

2023 DANIEL FAST

R.E.A.L.

Relationships Everyone's Always Looking for

DAY 8

Mark 12:28-31 [New Living Translation] *One of the teachers of religious law was standing there listening to the debate. He realized that Jesus had answered well, so he asked, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"* ²⁹ *Jesus replied, "The most important commandment is this: 'Listen, O Israel! The LORD our God is the one and only LORD.* ³⁰ *And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.'* ³¹ *The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself. No other commandment is greater than these."*

Our relationship with God is where we receive life. It's the abundant life Jesus spoke about in John 10:10. The strength and depth of our relationship with Him helps us to have and maintain strong relationships and friendships. But what about our relationship with ourselves? How do we see and treat ourselves? How do we talk to ourselves? How do we think about ourselves?

Scripture commands us to love our neighbor. Scripture also teaches us how we are to love them; in the same way we love ourselves. There are many ways to love yourself. Everyone is different and in turn will love themselves differently. But there are at least 4 practices by which every Christian can love themselves so they can love their "*neighbor*." Taking the word, **SELF**, we will look today and the next 3 days to see how, according to the Word of God, that we can love ourselves so that we can build healthy relationships and effectively love others.

First, we love ourselves by **Sanctifying** ourselves. Sanctification is the process of becoming more like Christ, by purifying our hearts and minds, through repentance, prayer, and spiritual practices (*i.e., fasting*). Sanctify is a word that is not as commonly used in the Church as it has been in the past. The definition of "biblical sanctification" is to make holy; to consecrate; to set apart. If I truly love myself, I will not allow the world to corrupt my spirit, soul, and body. 1 Thessalonians 5:23 [New International Version] says, "*May God Himself, the God of peace, **sanctify** you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

In loving ourselves, we set ourselves apart to achieve a higher purpose. In 2 Timothy 2:21, the Apostle Paul encourages us to sanctify ourselves so that Christ can use us for His highest purposes. Loving your neighbor as yourself is one of His higher purposes. May we fulfill the higher purpose of Jesus that we find in Mark 12:31. Sanctify, love yourself, so that you can love others and build strong and lasting relationships.

It's time to build Relationships Everyone's Always Looking for!

Worship Song:

"You Have Made Me Glad" – Charity Gayle

https://youtu.be/3fZDS_5Jv5E

Scripture Readings:

Proverbs 19:8 [New Living Translation] *"To acquire wisdom is to love oneself; people who cherish understanding will prosper."*

Ephesians 5:29 [Contemporary English Version] *"None of us hate our own bodies. We provide for them and take good care of them, just as Christ does for the church."*

1 John 4:16 [New International Version] *"God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in Him."*

Prayer:

Father, Your loving kindness has made me glad. Your Word has made me glad. The opportunity to share Christ in my relationships and friendships has made me glad. I pray that You help me to love my neighbor as I love myself. Impart unto me the revelation of what I have that You have given me that I am supposed to give to others. I will sanctify and set myself apart so that my whole spirit, soul, and body is well able to express the love of God to my family, my friends, my brothers, and sisters in Christ, and to the people You are bringing across my path. I pray for Your love to live in me so I can love myself and because of this, may the benefactor be my neighbor. In the Name of Jesus I pray, amen!

Today, I need to pray for:

What is God telling me today?
