

Message Extras

a little something extra to keep you connected to Jesus this week

Message Extras accompany the [weekly message](#).

We read the following words of Jesus:

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 22:37-40)

Did you catch that? The entire Law of God and all the teachings of the Prophets hang or depend on these two commands. Love God. Love Others. Simple, right? Not so much!

Loving God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind, essentially your whole being is tough, and God is, well God. He is perfect in every way. He made you and He loves you. He loves you so much, He sent His one and only Son Jesus to give His life for you.

When you receive Him into your life, He gives you new life. He gives you the gift of the Holy Spirit, and He becomes your best and closest friend for all of eternity.

In the here and now, speaking for just myself, I know I don't always love God as I should. I don't always love Him with my whole being. I am a work in progress, and I praise Him that He is working in me.

But when I read the command to love others as much as I love myself and more than this to honor others above myself... well, sometimes, and with some people, this is impossible! Keeping these commands is bigger than me.

Obedying these commands to love God and to love others is more than a decision you make. These are not commands you can simply say, "I will give it my best," or "I will try." These are not commands you can decide to keep.

They require a supernatural response.

Just a few paragraphs before Paul tells the Romans to honor others above yourself, he instructs them to "offer themselves to the Lord as living sacrifices," and to "be transformed by the renewing of the mind."

And in the book of First John we read, “love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.” Furthermore, “We love because God first loved us.”

The power to keep the two greatest commands (and every command) comes from only one source, and His Name is Jesus. Do you know Him? Have you received Him?

When you receive Jesus into your life and surrender yourself to Himself, He does a supernatural work in and through you. First John 4 gives us insight into the work the love of God does in us through Jesus. The love of God is made manifest in us, and the love of God is perfected in us. So, to keep the two greatest commands, to love God and to love others, we need the love of God working in and through us in the person of Jesus!

- Read Romans 12:1-2. What are two keys found here to give you power to live out Romans 12:9-18?
- Read Romans 12:3-8. Why does Paul keep his discussion about love and living out love separate from His discussion on the gifts of the Spirit? Can we opt out of loving others if it does not come natural to us or is not a function of our God-given gifts?
- Read 1 John 4:7-21. How does the knowledge that God perfects His love in you give you confidence as you seek to live out love to God and others?
- Does loving God with your whole being come easy to you, or are there times when you do not love God as you should? What are you doing, or do you need to do to love God as you should?
- Does loving others as yourself come easy to you, or are there times when you do not love others as you should? What are you doing, or do you need to do to love others as you should?

