



“Teacher Tell Me” Matthew 22:36-37

Today marks the first in a new series on love. Throughout this month of February, we are going to focus on what the Bible teaches us about love. We will attempt to define and identify what love is supposed to be and also and what we are to love most in this world. Everything we need to know about love is listed in Scripture and shown to us through Jesus words and by His example. So is there any doubt that the first place we should turn for a complete definition of love would be from Jesus Himself? Love is shoved at us and brought to us through mostly media. We are bombarded with it. The world attempts to depict love as many different things. It equates love solely to an emotion that is impulsive and self serving. The world views love incorrectly and takes this incorrect definition and presents it to us as truth. We use the television as a window to give us life’s answers, but I must caution you. 99 % of what we see today has nothing to do with real genuine love. Television and Movies depict love, Song writers with their songs attempt to explain and describe love to us. These song writers for have attempted to identify what love is:

Lou Graham cried out to us “I want to know what love is”; Tina Turner said: “What’s Love Got to do with it”, Meat Loaf said: “I want you, I need you, but there ain’t no way I’m ever gonna love you, but don’t be sad, cause two out of three ain’t bad!!”, Air Supply said, “Here I am, the one that you love!”, or “Lost in Love”, The Beatles, accurately claimed that, “You Can’t Buy me Love”, but failed when miserably when we found out that their loyalty was to Hari Krishna as their Lord instead of our Lord and Savior Jesus, Meatloaf was really confused when he came out the second time as he stated that he “Would do anything for Love”, but he wouldn’t do that!! Whatever that is?? When Elvis Presley was alive he had some kind of throat problem I guess and

he talked about some kind of “Hunk of Burning Love”, Tammy Wynette really made it easy for men, despite all the lying and cheating her man did, she wrote a song about “Standing by her man, telling the whole world you love him”: As you can see none of these examples depict any close resemblance to any kind of “True Love”!! The media invests thousands of dollars to put on shows which show lustful nudity and depict love as a sporadic emotion that comes and is “Gone With The Wind”. As a result of a Godless society we see science also trying to look at our society in an attempt to define for us what love is all about. Here are some definitions that are being applied to “Love”. Love is any of a number of emotions related to a sense of strong affection[1] and attachment. The word love can refer to a variety of different feelings, states, and attitudes, ranging from generic pleasure (“I loved that meal”) to intense interpersonal attraction (“I love my husband”). This diversity of uses and meanings, combined with the complexity of the feelings involved, makes love unusually difficult to consistently define, even compared to other emotional states. As an abstract concept, love usually refers to a deep, ineffable feeling of tenderly caring for another person. Even this limited conception of love, however, encompasses a wealth of different feelings, from the passionate desire and intimacy of romantic love to the nonsexual emotional closeness of familial and platonic love[2] to the profound oneness or devotion of religious love.[3] Love in its various forms acts as a major facilitator of interpersonal relationships and, owing to its central psychological importance, is one of the most common themes in the creative arts.

It should be noted here that the first definition given here as the foremost definition and is listed first is related most closely to our emotions. Love is full of emotion, but should not be placed ahead as the foremost definition of Love. Love first came from God and therefore we must use our head and mind to look at an accurate definition of Love. It is brought to us as the foremost act of obedience listed in scripture. When Jesus was questioned by the Pharisees as to the greatest commandment, Jesus quoted Old Testament scripture from the Mosaic Law given in Deuteronomy Chapter six: we read in Matthew Chapter 22 verse 36-37. 36"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" 37And He said to him, " '(AC)YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' If we read Mark 12:30, strength is added to what Jesus said, which would be complete coming from the Old Testament scripture. (NASU)

When we look at what Jesus taught us about love, we should note that Jesus taught is that:

I. Jesus taught us that God loved us first.

In John 3:16: Jesus said that For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him, should have every lasting life. God loved the world and all that he had created. When we read in the book of Genesis, we see that it was God who created the world, heavens and all that was in it. After God created the heavens and the earth, he looked around and said it was good. (NASU)

