perfect is that you love God with all your heart. God doesn’t expect you to be perfect. In fact, he knows you can’t be perfect. You can’t be perfect so forget that one. What matters is not that you’ve screwed up in life, or messed up in life. What matters is do you love God with all your heart? And love your neighbor as yourself? God says if you do that it will cover a multitude of sins. Isn’t that good news?

Then there’s a fourth thing that love does.

#### **4. Love reverberates forever.**

What does that mean? It means it goes on and on and on. Love reverberates forever. It echoes into eternity. In fact, it’s the only thing in your life that’s going to last. Everything else you do is temporary. But every single loving action you do is going to go on for eternity and

God's going to reward it in eternity. God's word, the Bible says this. *"These three things continue forever. Faith, hope and love. And the greatest of these is love."* I hate to tell you this but people are going to forget you, your money, your toys, your whatever. The truth is one day they will all be gone... trashed. In fact, the Bible says life without love is worthless. It is a wasted life. The Bible says this *"No matter what I say or what I believe or what I do, I'm bankrupt without love."* Bankrupt!

If that's true, and of course it is, then why do relationships get the short end of the stick? If we know it's really about love, it's really about relationships, why do we always short our relationships? If this is true, why don't we have time for the people we love? You may be asking yourself why are we doing this Campaign of 40 Days of

Love? Because, I want the rest of your life to be the best of your life... Life is not about achievement. It's about love.

## **2. Law number two: The best expression of love is time.**

You spell love - T-I-M-E. The Bible says this in 1 John 3:18 *"We must show love through actions. [Love is not something you feel, something you say. It's something you do.] We must show love through actions. Actions that are sincere, not through empty words."*

Question: What is the most desired gift of love? When people are in love, when people show love, what is the most desired gift? It's not diamonds. It's not chocolate. It's not flowers. The most desired gift of love and the most priceless gift of love is focused attention. In other words time. When you give your time to someone that is the greatest gift you can give. A kid, a husband, a wife, a friend or anybody else. Giving your attention, giving your

time is the greatest gift you can give somebody. Why? Because your time is your most precious resource you have... Every time I give you a minute of my time I'm never going to get it back. Every time I gave you an hour of my time I'm never going to get it back. Every time I give you a day of my life I'm never going to get it back. I can always get more money but I can't get more time. I only have a certain amount of allotted days and you do too. That's why when you give something to people, the most valuable, precious thing you can give them is your attention. Because when you give attention to somebody you're saying, you matter to me. You are valuable. You are worth listening to. You're saying all kinds of things when you give people your attention. Why, because it is the part of your life you're never going to get back.

Let me explain it. Jesus said that the essence of relationships is not what we **do** for each other. Jesus said that the essence of real relationships is not what we **give** to each other – presents and things like that... Jesus taught that the essence of true loving relationships is how much we give of ourselves to that person. Our lives. That's love. Guys, as men, we don't get this. I don't know if we lost that gene somewhere or something. But this one just does not compute to most guys. We think we have done it all for our families, because we may supply for them. But I want to tell you what your son, what your daughter, what your wife wants... I'll tell you what they want. You need to man-up because they want you. They want you! "Look at me, Daddy... Turn the TV off ...and put the paper down... and turn the computer trash off and look at me

Daddy! ... Let me have your attention.” Only you can give that. When you give that it means, Son/ daughter, wife, I’m putting your needs ahead of mine. I’m putting your desire ahead of mine. That’s called love. They want you. Nothing can compensate for time. No amount of gifts. No amount of money. No amount of clothes. Kids don’t need *things*, they need *parents*. They don’t need another video game. They need you. They need your attention and they need that now.

The Bible says this *“The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.”* They need it.

The Bible says *“No matter what I say or what I do or what I believe I’m bankrupt without love.”* The Bible says that God wants you to make time for relationships.

Ephesians says this *“Live a life filled with love for others [There it is again.] following the example of Christ, who*

*loved you and gave himself as a sacrifice to take away your sins.”* I want to encourage you to circle “*love*” and circle “*sacrifice*” and then draw a line between them. If it isn’t a sacrifice it’s not real love. You can give without loving but you cannot love without giving. Love means giving up. It means I give up my agenda for your agenda. It means I give up my time for your time. It means I give up my preference for your preference. It means I give up what I’d rather do right now to do what you’d rather do right now. That is a sacrifice. That is love.

I want to recommend that starting tomorrow morning and for the next 40 days you get up in the morning and you sit on the side of your bed and before you get off that bed you says this, “God, if I don’t get anything else done today I’m going to love you a little bit more and know you a little bit better and I’m going to love the people

you've put in my life. Because that's what you put me on earth to do. If I don't get anything else done today I'm going to love you a little bit more and I'm going to love the other people in my life you put around me. If at the end of the day you've done that, that day counted.

