

True Disciple #12 – Loving

Thanks for tuning in to True Disciple #12. This is Rod Nichols and I'm excited for what God is doing in your life. Let's get right to it. Today, I'm going to be teaching on Loving.

When Jesus was asked which of the commandments was the greatest, He replied (in Mark 12:30-31), "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

Jesus took the ten commandments and turned them into two. He knew that if we loved God and other people, we would never break any of the ten. Unfortunately, as we see throughout the world and in our own lives, we're not loving God and loving people. That's where we, Jesus' true disciples come in. We're to be the love carriers into the world.

Now, before we get too far down this road, I want to make it clear that I'm not talking about the worldly kind of love – I love my job, car, house, dog, etc. Rather, I'm talking about the God-type of love that we see throughout the Bible.

We first see God's love in Genesis 1, where He creates an amazingly precise and perfect universe to support a perfect planet that would sustain life. Then He created perfect people to have relationship with Him and placed them in a literal paradise. I can only imagine how beautiful it was, how aromatic the fruit and flowers were. How amazing the fruit and vegetables must have tasted. The climate was perfect, so no need for clothing or houses. The best part is that God walked and talked with them daily. This was all before sin and death entered their world. God's love was great for His creation.

Even after Adam and Eve sinned against God by disobeying His command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, we still see His great love. Instead of leaving Adam and Eve in Eden, where they could eat from the tree of life and live forever in the shame, guilt, condemnation, and separation from God, He moved them into the world and shortened their lives.

We see God's continued love for His people as He blesses them with favor and victories over God's enemies. He created a sacrificial system, so that their sins could be covered. He constantly sought after them for relationship, but time and time again, they rejected Him.

Then, God gave us the ultimate example of love. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Let's digest this a bit before we move on. First, we have God the Son who loves mankind so much that He is willing to set aside His godly attributes to be born a helpless baby. He gives up the glory of heaven to enter into an earthly body and live in our world full of sin. Then, if that wasn't enough, He gave up His life for all of us. He took all of our sins and our penalty of death on the cross. Then He was resurrected, so we too could have a new, eternal life.

Second, we have the Father, who is giving up His only Son for rebellious and sinful mankind. That's some kind of love. Think about it. Would you sacrifice one of your children for the people of this world – the rapists, child molesters, murderers, terrorists, gossips, adulterers, and liars? For a moment, you might be thinking, well that depends on which child. Not really, there is no human parent who would sacrifice their child for another. But, God did for you and me.

Okay, but I hear you thinking that it's easy for God to love, because He is love (1 John 4:8). The reality is, that if you're a born-again believer, you have God in the form of Holy Spirit inside you. You have all the love you need. All you have to do is let it out.

So, what does that look like? Well let's examine love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails."

If we first love God with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength and then allow Him to love through us, our love will look like that. We will be patient and kind. We will not be envious, boastful, and proud. We will not be self-seeking and

dishonor others. We will not be easily angered or keep records of how we have been wronged. We will not delight in evil, but instead rejoice in God's truth. We will always protect those we love, always trust their love and they will trust ours, always have hope, always persevere through the tough times and that love will never fail.

God's love is not the kind that you fall in and out of. That's worldly love. No, God's love is not an emotion or feeling, it's an action. We have to choose daily to let God love through us and not allow our flesh and soul to take over.

True disciples are lovers of God and lovers of people. They receive love from God and carry it into the world, spreading it wherever they go. And those who don't know God, will recognize Jesus' true disciples by their love.

That's it for message #12. I hope you will invest time daily to turn yourself over to God and to allow Him to love through you. Then watch how the world around you changes.

Tune in next week for message #13 on giving. This is going to be another powerful, life-changing message, so make sure you are subscribed to our email list and are receiving our weekly updates, so you will know when we post this message and other content. You can do that from the front page of the True Disciple site at www.TrueDisciple.Info. Look for the red starburst in the upper menu or near the bottom of the page. We only send out one or two emails a week, so make sure you use the email you check daily.

Thanks for listening and for your continued pursuit of becoming a true disciple of Jesus Christ. Have a great week and may God abundantly bless you in everything you do!