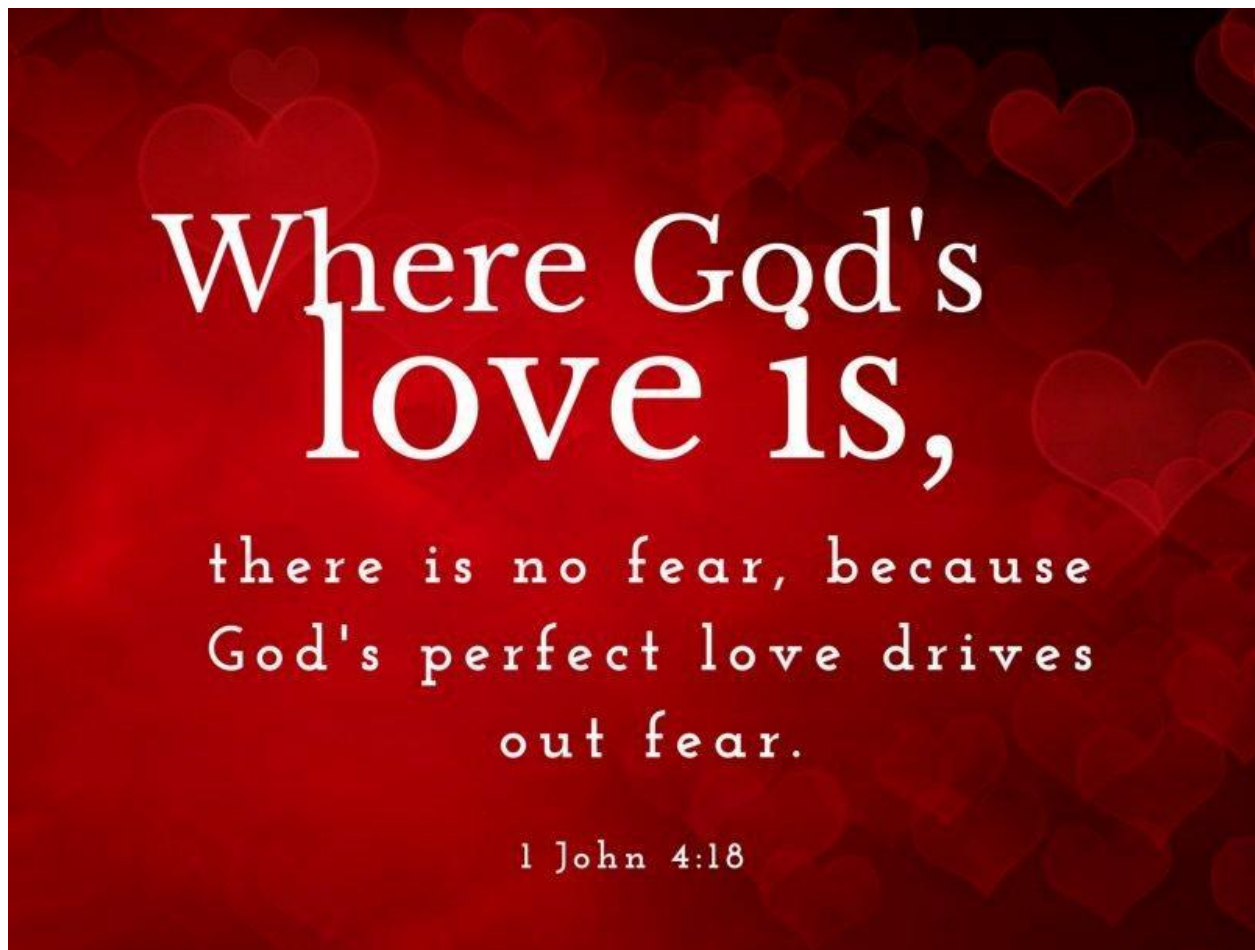


Greater Love...



PART 1

1. Jesus said, Love God with your whole heart, mind & strength.
2. Love others as you love yourself.

- The question is, do you love; do you really live the definition of love?

- Are you patient; are you kind?
- Do you celebrate in the blessings of others?
- Are you humble?
- Have you died to self?
- Are you slow to anger?
- Do you keep no record of wrongs?
- Do you always protect?
- Do you always trust?
- Do you always hope?
- Do you always persevere?

