

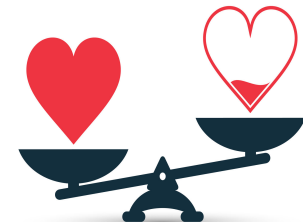
# CHRISTIAN SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

The process of being conformed to the  
image of Christ for the sake of others



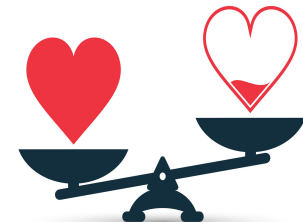
Why is it so important to study love?

1. It consumes our culture
2. It's the central need of every human being
3. It's either the most doubted aspect of God's character or the most affirmed, both of which present an unbalanced view of God.
4. It's the central ethic of the Kingdom of God



## Love - Some biblical and cultural observations

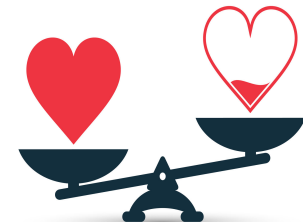
1. Biblical love is not primarily based on 'feelings', but on spiritual obedience. It is a choice we can make.
2. Love is not easily defined but is easily recognized. Last time I googled 'quotes on love' I got 1,410,000,000 results (August 2019).
3. 'Love and belonging' are the 2 essential needs of every human being.
4. To be loving does not mean we surrender truth or become objects of abuse.
5. Hatred is easy, love is hard.





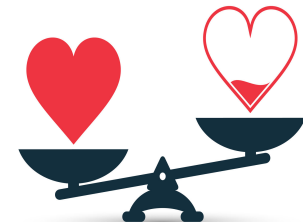
## Love - Some biblical and cultural observations

6. Unhealthy love easily turns into idolatry.
7. How we say something is more important than what we say. This is especially true in the context of love.
8. Servant leadership, and service in general, is essentially love in action.
9. Biblical descriptions of vibrant faith are often associated with the images and/or the language of love. (See Luke 15, especially the story of the Prodigal Son)



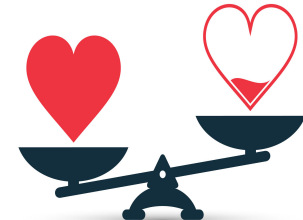
## Love - Some biblical and cultural observations

10. If you were to think of the saddest experience of your life or the most joyful one, love was likely a factor in both.
11. Living out this ethic of the Kingdom becomes a safeguard against Pharisaic tendencies
12. The full expression of God's love is Jesus. Further, based on the High Priestly Prayer of Jesus in John 17, the Trinity is also rooted in love as well as unity. They become the essentials of Jesus' final prayer for all believers, present and future.



## Love - Some biblical and cultural observations

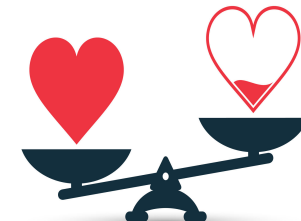
13. Jesus gave a 'new' command in John 13:34-35, to 'love one another'. For Jesus, this became the central command/ethic of the Kingdom, as well as a source of proof for the disciples. Paul, John, (and the writer of Hebrews) repeat this command multiple times in their writings.
14. Love is central to both the vertical and horizontal aspects of Jesus' teachings.



Vertical

Jesus replied, 'You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' (Matt 22:37-40; see also Luke 10:27; Mark 12:30-31)

Horizontal

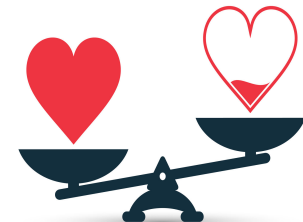




40 The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.”

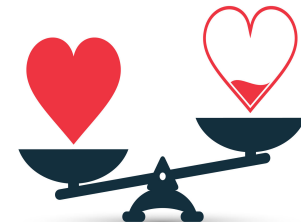


According to Jesus, it was the underlying ethic to the entire Old Testament. He merges a passage from Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18 to summarize the entire foundation of the Old Testament Law and prophetic writings.



To stay in the vertical dimension results in  
theologizing without application

To stay in the horizontal dimension results in  
moralizing without a foundation



## The Ethic of the Kingdom

<sup>36</sup> "Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?"

<sup>37</sup> Jesus replied, "'You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.'

<sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment.

<sup>39</sup> A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

<sup>40</sup> The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments."

(Matt. 22:36-40 NLT)

## The Ethic of the Kingdom

<sup>16</sup> We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.

<sup>17</sup> And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world.

<sup>18</sup> Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love.

<sup>19</sup> We love each other because he loved us first.

(1 Jn. 4:16-19 NLT)

# The Ethic of the Kingdom

If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

<sup>2</sup> If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing.

<sup>3</sup> If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing.

<sup>4</sup> Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud  
<sup>5</sup> or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged.

<sup>6</sup> It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out.

<sup>7</sup> Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

(1 Cor. 13:1-7 NLT)

# The Ethic of the Kingdom

<sup>35</sup> Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death?

<sup>36</sup> (As the Scriptures say, "For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.")

<sup>37</sup> No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.

<sup>38</sup> And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow-- not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love.

<sup>39</sup> No power in the sky above or in the earth below-- indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(Rom. 8:35-8:39 NLT)



## The 3 Pillars of Love

Am I Heard?

Am I  
Understood?

Am I  
Wanted/Valued?

