



Life Changing Words From God Week #1 'LOVE'

Jim Hoffman

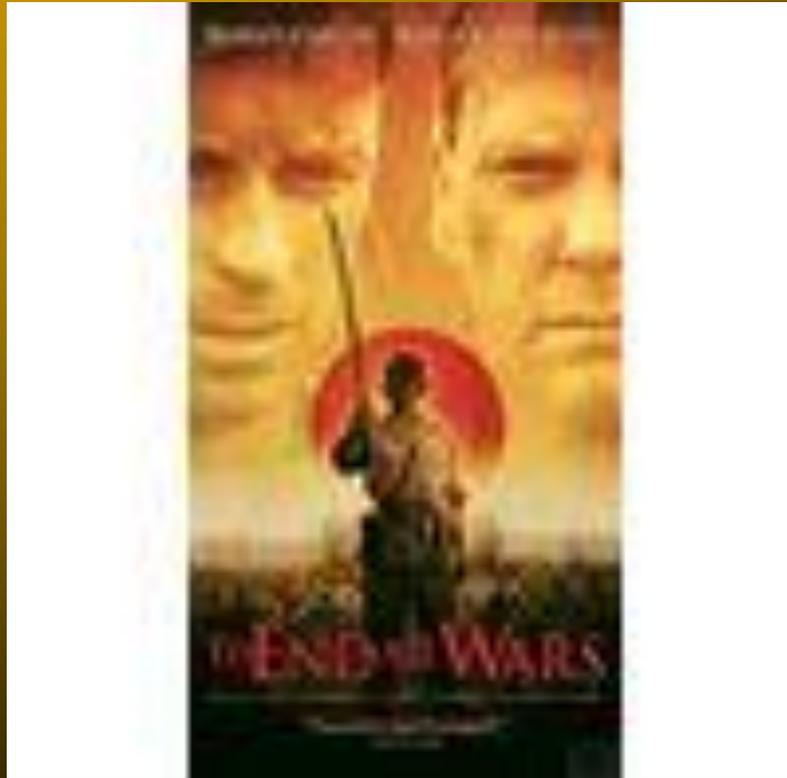
My Classes

- Your opinion is as good as mine
- Scripts
- Transform not inform
- Next week



To end all wars ...

Ernest Gordon



We have a problem.

- The church of Jesus Christ is not respected in our world like she once was and we are partly to blame.
- When the nightly news shows ‘Christian’ groups holding signs of protest like ‘Jesus is a Republican’ and ‘God hates fags’ the world gets a distorted picture.



Matthew 22:15-46

The enemy of my enemy is
my friend.



Matt 22:35-40

36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?"

37 Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." NKJV

- A very simple concept; love God and love others and you fulfill all of the commandments.
- Notice please that both are commands. They are neither *negotiable* nor *optional*.
- Like all of God's commands, there is a *certain joy* that comes to us when we obey and a *certain conviction* when we do not.

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- The one who asked the question was trying to trip Him up, but rather than responding in *kind*, He responds in *kindness*.
- Instead of giving a reply that would have tripped up the questioner, he answered with words that would serve to *hold him up, not trip him up*.

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- Deut 6:5 "*And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.*
NASB
- Lev 19:18 'You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, *but you shall love your neighbor as yourself;* I am the LORD. NASB

Matt 22:35-40

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- These two commands provide enough truth to make us into *powerful and fruitful children of God.*
- Have you ever considered that maybe we should consider a moratorium on learning anything new until we can execute what we have already learned?
- If we would execute the truth in just these two verses we could change our *homes*, our *neighborhoods* and our *work places*.

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- Nothing is as altogether attractive and inviting as love.
- There have been more people won to Christ through the power of love than any other evangelistic strategy. (an unofficial statistic)
- I have just not seen many people saved by putting down their lifestyle, their shortcomings, or the church that they belong to.
- In fact, loving God and loving people can be a vision, mission, and strategy all rolled into one.

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- Rom 13:10 Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. NKJV
- These two commandments exclude no other command, but serve to include them all.
- If you keep these two, it's impossible to break any of the other commandments. (very much in harmony with Galatians 5:22-23)

Matt 22:37-38

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- So what is it to love God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind?
- I am not certain that I have words to do the concept justice:
 - Nothing held back
 - No divided allegiance
 - With our wills, with our emotions, with our thoughts
 - With our time, with our talents, with our money
 - Without shame, without pretense, without reservation

Matt 22:37-38

37 Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and great commandment. NKJV

- There is something very convincing about the reality of God when His children love him with all that we have within us and do it openly.
- If we love Him reservedly, how convincing is a love like that?
- If we really believe that He is all that we say He is, then why would we hold anything back?

