

# Love



## COMMON GROUND

Who was your first crush? What's the story?

## KNOWN TRUTH

- *Was that real love?*
- *What is love? Is it simply a feeling?*

Love is not simply a feeling but love is also a choice and a verb. **Love is unselfishly choosing for the highest good of another for God and His Kingdom.**

## GREATEST COMMANDMENT

*One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"*

*Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."*

MATT 22:35-40

- What could it look like to love God with your heart? Soul? Mind? Strength?
- What does it mean that God *commands* us to love?

## WHO ARE WE TO LOVE?

*On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"*

*"What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"*

*He answered, " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind' and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"*

*"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."*

*But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"*

*In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'*

*"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"*

*The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."*

*Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."*

LUKE 10:25-37

- At this time, Samaritans were bitter enemies of the Jewish people Jesus was talking to. That a Samaritan was a hero in Jesus's parable would have seemed offensive.
- How did the Samaritan love the man by the road? What does that tell us about love? (Love is tangible, inconvenient, extravagant)
- How can the Samaritan love a bitter enemy? (Love is a choice)
- **Feelings follow action**

## WHAT IF THEY ARE UNLOVEABLE?

How can we love someone we don't like?

*"Let us suppose we are confronted with a desperate thing -- say Pimlico [a unimpressive city]... It is not enough for [a resident] to disapprove of Pimlico: in that case he will merely cut his throat or move to Chelsea [a beautiful, prosperous city]. Nor, certainly, is it enough for a man to approve of Pimlico: for then it will remain Pimlico, which would be awful. The only way out of it seems to be for somebody to love Pimlico: to love it with a transcendental tie and without any earthly reason. If there arose a man who loved Pimlico, then Pimlico would rise into ivory towers and golden pinnacles; Pimlico would attire*

*herself as a woman does when she is loved. For decoration is not given to hide horrible things: but to decorate things already adorable. A mother does not give her child a blue bow because he is so ugly without it. A lover does not give a girl a necklace to hide her neck. If men loved Pimlico as mothers love children, arbitrarily, because it is theirs, Pimlico in a year or two might be fairer than Florence. Some readers will say that this is a mere fantasy. I answer that this is the actual history of mankind. Men did not love Rome because she was great. She was great because they had loved her."*

G.K. CHESTERTON, *ORTHODOXY*

Something must be loved before it becomes lovable. Because we have been overwhelmingly loved by God beyond what we deserve (like the man who the Samaritan ministered to), we can now love others beyond what they deserve. We can love people not for who they are but because of who we are.

- Can you think of something that wasn't loved? What happened?
- Have you seen someone be loved beyond what they deserved? What was the outcome?

## CHALLENGE

When you think of someone being unloveable, who's the first person you think of? How can you love them this week?