Communication

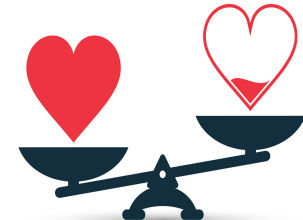
Compatibility/  
Connection

Care

## 1. Communication – Am I Heard?

<sup>14</sup> And we are confident that he hears us whenever we ask for anything that pleases him. <sup>15</sup> And since we know he hears us when we make our requests, we also know that he will give us what we ask for.

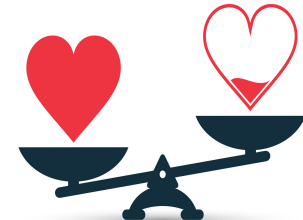
1 John 5:14-15



## 2. Compatibility – Am I Understood?

<sup>27</sup> So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Genesis 1:27



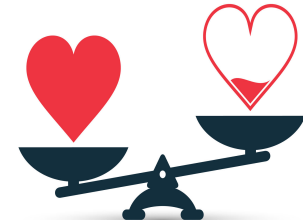
### 3. Care – Am I Wanted?

<sup>28</sup> "And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing,

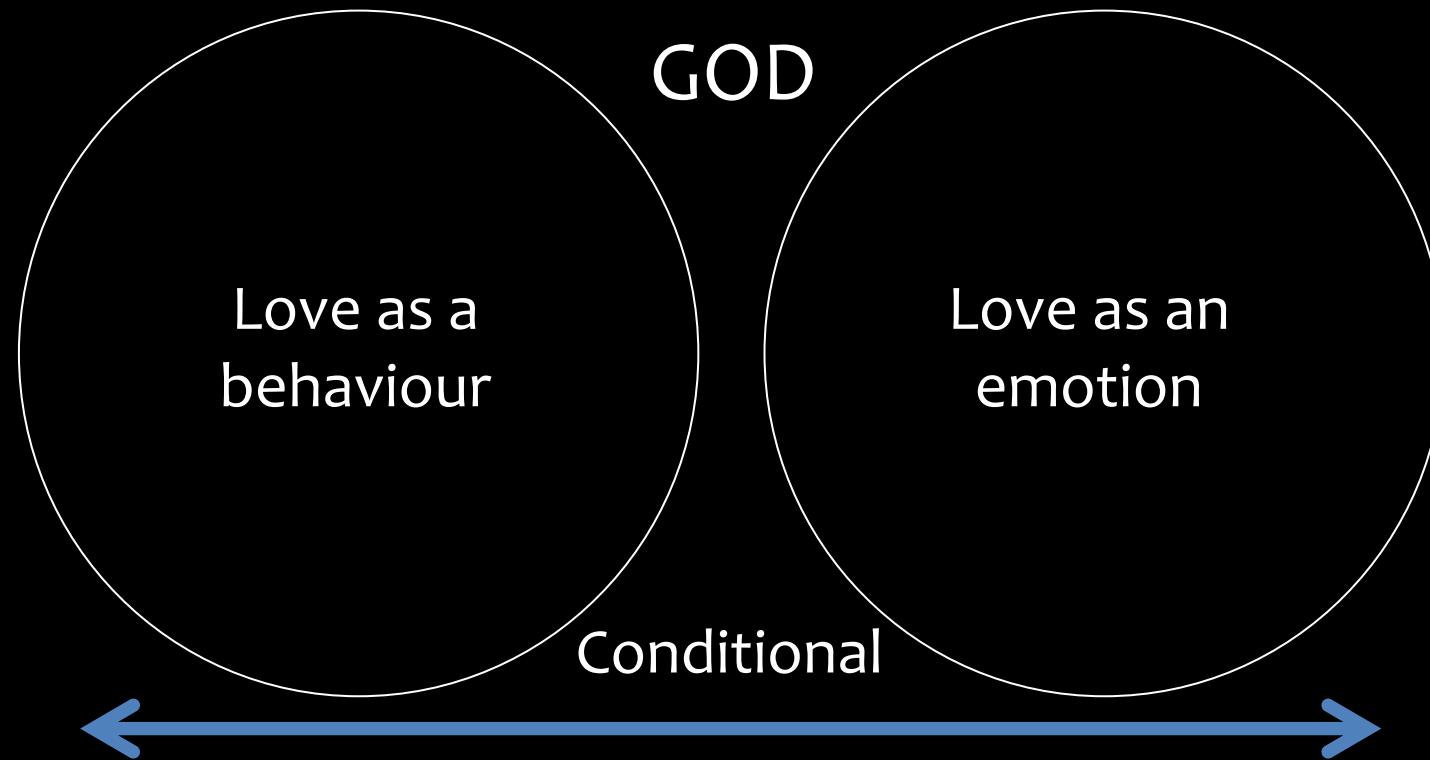
<sup>29</sup> yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are.

<sup>30</sup> And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?

Matt. 6:28-30 NLT



## The 2 Arenas of Love



We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. (1 John 4:16 NLT)

if...

## Biblical love is rooted in the following

- Others-focused
- Sacrificial
- Unconditional
- Forgiving
- Reconciliation
- Humble
- Peace-seeking
- Grace and truth
- Covenantal
- Servant



# The Ethic of the Kingdom

<sup>11</sup> Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers.

<sup>12</sup> Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ.

<sup>13</sup> This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

<sup>14</sup> Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth.

<sup>15</sup> Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church.