This is what it means to LOVE the way God intended

So, the question remains, do you love?

Our discussion will be based on Love in Christianity and this series will demonstrate where Pastor is going in this series so that we will be able to be free to Love as God has asked us to love.

Matthew 22:34-40

³⁴But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together.

³⁸This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹And the second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."^a ⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

- One of the important things about how this story starts is in the first sentence above, "But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together," the story we're about to read is about how God loves.
- And if you were with Jesus during this time when he was at the age of 31, 32 & 33, Jesus was sometimes in the temple silencing the authorities. That doesn't look like love in our context today because in today's definition of love is, accept everyone, condemn no one. But if you went to the temple back in the day, you would have seen Jesus sitting down and a bunch of Lawyers Sadducees, Pharisees—knowledgeable individuals lined up all around Him; they're trying to find out who would get stomped first.
- And they would come at Jesus with a lot of, "but according to the book of Deuteronomy, this and this," and Jesus would be like, "no, you got it all wrong, this is actually what it means; you're wrong, I'm right."
- And then they were being silenced and then they would gather back together, reconvene, and say, "alright, He got us on that one let's come back, we're going to make sure this guy doesn't know what He's doing."
- Yet, He is love. Love is not accepting all things the way it is, love is walking in truth and unfortunately, truth hurts people at times.

³⁵Then one of them, a Lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, ³⁶"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"

- This question is, Jesus, what is the greatest Law? Now we're reading all the Laws and the prophets; there's not only the *ten commandments* when we say, "the Laws," the Law is also the prophets. There were Laws that were given on top of Laws to explain Laws; on Laws just the sabbath day, we have 600 Laws.

- So, they asked Jesus which is the greatest one; and this is the first time that you will see in the Bible that Jesus answered the question straight forward. He didn't answer it with another question, He didn't do that whole "give to Cesar what is Cesar's," no, He actually answered it.

What was the answer?

³⁷Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'^a

- Do you notice that this is not a suggestion? What He is saying is that if you are a Christian, then you "shall" love; if you are a follower of God, then you shall love. In other words, for you to love, you must agree with God, in order for the Law—the greatest Law to fulfill, then love should be found in you.
- He doesn't tell you what love is; He doesn't tell you what it means to love; all He tells you in this first commandment is what is involved if you are loving—all the answer Jesus gives is what is involved if you truly are loving.

So, what was Jesus' answer?

- You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with your whole being with your heart, with everything that you are. But He didn't stop there; He said you must also love Him with all your soul; your thinking process and then with all your mind.
- With all your Spirit, with all soul, decision-making and how you think, you must love God. In other words, if you just love him in your Heart and your soul and you are not convinced in your decision making and your mind has other options, God says that's not love.
- You can love Me in your Spirit, but if it doesn't manifest into the physical realm, I don't consider it.
- So, you can't all be like, "I love God in my heart," but then if your soul, your decision making, how you feel about the truth is not at standard, and your mindset is always you act first and think about it later, it doesn't come out of your love or your reverence for who God is.
- So, Jesus says that the only way you can love the LORD (Yeweh), is if your heart is involved, if your soul is involved and if your mind is involved. In other words, you are preoccupied with Spirit, soul, and body with who God is and then he says, this is the greatest first commandment.

Question: "How many Laws did the Lawyer ask Jesus for, he says which one was the greatest, right?"

- But then have you ever asked yourself the question, who asked Jesus to give the second one, **why was it important; why did Jesus, when they asked him for the first one have to give the second one?**
- In other words, the first Law cannot be fulfilled without the second; it cannot be fulfilled without the second one! In other words, Jesus did not want you to separate the love of God without the love of humanity. You could not separate the two.
- In fact, you cannot be having love issues with humans and say you love God. Impossible. You cannot love God. Listen, and so He says, the second is like "IT," you shall love.