Matt 22:39

39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

NKJV

- And then the 2nd command (in order or greatness) is to love others as we love ourselves.
- If loving God without reservation is a challenge for us to understand, this one is absolutely and instantly clear to us.
- We may struggle to execute it, but we have no problem understanding the goal because we really know how to love ourselves.

Loving God

Questions thus far?



Matt 22:39

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NKJV

- When we hurt, we seek comfort. When we are cold we seek warmth. When we are sick, we seek healing.
- Furthermore, we are much more than passive in our pursuit of solutions to our pain. We are, in fact, very aggressive as we petition God and ask others to pray for us.
- We go to great lengths to protect ourselves and to make ourselves comfortable.

Matt 22:39

**39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'
NKJV**

- Eph 5:29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. NKJV
- The fact is that we take great care of ourselves and we look out for ourselves; and as stewards of our bodies, we should.
- All Jesus is asking is that we love others in like fashion.

Matt 22:39

39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

NKJV

- When I say ‘all that Jesus is asking’ I unduly minimized it to get our attention.
- It is indeed a *radical idea* that we would love others just like we love ourselves.
- I have difficulty imagining that this is even possible, but it is His command and His standard.

Matt 22:39

39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

NKJV

- Luke 6:35 But love your enemies , and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. NASB
- OK, this is over the line and out of our reach. Love the lovable, maybe; but love those who seek to do us harm?
- How am I going to get this one done?

Matt 22:39

39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

NKJV

- Could we not argue that Jesus loved others 'more' than He loved Himself?
- Like so many other things that Jesus asks of us we find that He never asks us to do something that He either would not do, or has not already done.
- He asked Abraham to sacrifice his son and then stopped him short, but we know that God eventually sacrificed His son for Abraham without stopping short.

Matt 22:39

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- General Booth, who founded the Salvation Army lived by the words of this poem.
 - Lord, let me live from day to day,
 - In such a self forgetful way,
 - That even when I kneel to pray, my prayer would be for others;
 - Others, Lord, yes others; Let this my motto be,
 - That I might for others so I might live like thee.

Matt 22:39

39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

NKJV

- I find this command perhaps more challenging than all of the other commands.
- By comparison, it is easy to love God. (understand that we fall short of obeying all of the commands)
- It is not easy, but certainly less difficult to love fellow Christians as I love myself, but to love the unlovely, and the unlovable, as I love myself is so far above the natural man that it seems all but impossible.

Matt 22:35-40

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- Surely Jesus knew He was setting standards that are unattainable, or at least unsustainable.
- Surely He knew that when we read such words thoughtfully that we are either *challenged beyond our abilities* or *crushed by the weight* of the request.
- That is certainly true and I believe we get some understanding when we see that 1) God has given us a Tutor and 2) He grades on a curve. (trying counts)

Matt 22:35-40

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- To love others as we love ourselves means that we give up our rights to our time, our talent, and our resources.
- We do not do this easily, and often not at all.
- The only hope we have of doing this is to surrender to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to do it for us.

Matt 22:39

39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

NKJV

- What would it look like if we loved others as we love ourselves?
- It would look like Jesus had cloned himself millions of times and would completely change the way the world views the church.
- It would look like what Jesus described in Matthew 25:32-46. (let's read it)

Matt 22:39

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NKJV

- It would look like;
 - Feeding the hungry
 - Bringing the cold into the warm
 - Visiting the lonely
 - Caring for the sick no matter the reason for their sickness
 - Sharing our lives with those who have nothing for us
 - Spending time with those whose company bores us
 - Hanging out with those whom we once held at arms length
 - Treating, as equals, those whom others hold in contempt

Matt 22:39

**39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'
NKJV**

- *James 2:15-17 - If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?
NKJV*
- Such behavior would be worse than totally ignoring the person because it would paint a false picture of God.
- Jesus didn't pass over people with needs; He often passed over the 'whole' to get to the ones with needs.

Matt 22:39

39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

NKJV

- Here is the heart of the matter;
 - Do we really believe that Jesus meant what He said?
 - Do we really believe that we will give an account?
 - Will we take Him seriously enough to allow Jesus to work in us?
 - Can we begin to grasp and separate the eternal from the temporal?
 - If we saw Jesus hurting today would we even recognize Him?

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- *Mark 12:32 So the scribe said to Him, "Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He. 33 And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." 34 Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God."NKJV*

Questions

- What is the best advice you have for someone who wants to love God and love others?
- What would change about the world's view of the church if we really obeyed these (2) commandments?



Questions

