

RADICAL LIVING PT. 4 - RADICAL LOVE

Scripture used: Matthew 5:43-45, Matthew 22:37-39 (NLT)

OVERVIEW

Today we pick back up the theme of living a radical life. This is what Jesus called us to do, and living radically is especially important when it comes to love. In Matthew Chapter 5, Jesus reinterprets rabbinical law based on radical love. He shows how radical love transforms us and our behavior toward others. That is the power of God's complete and perfect love. Most of us cannot bring ourselves to believe in such perfect love. Why? Because we only experience broken love here on earth. But we were shaped by God to seek out love. We cannot help ourselves, and will continue to search until we find it. First, we come to experience God's tremendous, eternal love for us. That divine love starts to reorder our life. It lets us come to love our broken selves as He loves us. Then we are freed to love others. We are reshaped into mature Christians, true followers of Jesus!

KEY POINTS

The Big Idea: Following Jesus involves radical love.

- We have all experienced broken love. - Our parents, siblings, spouses, children, and friends have all let us down at one time, or they will at some point. Others tell us "I love you" but will always find a way to hurt us. There is no way for another human being to live up to the demand of perfect love.
- We are shaped by God to constantly seek out His unconditional love. Imperfect love makes us cynical and angry. And yet, we still desire true love. That desire stems from our origin, when we were each lovingly shaped by God. The deep love we experienced at birth leads us to search for it endlessly in life.
- Mature Christian love involves three parts. We can start to find peace after we truly understand the order and nature of love. That is what John meant in Chapter 3 Verse 16. That is the love we must contemplate.
 - **Love for God.** This is the perfect and complete love that reorders our lives. This is the love that only Jesus can bring to us through His sacrifice on the cross. This is the first commandment as outlined by Jesus Himself in Matthew 22:37-39 (NLT).
 - **Love for self.** God loves our broken flesh. That alone should be enough of a reason for us to love ourselves. We must take it on faith that we are worthy of God's love, our own love, and the love of others. We cannot "throw away" ourselves. We are worthy! Romans 8:28-29 (NLT)
 - **Love for others.** Jesus instructed us to love our neighbors. We cannot just have an "inward" faith. We must grow our hearts through good deeds that are motivated by a sincere desire to see others thrive without a single thought for ourselves.
- Mature Christian love is not just about doing, but also becoming. Over time, we will be transformed when we practice this kind of radical love. The habits of love will help us capitalize on every opportunity to be a shining light to others that draws them into their own relationship with God!

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - A mature Christian love involves three sides. In order, we must: love God; love ourselves; and then love others. God is the center of it all. Do you truly believe God loves you? Do you truly love Him in return?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Think again of the three-part Christian love of God, ourselves, and others. Which part are you missing? How does that lack manifest itself in your life?
- 3) **DO** - Write down the phrase "I will practice radical love!" and start this Wednesday. People will be feeling hurt and angry based on the Election. This is a special opportunity for Christians to shine by showering others with mature love. Pray for people who you know will be disappointed by the outcome. Reach out to them personally and remind them that God is on the throne!

"Command those who are rich in this present world..... to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share"

SEE THIS SPECIAL NOTE TO LIFE GROUP LEADERS FROM EVELYN POWERY:

“We recognize that there are needs this holiday season within our church community. As leaders, we encourage you to pray for God’s guidance to identify families or individuals within NBCC or in the community that need our help. Do they need groceries, toys, an overdue bill paid, etc? Please fill out the following form (https://mynbcc.ccbchurch.com/form_response.php?id=398) to identify the needs by Saturday, November 26. On the form, you can also indicate whether you and your team are able to meet needs as well. Once we have received all the needs, we will work with all Life Groups and ministry team leads to ensure the needs have been met. Share this information with your group so that they can all begin gathering supplies needed for the identified families. You might even organize a date when your group can come together and package/distribute supplies for individual families. We will leave it up to each group to lead the specifics of this project.

May God bless you as you bless others during this season! If you have any specific questions about the Be Rich holiday campaign, feel free to contact: Evelyn Powery, Director of Transforming Communities, epowery@nbccbayarea.com, (408) 239-3117”

>>> Even though the form isn’t due until around Thanksgiving -- do start thinking now about who your LG might be able to help! <<<

GIVE:

Did you know that if you earn \$33,000 per year, your income is considered to be in the top 1% in the world? We need to learn how to be rich with what we have been given.

Sunday 10/23 - If you are able, you are challenged to give \$39.95, which will go towards Cityteam, Columbia Middle School, and Project WeHOPE.

SERVE:

This is the week to focus especially on SERVING!

One of the greatest gifts we have is time. We have the opportunity to be the hands and feet of Jesus by serving our communities in need! Sign up online or at church to serve with one of our 2016 Be Rich partners starting on OCT 30. See the bulletin inserts for more details. This is a GREAT thing to invite friends to participate in together with you!

LOVE:

We are also focusing on LOVING!

In partnership with Mountain View Central Seventh-Day Adventist Church, we will be collecting non-perishable food items for the Second Harvest Food Bank. The challenge is for you to bring 3 lbs. of non perishable food (approx. 3-4 cans) on Sundays, November 13 and 20 in bins in the church lobby. Super-easy, but deeply impactful.