- Now wait, we just saw in the previous first commandment, it says “you shall love, right? I want you to understand that when it says you shall love, the Bible is assuming that you have love to give. Let me repeat that, you cannot give what you don’t have!
- Love is first in you before you give it to someone else... So, when it says “you shall love,” its saying that you shall give what’s already in you. So therefore, “you shall love your neighbor” (**as what**), yourself. That was a major clue.
- And then it says on these two commandments “hangs all the Laws and the Prophets.” If you have loved God, meaning, you have loved people, every Law and everything the Prophets told you to do, you will do, you will do everything.
- Cause if you love God with all of your spirit, soul, and mind, and then you love people, all the ten commandments are broken into two; the first five is about loving God and the second five is all about loving people; you will fulfill everything—just on these two commandments.
- So, the first commandment is to do what, love the Lord; the second is the method by which you can show that you love God... Okay? Why? If someone says “I love God” and hates his brother—not even biological brother, the bible considers other human beings our brothers and our sisters by the way...

1 John 4:20

⁴If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar, for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?

1 Corinthians 13:4

⁴Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does not envy; loves does not parade itself, is not puffed up;

- Again, if anyone loves God and hates his brother; so, if love is to suffer long, the Bible is saying, that if anybody suffers long for God but doesn’t suffer long for his brothers or sisters is a liar.
- And, if you’re kind to God but you are not kind to your brother or sister, you are a (**what?**) A liar. (**Does not what?**) Parade self! Parade (**does not envy**); If you’re not envious of God of course, you cannot be envious of your brothers and sisters.
- And love does not parade itself against God, neither does it parade itself against its brothers and sisters.

⁵does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the (**what?**), truth; ⁷bears all things, believes all things (**in other words, always giving the benefit of the doubt, no matter how many times they hurt you**), hopes all things, endures all things.

- It’s easy to do that for God, right, because sometimes we have a fictitious imagination of who God is but, we can’t do it to the person that we see; so, in other words, He’s saying if you say you love God but hate your brother, cause anything short of what we read—you do not Love God.
- So, if you’re going to love your brother, then you must do all these things. Then he says he’s a liar for he who does not love his brother whom he has (**what?**) seen, how can you love God whom you have not seen?

- This is serious, if you tell me that you love God right now, but your human relationships are suffering, **“you is a lie!”**
- You know why he says you are lying because you can’t see him? “You don’t even know how I look; how can you love an invisible person? You can’t. So, the only way I know you love Me, is when you obey my words...
- What is My word? Love somebody else. So, if you’ve not loved somebody else, you cannot love Me; because you can’t even see Me.
- It sounds like online fraud—when you’re in a relationship with someone who is in another Country, yet you love them, catfishing. It’s like, I tried to catfish you; in other words, he’s saying, how can you love God whom you have not seen?
- So, I really want you to understand that it is impossible walking around with this ideology, “I love God,” and you’re in a relationship with just yourself. Or, the reason why you relate with others, is to always get from them what they have and cut them off if they’re not blessing you, that’s not love.
- In other words, if 1 Corinthians 13 is not how you’re relating to other people but because they are not adding value to you, what value did you add to God? They should have deleted you right because He saved you while you were yet (**what?**) sinners.
- Cause we do pressure Him; so much so that we killed Him. So that’s what He says, He says that if anyone says, “I love God” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?

1 John 4:12-16

No one has seen God at any time (**I’m talking to spiritual people that feel like they are Jesus’ and Gods (what?) special assistants!**)! If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because he has given us His Spirit.

- The measure of your spirituality is determined by your relationship with other people. “If you love one another’, God abides (**in what?**), God abides in us.”
- Let me talk to church, the body of Christ; there is no scripture in the bible that says the first evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues. I go based on what is written and the Bible it did not say that the first evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues, but it does say that if you love one another that is the evidence that God abides in us, and His love has been (**what?**), perfect.
- By this we know that we abide in Him; by this, (**by what?**), what I am about to tell you is how you know if you’re filled with the Spirit; by this we know that if we abide in Him, and Him in us because He has given us (**His what?**) His Spirit.
- The first evidence that you have the Holy Spirit is your capacity to love. In fact, I’m about to show you a verse that you could speak all the tongues you want, and it would be useless without love.
- The first evidence to receiving the Holy Spirit, in fact the way you know God is in a person is in their capacity to love, (**why?**) because every time you see this phrase in the bible, “and His love has been made perfect (**in who?**), us.” What that means is that the love of God worked in you first and perfected it in you first, now you’re giving it to other people.

So, how do I know you're really saved?