In 1 John 4: 7-10 Beloved, let us (U)love one another, for love is from God; and (V)everyone who loves is (W)born of God and (X)knows God. 8The one who does not love does not know God, for (Y)God is love. 9By this the love of God was manifested (Z)in us, that (AA)God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. 10In this is love, (AB)not that we loved God, but that (AC)He loved us and sent His Son to be (AD)the propitiation for our sins. (NASU)

In 1 John 4:19 it says, we love because he first loved us. (NASU)
If you still do not believe that God first loved us after these examples, just read the second chapter of Genesis. God formed man out of the dust of the earth. He fashioned man and breathed the breath of life into him. God then planted a beautiful garden and placed man into the garden to live. He formed all kinds of pleasing plants bearing fruit out of the ground. Man was placed in the garden to cultivate and keep it. When man could not find anyone to have companionship with, God molded out of man's own flesh, woman, which was the completeness of man in the flesh. All of these characteristics suggest extreme long for mankind. If we continue through the Old Testament, we see a very loving and patient God who was patient and guided his people to a promise land. All of this shows a God who first loved us and demonstrated love to His people.

But there is second thing that Jesus taught and showed us. Jesus taught us that we are to:

II. Jesus taught us that we are to first love God.

The Pharisees thought they were smarter than the Sadducees who had just been bested by Jesus. They attempted to trick Him by asking Him what the greatest commandment was. Jesus said as we stated before that we were to: "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND". Based on Jesus own words of instruction we can truly see what love is and how we are to love. Jesus informs us that by loving God, who first loved us, we can truly see and demonstrate and genuine love. After all, God is love and love comes first from God. Out of Jesus words we can see five ways we are to love God resulting in the ultimate demonstration of love for us to live by.

Love is:

1. Love is: Loving with a sincere love; Not in word and tongue only, but inwardly in truth. Wow, just think about how contrary this demonstration of love is from that we have described by the world!!

Music is full of meaningless, empty words as we have seen through my demonstration of some of the artists song titles. The television identifies love as a funny feeling or what we see visually appealing. This is not a sincere love that comes from the heart. This type of sincere Love was demonstrated when we look back into the Old Testament book of 1 Kings Chapter 3 We see King Solomon having a problem on his hands. Two women claimed to be the mother of the same child. Both women lived in the same household and the one mother's child had died. Both of them came before the King with their plea. Solomon said he would take the child and give half to each mother. The one who was the real mother was stirred and was willing to give her child to the other mother in order to spare His life. Solomon then realized that the first mother was in fact the real mother since the child's life was more important than her having him. You see, this is an example of a sincere heart-felt love, while the other mother only claimed to love in words to the King. So love is loving with a sincere heart, but love according to Jesus is also more. Love is also:

2. Love is: Loving with a strong love.

He that is our All, must have our all, and none but he. This means that it takes work. Love is much more than from the heart. Love involves a conscious decision to love, Love then is a commitment to love. This representation of love is so deep and so committed that we would be willing to lay even our life down for it. We are to love God that way as an example to others. We see one of the greatest examples of this again in the Old Testament in Daniel Chapter 3:28 Nebuchadnezzar responded and said,

"Blessed be the (A)God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, who has (B)sent His angel and delivered His servants who put their (C)trust in Him, violating the king's command, and yielded up their bodies so as (D)not to serve or worship any god except their own God. The King had give a decree for them to worship only he the King by bowing to his statue. These three men knew that they loved and trusted God enough and as a result were brought safely through the fiery furnace. We are to love then with a strong love. But we are also to love.

3. Love is: Loving with a superlative love:

What in the world is superlative mean!! Well it above all else. Of top or highest quality and quantity. In other words, it is the best of the best. We must love God above any creature whatever, and love nothing but what we love for him. This means that there is nothing greater than our Love for

God. Our love should be of the utmost quality and quantity, overabundant, before above any one things or anyone. In the Old Testament book of Genesis we read about Abraham. He should this type of love when he was promised a son by God. In his old age, God gave him Isaac, but God tested Abraham by requiring Abraham to offer His only son Isaac as a sacrifice to God. Abraham began to offer his son and as a result of the love Abraham showed God by being willing to offer his only son for him, God provided a sacrifice in Isaacs place. Abraham loved his son deeply. Can you imagine sacrificing your family for God? That is exactly the type of overflowing love Abraham had for our Lord God. He loved them Him above all else.

