

Stretching Our Love

Key Verse: *"He answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself."*
—**Luke 10:27**

Selected Scripture:
Luke 10

should daily be seeing more clearly the force of this expression—'love is the principal thing.' The Bible tells us, "God is love." (I John 4:16) He is also referred to as the "Father of lights," and mercy, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift. (James 1:17) The true and living God is to be recognized and have first place in our heart. We will then be compelled to be anxious to do those things which would be the service of our God, as a demonstration of our love. It should lead us to a desire to see to what extent we are loving God, and keeping the Father's law; for, "Love is the fulfilling of the law."—Rom. 13:10

The Lord Jesus then proceeded beyond the question posed to him by the lawyer, when he declared that the

OUR LORD HERE IS QUOT-
ing from the Old Testament, and is making a reference to the Divine Law. (Deut. 6:4,5) Heavenly wisdom was certainly shown in this wonderful, comprehensive statement regarding love, that Jesus gave in response to the question, "Which is the first [greatest] commandment of all?" (Mark 12:28,29) Love for God was referred to as the chiefest of all commandments, and nothing else could be added to it. We

second commandment stands related to the first—namely, ‘Thou shalt love . . . thy neighbour as thyself.’ He divided the law into two parts, just as on the two tables of stone given to Moses by God on Mt. Sinai. (Exod. 31:18) Our Lord was showing to us that one part related to God, and man’s obligations to his Creator; and the second part related to man’s responsibilities toward his fellow man. We must note also that it is second only to the previous statement of the love to God. Jesus was actually recalling the words from Leviticus 19:17,18, “Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, . . . but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” We are further told, “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” (I John 4: 20) The person who loves his neighbor will not intentionally injure him in act, word or thought. It is important for us to keep this test clearly in our hearts and minds.

A further question was posed to Jesus, “Who is my neighbour?” (Luke 10:29) If we look at the example of the good Samaritan from verses 33-36, we should come to the realization that every one is neighbor to every other one. We recall from the account that a priest and a Levite passed by an injured man who had been left on the side of the road by thieves. A kindhearted Samaritan, common and despised by the priestly class of Jews, stopped and helped the injured stranger. This unselfish act of compassion saved the man’s life.

Through the story of the good Samaritan, Jesus taught that a neighbor is one who, ignoring all the racial and ethnic barriers, shows mercy and love to another. We are to express our love for our neighbor by being thoughtful and considerate of his welfare and interests, and helpful to him as far as it is in our power to do. ■