- It's in your capacity to love. How? Love suffers long and its kind, love does not envy, love does not parade itself, it's not puffed up, does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil, does not rejoice in iniquity but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things—what does this mean?
- As soon as the Spirit of God comes into your life what is He doing first? He is working in your heart to learn how to suffer long. Then He's working on you on how to be kind; then He's working on you to love so that it does not envy; to know how to not parade yourself around as though you're better than everyone and it does not allow you to be puffed up so that you don't behave rudely.
- And it doesn't allow you to seek for your own good; it does not provoke, and it causes you to learn not to be evil and doesn't allow you to rejoice when your enemy falls.
- But causes you to know how to rejoice in the truth; to bear all things, believe all things, hope all things and to endure all things; that's the job of the Holy Spirit.
- Not to just pump you up to be, "Rei Ka To Se," speaking in tongues, with no character. Therefore, when you first come to Christianity it seems like He slows everything so that you will meet yourself first; because without the ethic of loving Christianity, you can't even love God.
- So, the job of the Holy Spirit is to prepare you to love God by loving others.

1 Corinthians 13:1

¹Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

- You're just making noise if you say you're filled with the Holy Spirit and the basis of your filled with the Holy Spirit is not love. In other words, it's impossible to be a Christian without loving those who you don't like; like the political party that is opposite of you, or the one that is at work, that gets on your nerves; the one that took what belongs to you; the one that owe what belongs to you.

Why does God let that all happen?

- Because it's impossible for you to prove that you love Him without loving someone that is unlovable. Because love needs to be perfected in you. So, love God by loving others. But He still doesn't tell us how this works.
- Because all I have told you and this is a lot of what our Christianity is, "all I have to do is love somebody else." But there was something I kept saying, that I hope you picked up, is that the first commandment is Heart, Soul, and Mind—how do you prove that you love people with your heart, soul, and mind?
- So, you love God through other people; but I need to add this, because we cannot move on from this without emphasis, even though comments were made regarding this:

Matthew 22:34-40

³⁹And *the second is* like it: "You shall love neighbor (**like how?**) as yourself; ⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

- "You shall love your neighbor (**like how?**) as yourself. Do you know why this is so important because I want you to follow this train of thought: **You can only love other**

people if you have learned to love yourself. That means if you are broken, you love people (**what?**), broken.

- Let me say this; every time love was mentioned, you remember that verse that says, “love has been made perfect in us.” The job of the Holy Spirit when He comes on you, it is not this automatic thing where all of the sudden when He comes on to me, “now I just know how to love.” The first thing that the Holy Spirit does is perfect God’s love, in you.

So, what does that mean?

- When you receive the Holy Spirit the first thing that He does is to reveal, of course, the song says amazing grace, the wretch that we are, but the first job of the Holy Spirit is to prove some things to you so that you can start thinking differently about yourself.
- He saves you from a broken place, (**the poor at heart**), then He gives you value. What are the first few things God does which defines the rest of our seeds?
- The first thing God does when He brings you into the fold, is to convince you to that you are first worth dying for.
- But the only way you would appreciate Him dying for you, is to first admit and understand how much of a **wretch** you were without Him. What is the first thing He does, He lifts your esteem from what you thought of yourself to what He thinks of you.
- We were sinners when He died for us, you were supposed to ponder on that “I was separated from God far and long enough with no hope;” ‘that Him who created the earth thought me to be valuable enough to kill Himself to save me.’ **This takes a whole year to understand.**
- Then, not only did He only save you—because Jesus did not only save you and leave you, the Bible tells us that not only did He save you, but He’s seated at the right-hand side of the Father, in the Father’s ear (**doing what?**), praying for you.
- God is praying for you so the next time you call me asking me to pray, just know that God already prayed for you; cause He already knows what we’re about to pray for.
- The first thing God does is to lift your knowledge of yourself from the person that is so dejected, always broken like “I’m never good enough, this is not happening, I don’t know what my destiny is, I don’t know what my purpose is, I don’t know who I am, why is everything bad happening to me!”
- The first job of the Holy Spirit is to give you purpose, direction, mindset, love and make a wholesome person out of you, (**why?**) because if how you love Him, is by loving others and technically you can’t even love Him if you haven’t learned to love you because He first gave us love, therefore we know how to love Him.
- So, if you have not accepted the love that he has shown you and changed your mindset about yourself, you will always treat people from your broken perspective,
- Now, if you have not yet learned to accept God’s love, you will always subconsciously look for other ways to love yourself.
- This is where it has crept into Christianity; it’s always about (**when we say self-care**), it’s not the same love and self-care the Bible is talking about—we even have relationships to exploit people at this point, (**why?**) because if you have not accepted the love of God, you will always be looking for that love; and Satan will always provide you love that always hurt relationships.
- In other words, the first thing you need to do having received the Spirit of God is to spend time with him, (**why?**) because if you haven’t received that love, (**meaning**) everything we keep talking about like, “why do you love Jesus? Well, he died on the cross for me.”

