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**Women's Bible Study**

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May 5, 2006

**Tearing Down Walls – Building Bridges**

**Matthew 22:34-40** Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. <sup>35</sup> One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: <sup>36</sup> "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" <sup>37</sup> Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." <sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment. <sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' <sup>40</sup> All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

**Mark 12:28-34** One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" <sup>29</sup> "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. <sup>30</sup> Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' <sup>31</sup> The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." <sup>32</sup> "Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. <sup>33</sup> To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." <sup>34</sup> When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.

**Luke 10:25-29** On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" <sup>26</sup> "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" <sup>27</sup> He answered: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" <sup>28</sup> "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." <sup>29</sup> But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

**John 13:34-35** "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

**John 15:12-13** My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

**Galatians 5:14** The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

**James 2:8** If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right.

**1 John 3:10-11, 23** This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother. This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.... And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.

**1 John 4:20 - 5:1** If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. <sup>21</sup> And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

**Leviticus 19:18** <sup>18</sup> "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.

As you can see throughout the New Testament the importance of loving God and loving our neighbor is emphasized, but, this was not a new concept introduced in the New Testament, it has its roots in the Old Testament, in the Ten Commandments. It has its roots in the very nature of God. Jesus taught this over and over, sometimes outright like in the above verses, and other times by his actions. Some examples of this would include the woman caught in the act of adultery, Jesus had every right to condemn her, but He chose to show love and compassion. Another example would be eating with the Tax collectors. This just was not done in Jesus day and He was going against all social norms risking being ostracized Himself. Jesus taught this so well that it is also a theme that the disciples emphasized after He was gone. They taught it and encouraged each other in continuing to live in love with each other.

**Fun facts:** The word love is used in the Bible 348 times, the word loved is used 95 times, and the word loves is used 70 times, for a total of 513 times.

Love must be an important concept if it is talked about that much in the Bible. In the Old Testament the Hebrew word for love is **אַהֲבָה** and in the New Testament the Greek word for love is **ἀγάπη**

- What does love “look” like? What does it mean to “love your neighbor as yourself?”

Luke 6:32

Romans 12:10

Romans 13:10

1 Corinthians 8:1

1 Corinthians 16:14

Ephesians 4:2

1 Timothy 1:5

1 Peter 1:22

1 John 3:16

1 John 3:18

1 John 4:8

Romans 12:9

Romans 13:9

Romans 14:15

1 Corinthians 13:1 ff

Galatians 5:6

Ephesians 4:15

Hebrews 10:24

1 Peter 4:8

1 John 3:17

1 John 4:7

- What words are used to describe love in these passages? And what would that look like in day to day life?
- How can we apply this tonight? Tomorrow? Sunday?