4. Love is: Loving with an intelligent love.

To love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, we must see good cause to love him. Does anyone doubt this? We may say today sitting in the pew, why no. We do not doubt that it makes sense to love God. Our minds or that consciousness we have, suggests that it is common sense to love Him. Why would we say that loving God is intelligent to do so? We it really is a simple answer. We serve a all powerful, all knowing God who is the creator of all the universe and everything in it. The Bible teaches us that our God is Love as we have previously read in our various texts today. Since our God is love and our loving God is also all knowing, it makes sense to love Him. When we think about how our creator God, took time to mold and fashion us. He says in Jeremiah that he knows us before we are born. He knows us from the womb. He designed us to be the way we are, with a purpose.

If Gods knows us prior to being born and he has a purpose for each and every one of us and we can answer that it makes sense to love God. How can we leave here and live like the world on Monday through Friday? How can we allow the world to give us answers on who and what love is? How can we say we serve Him, yet serve the prince of darkness when we leave here?? In summary, we are to love with an entire or complete love. God is ONE, our hearts must be united in God's love. This love of God must be shed abroad in our hearts! God first loved us, he demonstrated this to us from the beginning of mankind even unto the end of our time. He loved us so much that he gave the ultimate sacrifice for you and for me!! JESUS!! There was a Pastor, who after the usual Sunday Evening Hymns, stood up, walked over to the pulpit and, before he gave his sermon for the evening, briefly introduced a guest minister who was in service that evening. In the introduction, the Pastor told the congregation that the guest minister was one of his dearest childhood friends and that he wanted him to have a few moments to greet the church and share whatever he felt would be appropriate for the service. With that, an elderly man stepped up to the pulpit and began to speak.

"A father, his son, and a friend of his were sailing off of the Pacific

Coast," He began, "When a fast approaching storm blocked any attempt to get back to shore. The waves were so high, that even though the father was an experienced sailor, he could not keep the boat upright and the three were swept into the ocean as the boat capsized." The old man hesitated for a moment, making eye contact with two teenagers who were, for the first time since the service began, looking somewhat interested in his story.

The aged minister continued with his story, "Grabbing a rescue line, the father had to make the most excruciating decision of his life: to which boy he would throw the other end of the lifeline. He only had seconds to make the decision. The father knew that his son was a Christian and he also knew that his son's friend was not. The agony of his decision could not be matched by the torrent of waves.

"As the father yelled out, 'I love you son!' He threw out the lifeline to his son's friend. By the time the father had pulled the friend back to the capsized boat, his son had disappeared beneath the raging swells into the black of the night. His body was never recovered." By this time, the two teenagers were sitting up straight in the pew, anxiously waiting for the next words to come out of the old minister's mouth.

"The father," he continued, "knew his son would step into eternity with Jesus and could not bear the thought of his son's friend stepping into eternity without Jesus. Therefore, he sacrificed his son to save his son's friend..."

With that the old man turned and sat back down in his chair as silence filled the room. The Pastor again walked slowly to the pulpit and delivered a brief sermon. Within minutes after the service ended, the two teenagers were at the old man's side.

"That was a nice story," politely stated the boys. "But I don't think it was realistic for a father to give up his son's life in hopes that the other boy would become a Christian."

"Well, you've got a point there," the old man replied glancing down at the worn Bible. A big smile broadened his narrow face, he once again looked up at the boys and said, "It sure isn't realistic, is it? But I'm standing today to tell you that the story gives me a glimpse of what it must have been like for God to give up His only son for me. You see, I was the father and your Pastor was my son's friend."

This Pastor made a choice. That choice was to sacrifice his son for someone who did not know God. This Pastor loved God more than anything else, so much so that he was willing to sacrifice his only son for God. Do we love God that much?? Do you know what true love is? Are you willing to surrender you life for Jesus who loved us enough to surrender everything?

That is the type of love we should have for God. Won't you come today and give your life for Him?? Won't you make Him Lord of your life today??