Do you even know what that means?
Did you spend a whole year just looking into what that means?

- Paul says, “that I may know Him;” (**and who**)? the power of His resurrection that’s a lifetime thing. “When I’m doing my quiet time at home, till today—being Christian for almost 16 years and how I study the Bible, I am literally looking for who God says I am.”
- Because if I don’t find who He says that I am I don’t know who I am and therefore I don’t know how to treat other people—therefore I can’t love God.
- You got to learn to love you. Now, some may say, “don’t the Bible say don’t be all about yourself?’ No, no, no—when you really love God, when you really love yourself the way that you’re supposed to, all you’re doing is seeing yourself the way God sees you.
- That’s all. And it always corresponds with 1 Corinthians 13. Can you see a person having love issues literally fulfilling verse 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7, it’s almost impossible because your insecurity won’t let you “suffer long” (**why?**), because you’re ready to cut them off because you’re looking for love in all the wrong places and if you don’t get it, you got to cut the person off; opposed to if you got it from God and it sticks. Amen.
- So, you love God and, how do you love God—it is by loving others and how do you love others—it is if you first accepted the love yourself.

The rest of this series will be defining that love and how it is that we can get to where we need to be free so that we can love ourselves to love others as evidence that we love God. This message wouldn’t sit well with individuals who thought they could skip everything and just go to the love of God—this doesn’t sit well, because this message forces you to find where you’re broken. And then, it causes you to extend that love that you’ve realized from God and extend it to other people. All of the sudden, you can’t be alone in this love thing, and you can’t be the greatest ethic of love to yourself; all of the sudden, that’s the only way. So God makes loving Him at such a high price that you have to go through yourself and others as evidence that you love Him. So, you can’t come up to me and say, “oh I love the Lord,” and when I ask, ‘who do you love’ and you only show people that actually love you back.

- The Bible actually says that “what good is it to love those that love you?” You can’t prove to me that you love God if all the people you love, you’re related to, or they actually love you back.
- So, if you say that you love God, I had better find the person that you couldn’t love—that’s the first thing.

When I was sexually assaulted, (**guess what?**), when I was going through this whole questioning of whether I’m Gay or not, going through all this mental anguish up to an age where I literally made up in my mind that when I was 18, I was going to fly to Fiji and kill the person who sexually assaulted me—that was my mindset, then I met Jesus. And the first thing that He did for me to get over the person who hurt me, was teach me to love. Cruel. Until I did, I wasn’t free from any Spirit. I recall sitting there for hours in the closet, “Jesus, Jesus, get this away from me, get this away from me, get this away from me!” And then I read the Bible that says, ‘that if you love the person that hurt you, it’s as though you’re pouring hot coals on them.’ Oh, boy did I love him! Not that God would punish him—because love must be what we read...and that was the only evidence that I could love God through my pain.

The evidence to all of what was shown today is in 1 John 4:12.

1 John 4:12-16

¹²No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.

- The evidence that you know that you're saved and are going to Heaven is in your capacity to love. "And His love has been perfected in us" in other words, when you received Jesus Christ, you allow time to perfect that love—if God said He loved you, you took time to discover why He loved you.
- If you don't know why He loves you, or what He went through to love you or the things that He had bypassed to save you—if you haven't taken the time to understand that love is not perfected in you.
- Then the question becomes, "am I really saved?" Let me explain that; 'no one has seen God at any time.' And 'if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.'

¹³By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us His Spirit.

¹⁴And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son *as* Savior of the world.

- What is the evidence that Jesus died; in your capacity to love the unlovable. What is the one evidence that God exist? How you love other people. In other words, the Bible is saying it is so difficult... What's the purpose of marriage?

When doing marriage counseling, I tell you the purpose of marriage is to depict the relationship between God and Humanity and its impossibility. And how the love of God can make two people that are mutually exclusively different, to be one people—God considers it a miracle! So, He says, "I'm about to do little miracles in every house; husband, wife, marry.

