



PART 3: Love

INTRODUCTION

We all assume that we can behave and confess our way into a barrier-free relationship with God. If we sin against someone, we can just pray for God's forgiveness and we'll be back in his good graces. But what if God wants more from us than vertical morality? What if he cares about our horizontal relationships?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When have you asked yourself or someone else if a particular behavior was a sin? What motivated you to ask that question?
2. How do you think the reputation of the church would change if Christians focused on loving others the way Jesus loved others?
3. To what extent do you currently believe that your relationship with God is based on how well you obey him? How do you think that influences the way you view God?
4. Read 1 John 2:1-11. If you took this passage to heart, how would you treat people differently than you currently do? How would it change your relationship with God?
5. *"If it's not best for them, it's sin."* Does that standard sound reasonable to you? Why or why not?
6. Who do you need to love better right now? What does love require of you in that relationship? How can this group support you as you do what love requires?

MOVING FORWARD

Ever since Jesus introduced a new covenant, our relationship with God hasn't been measured against our obedience; it's measured against how we treat others. Jesus calls us to love those whom God loves . . . even when that's difficult to do. The way of love is far less complicated than obeying a long list of rules, but far more demanding.

So, what does love require of you?

CHANGING YOUR MIND

Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister is still in the darkness. Anyone who loves their brother and sister lives in the light, and there is nothing in them to make them stumble.

1 John 2:9-10