On the other hand, if you didn't do any of that, showing love in any way at all, you've just wasted that day because God didn't put you on earth to mark things off your to do list.

Love is an action. Love means taking time. Love means making somebody else's agenda my agenda.

### **3. Law number three: The best time to love is now.**

He didn't wait. The best time to love is now. Not tomorrow. Not later. Not someday. Not one of these days. Not when I get around to it. Not soon. *But Now.*

The Bible says "*Whenever we have the opportunity we*

*should do good to everyone.*" Wherever we've got the opportunity. That means now.

*"Use every chance you have for doing good."* In other words, now.

The Bible says, "*Whenever you possibly can, do good to those who need it. Never tell your neighbor to wait until tomorrow if you can help them now.*"

What am I saying? Never procrastinate in showing love. Don't delay. Don't put it off. Do it now.

Let me ask you a question: Who do you need to show love to today? Who do you need to go home after this service and make that phone call and share a word of encouragement and love? Or go home and write that letter? Or go home and make a visit to somebody in a convalescent home or at the hospital? Who do you need to invite over to your backyard and have a barbecue with

them and show some love? Who is it at your work that everybody can't stand because they're so obnoxious and that person needs massive doses of love and you could show love to the unlovely?

Did you know that God specifically puts people around your life so you can show love to them? He wants you to do that.

There are some activities in life that you ought to procrastinate on. There are some activities in life where procrastination is a legitimate response. Some things you ought to go, "We're just not ready to do that. Let's wait on that. Let's delay. Let's put it off. Let's postpone." That's ok.

But there's one thing that you should never, never postpone – showing love. If love is the essence of life it's the number one goal in life, it's the reason God put you on

earth to learn, then love should always take priority over everything else. Showing love.

Why? Because you don't know how long you're going to have the opportunity. People die.

I saw a book title the other day. It caught my attention. It was a book on anorexia. The title of the book was Starving for Attention. You know anybody like that? I do.

Everybody is starving for attention. *Everybody is starving for attention!*

So what are you going to do about it? Are you going to change? Are we just going to go through 40 Days of Love and talk about love and you go, "That was nice," and that's it? But not any more loving?

Let me tell you my goal for 40 Days of Love. My goal is that I will become more loving. I don't know about you but I'm fed up with the level of loving I'm at. When I do serious looking at my life I can see a whole lot more of me than I like. I know that one day I'm going to stand before God, and God's going to say to me, not, "Bill, what did you accomplish with your life? How much money did you accumulate? He's going to say this: "Did you do what I put you on earth to do? Did you learn to love me more than anything else? Did you spend time with me? That's how you show love. Did you learn to love everybody else? And did you spend time with them?"

I, more than anything else want to be known as a loving person. I want people to look at me and go, "That short bald head preacher man, that guy loves. He knows how to love people. He really knows how to love people. He is a godly man. He knows how to love." I want to be that. I hope you want to be that too. I hope you're not satisfied with your shallow love because shallow love only loves people who love you. Serious, mature love says, I love people who are unlovely. I love people who don't love me. I love people who irritate me. I love people who attack me. I love the way Jesus loved. That's what we're going to do in these forty days.

Are you ready to get serious? I told you that each week I'm going to give you an exercise. First you will be given a Message Devotional Guide when you leave. Also this

week I want you to take five minutes, ten minutes, fifteen – you decide – every day to talk with each of your family members. And to listen. Look them in the face, look them in their eyes and listen. You may need to apologize. You may need to sympathize. But spend some time with the people God has put in your life. The best use of life is love. The best expression of love is time. The best time to love is now.

**Prayer:**

Father, it's so easy to get distracted from what's most important. Knowing and loving you and knowing and loving those around us. Forgive us for being task driven instead of love driven. Forgive us for valuing things and accomplishments more than people.

**Now you pray.** In your heart say this, “Father, thank you for this wake up call today. I needed it. I know what

matters most even when my schedule doesn't show it. I thank you for this reminder today. I know the people who love me are a gift from you. Please forgive me for taking them for granted. Forgive me for allowing other things to crowd out my relationship to you, and allowing other things to crowd out my relationship to others. I know this is going to mean making some sacrifices. But I want to slow down and make time for loving relationships. I want to change. Jesus, you modeled real love when you sacrificed yourself for me. I thank you for that. I want to love you and trust you. I ask you to forgive me and fill me with your love. I want to follow you in life and love. And I want to make love the primary aim of my life...”