You know why marriages are not working? Because we kicked God out.

- Because it was impossible to love without Him, that's what went wrong. "And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son *as* Savior of the world."

¹⁵Who ever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

¹⁶And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. (**Did you see that? If you really say that Jesus did come and die for you, that means that you really believe the love that He had for you**).

- What that means that receiving Jesus is not just the standing at the alter and saying, "come into my life," it's in the actual studying of why he loved you and accepting it. Again, look at the verse ¹⁶ And we have known and believed (**so, you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior, is actually not just to believe, it is actually to know, therefore you believe what you know**).

- So, you can't just be emotionally moved that Jesus died for you, cry at the altar and go home; when you cry at the altar and you're emotional—you've done the whole gymnastics of receiving Jesus, you go back home and you study what the person that led you, meant when he said that God loved you.
- And then when you have known that you'll believe it. And the love that God has for us, God is love and he who abides in love, abides in God and God (**in what?**) him.

So how do you even know the Spirit of God is working through you?
Why do we even have the gifts of God, why do we have gifts, why?

- Because the gifts were supposed to just be an extension of love; gifts never stand on their own; in fact, if you are gifted and you have no love, you are not gifted—you are tormented. Your gifts will kill you because they'll never work.
- You will manifest, but God doesn't consider it a blessing in your life; ask Saul... Ask everyone that was so gifted but had love problems; your gift is what ate you up alive and God was not moving in your life.
- Yeah, the gift manifested but you struggled; the evidence is in love, how do you know you are saved, how do you know you love God; it's when you've learned to love other people; how do you know how to love other people, when you have learned to love yourself.

What does it mean to love to love yourself?

- When you have sat down, studied, and known what God says that you are, who He says that you are to Him and the value you have. **Why is that so important?**
- When you have gotten over what you think you are and embraced who God says that you are, you start loving people not for who they are—but for who God says they are.
- Again, when you have accepted who God says you are, now you have more grace (**do you remember we studied 1 Corinthians 13?**) Let's review it one more time; what does it mean to love yourself? That means God will have to teach you how to suffer long with yourself; God teaches you how to give grace to yourself first.
- You can't give grace to other people if you yourself haven't learned how to give grace to yourself; every time you're legalistic all about "this is how I have to serve God,"
- "I cannot sin, I must be righteous because every time I sin, I want to kill myself and hurt myself and I want to hurt myself (**I'm not saying this insensitively**) I just what to..."

That's how you're going to love other people.

- You will hold them to standards that you yourself can't attain. (**Why?**) Because you haven't learned to give grace to yourself; you haven't learned how to suffer long, you haven't learned how to be kind to yourself, you haven't learned not to even envy yourself; **how does that work—I don't know...**
- Love does not parade itself; God learns to humble you; He works with your envy mechanism; unless you have learned to give grace to yourself, you can't give grace to other people and if you can't give grace, you can't work with anybody.
- This is when your Christianity becomes a nuisance; when you haven't learned to love yourself, you become a nuisance; because your mindset is broken so you expect that

everybody must cater to you, opposed to you realizing who God is and you cater to others—and that's how you prove you love God.

- Take time to know you...You need to build you...

When I come to counseling people in marriage, one of the things I'm adding is before asking the couple if they've loved each other and are ready, I ask them what they have gone through to love themselves first.

How have you loved you first?

Because you have nothing to give to your spouse if you have not loved you. Because you don't know what to do... If you are waiting to get into a marriage for somebody to love you to heal, you've signed up for divorce. Nobody can heal you but God. And when you've learned to love yourself, then you'll know how to love your spouse. Before the Lord allowed me to marry my wife, every day for about an hour or two the year of my marriage and it didn't matter where I opened the bible, all God spoke to me about is how to love myself so that I can love her. So that's why when I came in, I knew what I had to do; (**why?**) because I learned to love me first.

I learned to love my brokenness, I learned to give myself grace so that when she does something, I remember that I am as imperfect as she is and that the only thing that makes me happy when I am imperfect is the grace that I gave myself, so I give her grace. What you need to do in your marriage is what God has done in you.

We're together?

- Learn to love you to love others to love God; you can't just skip all of this to get to God.

Amen!