

1. The Motive: (for enjoying people)

Love for “Jesus... Others... You...” (The key to JOY)

☞ **Love for Jesus**

The greatest commandment & the 2nd commandment

Matthew 22:35-40

1 John 4:19-21

John 13:34-35

The difference between duty and love is that the first represents Sinai and the second represents Calvary. RICHARD BRAUNSTEIN

The key to loving, or to growing in our love for Jesus... (1 John 4:19 – We love because...)

☞ **Love for Others**

Loving others means FAR MORE than merely loving those we find it easy to love. – We have all been blessed by others who have loved us, **despite** us. We need to become true LOVERS of PEOPLE, rather than merely lovers of those we enjoy.

Matthew 5:43-46

The Christian church is a society of sinners. It is the only society in the world in which membership is based upon the single qualification that the candidate shall be unworthy of membership. Charles Clayton Morrison

☞ **Love for You** (ourselves)

It is MUCH more enjoyable to love and to enjoy others than to dislike or hate them. The more we enjoy others, the more enjoyable they become – People can often sense when we find them difficult.

2. The Method: (vv. 13 & 15) (for enjoying people)

☞ **Open Lives** – Share with God’s people who are in need.

A True Statement: We will find that we are far more attached to people when we invest in them, than vice versa.

God has designed us to find true fulfillment in meeting other’s needs....

☞ **Open Homes** – Practice hospitality

Hebrews 13:2

(1 Timothy 3:2 & Titus 1:7-8)

☞ **Open Hearts** – Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

Deep down we know this one thing: What matters in this life is more than winning for ourselves. What truly matters is helping others win, even if it means slowing down and changing our course.

3. The Madness: (vv. 14, 17-21) (of enjoying people)

"If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend who you hate," – Nikka - age 6

☞ **Be Committed to be a Blessing to ALL** (v. 14)

We have a natural tendency to desire blessing for those who **deserve** it and not for those who don’t... **THINK ABOUT THAT for moment...** in light of the gospel...

☞ **Be Committed to being a Peacemaker**

Matthew 5:9

James 3:16-18

The “3 F’s of Cheek Turning”:

- **Forbearing, Forgiving, & Forgetting**

☞ **Be Committed to Humility**

v. 16b ^(NIV84) – Do not be proud..., Do not be conceited.

James 4:6 ...

- **Pride: Thinking about oneself too much**
- **Humility: Thinking about oneself less**
- **Conceit: Forgetting the gospel**

☞ **Refuse to Give In to Evil.** (vv. 17, 19-21)

Whenever we allow anyone to motivate us to evil, we give them power over us.

What does it mean for us to be “motivated to evil?”

- Motivated to resentment / bitterness
- Motivated to seek retribution/revenge
- Motivated to hate (extreme dislike)
- Motivated to refuse to love (have nothing to do with, write off, extend no grace...)
- Motivated to fear
- Motivated to pride (“Thank you, God, that I am not like...”)

The examples of Jesus and of Stephen (Acts 7)

Summary / Review:

Remember our primary **Motive:** Love for God

The **Method:** Loving those around us

The **Madness:** When we overcome evil with good, we bring glory to God in one of two ways:

Either we see a sinner won over to give the glory to God...

Or, we will see God’s justice all the more glorified when we stand before Him (as well as His grace in our own lives and actions)

Nobody cares how much you know, until they know how much you care.

A Truth to Remember: Loving God and loving sinners are integrally bound up together such that we cannot truly do either without doing both.

A Challenge to Consider: Are we actively and intentionally striving to love those whom we find most difficult to love, especially within the walls of the church?

One thing I heard this morning was...