



Life Is Complicated. We Can Help.

Above the Law

#nplifeiscomplicated

Week 22

January 31, 2021

Bottom Line: Love is not a feeling but something we do.

Icebreaker: Relational counselors tell us that the five love languages are verbal affirmation, physical touch, quality time, acts of service, and gifts. Which one is the primary way you like to receive love, and which one do you most like to give?

Key Verse: *“So I give you now a new commandment: Love each other just as much as I have loved you. For when you demonstrate the same love I have for you by loving one another, everyone will know that you’re my true followers.”*
John 13:34-35 TPT

Religion has always been about rules. When Jesus came, He announced that He was the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets. He was here to establish something brand new. Jesus paid the debt and fulfilled the obligation our sin had made, and now He was opening the door to a relationship with God. That is why in His Sermon on the Mount, basically His first public speaking event, He immediately told the people that a relationship with God is inextricably linked to a relationship with others God loves, which is the whole world. But He was introducing even more than that. He was introducing a whole new movement: “My ecclesia,” which even hell could not destroy. This movement would be known both for their radical love for God and their love for others and the world. Jesus summed up the message this way: “Love God with everything you have, and demonstrate it by loving your neighbor as yourself.” These two commands summarize everything God wants from us. The new covenant meant stop living by rules and start living by a relationship. Jesus made *love* a verb and then used the imperative form of the verb. This was, in fact, a command. Then He raised the bar: “Love others as I have loved you.” New-command-brand love was to serve as the unifying behavior for His *ekklesia*. Fans believe something. Followers do something. Fans ask, “What does the Bible say about...?” Followers ask, “What does God’s love require of me?” A follower knows that the way they LOVE God is by loving people. A follower knows that the way they SERVE God is by serving people. Fans focus on rules because they can control that in their minds. Followers focus on the relationship of love, which is uncomfortable and demanding. When we wonder what God’s love requires of us in our relationships, the apostle Paul says that God’s Spirit will always nudge us in the direction of kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control. When in doubt, max those out. That’s what love requires. You can’t be a follower with anything less.

THINK IT OVER >>>

What was the most significant part of today’s message for you?

What did Jesus mean when He said He came to fulfill the law? Fulfill means to bring to a designated end. Jesus did not come to abolish—as in destroy the validity of or undermine the credibility of the law. Jesus came to bring it to a designated end. How would you describe its purpose and end? How did Jesus fulfill it?

Jesus made it clear that our horizontal relationships matter—in fact, in a right relationship with God they take precedence. Reflect and discuss. Does this seem wrong to you?

Jesus was introducing a whole new way of relating to God and each other, a new movement called the *ekklesia*. It would not be a place. Why do you think this truth was and is so threatening to religious people?

Who is your neighbor, according to Jesus?

LOOK IT OVER <<<

How do you believe the typical “Christian” would answer the question, “What does it look like to love God with all your heart, soul, and mind?”

Love God and love your neighbor summarized all the laws of the Old Testament. How does that apply to the Ten Commandments?

According to Jesus, anyone who mistreats a neighbor doesn’t love God. Reactions?

But Jesus took it even further. Don’t just love—love others the way I have loved you. Talk about the implications. How has Jesus loved you?

This was not a suggestion—it was a command. It was the NEW one command. It was the way Jesus designed to change the world. How can you see the disciples living that out?

This love is the “only thing that counts.” Now what?

NEXT STEPS

1. Look at the ways that you have believed prove you are loving and pleasing God.
2. Evaluate your love for God in the light of your horizontal relationships.
3. Who is your neighbor? Deliberately show love to someone for whom love does not come naturally.

EVALUATION/ACTION

Realizing and reaching your full potential in Christ

Bottom Line: Love is not a feeling but something we do.

Rate yourself from 1 to 10 1 (never), 10 (always)	1	2	3	4		6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating?										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
Do you know someone who demonstrates this bottom line well? What do you admire about that person?										
What specific action can you put into practice to raise your rating?										
At the end of this week, reflect - where did you see the bottom line show up in your actions throughout the week?										

PRAYER

List group members and their prayer requests for this week:

DAILY STUDY

Want to dig deeper? Check out **The Daily** this week at newpointe.org/daily:

Monday: Galatians 5:4-6

Tuesday: Matthew 5:23-24

Wednesday: Matthew 7:28-29

Thursday: Romans 12:2; Philippians 2:5-7

Friday: Luke 19:7; Acts 10:27-28

Don't let the conversation stop here. Keep talking it over with others throughout the week.

(Don't forget to bring this paper to your next small group meeting)