

Relational Integrity

Series: Following Jesus: Valuing Relationships

Mark 12:28-34 NLT (0923)

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July 12, 2009

CALVIN MILLER *Dear Christ, make one that which we are and that which we appear to be. Be Lord of naked faces.*

John Powell—*I'm afraid to tell you who I am, because if I tell you who I am, you may not like who I am, and it's all that I have.*

Mark 12:28-34 (NLT) ²⁸One of the teachers of religious law was standing there listening to the debate. He realized that Jesus had answered well, so he asked, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" ²⁹Jesus replied, "*The most important commandment is this: 'Listen, O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only Lord. ³⁰And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength. ³¹The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these.*" ³²The teacher of religious law replied, "Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth by saying that there is only one God and no other. ³³And I know it is important to love him with all my heart and all my understanding and all my strength, and to love my neighbor as myself. This is more important than to offer all of the burnt offerings and sacrifices required in the law." ³⁴Realizing how much the man understood, Jesus said to him, "*You are not far from the Kingdom of God.*" And after that, no one dared to ask him any more questions. (PRAYER)

I. A question of authority

a. Jesus challenges everything

b. The campaign to make God manageable

OSWALD CHAMBERS *Jesus Christ is not teaching ordinary integrity, but supernatural integrity, a likeness to our Father in heaven.*

II. The heart of the matter

a. The greatest commandment

Mark 12:29-31 (NLT) ²⁹Jesus replied, "*The most important commandment is this: 'Listen, O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only Lord. ³⁰And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength. ³¹The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these.*"

Leviticus 19:18 NLT ¹⁸"Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against a fellow Israelite, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.

b. The role of religious observance in a life of faith

Mark 12:32-33 (NLT) ³²The teacher of religious law replied, “Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth by saying that there is only one God and no other. ³³And I know it is important to love him with all my heart and all my understanding and all my strength, and to love my neighbor as myself. This is more important than to offer all of the burnt offerings and sacrifices required in the law.”

III. Common obstacles to loving others

a. Individualism

b. Busyness

(v. 30) *...love... with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength*

c. Comparison

(v. 31) *‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’*

THOMAS HUGHES *Blessed are they who have the gift of making friends, for it is one of God’s best gifts. It involves many things, but above all, the power of going out of one’s self and appreciating whatever is noble and loving in another.*

JOHN POWELL *I am simply not mature enough to enter into true friendship unless I realize that I cannot judge the intention or motivation of another. I must be humble and sane enough to bow before the complexity and mystery of a human being.*

HENRY WARD BEECHER *Every [person] should keep a fair-sized cemetery in which to bury the faults of his [or her] friends.*

ERWIN W. LUTZER *God wants to develop the same character traits in us as exist in Christ. We are to react to the situations of life as Christ did.*