



John 8

⁷He...said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her."...⁹ At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there.¹⁰

Relentless love puts God first. (priority)

Matthew 10:37-39

Love must flow from the fresh spring of God's perfect love. Too many times we dig our own wells, but eventually what we drink there goes sour.

1 John 4:19-21

¹⁹We love because he first loved us. ²⁰If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. ²¹And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

Terry Cooper in Making Judgments Without Being Judgmental

A positive mind does not have the time or energy to waste on useless judgmentalism. It is too busy following a healthy path to constantly criticize the world around itself.

Dorothy Day
I really only love God as much as I love the person I love least.

Relentless love is about giving, not getting. (MERCY)

Luke 6:32-36

³² "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. ³³ And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. ³⁴ And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. ³⁵ But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them

without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. ³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful."

Relentless love moves beyond judgment. (EMPATHY)

Matthew 7:1-5

¹ "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. ² For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. ³ "Why do

you look at the speck of sawdust in someone else's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ⁴ How can you say, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? ⁵ You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from the other person's eye.

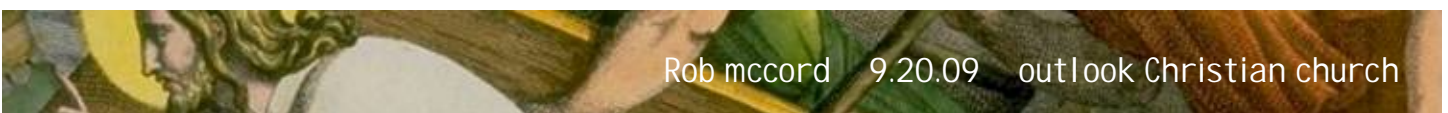
Anne Lamott
You can safely assume you've created God in your own image when it turns out that God hates all the same people you do.

Bill W. of Alcoholics Anonymous in a 12-step book published in 1952

Finally, we begin to see that all people, including ourselves, are to some extent emotionally ill as well as frequently wrong, and then we approach true tolerance and see what real love for our fellows actually means. It will become more and more evident as we go forward that it is pointless to become angry, or to get hurt by people who, like us, are suffering from the pains of growing up.

Romans 14:10-13

¹⁰ You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat your brother or sister with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat... ¹³ Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister.





Taking up the Jesus challenge of relentless love

Life group study

RELATE

Have you ever defended someone who was being picked on? What happened?

Among your friends, is there a group or individual you can “put down” without being disapproved of or stopped? Why them?

What principle, insight or idea was meaningful to you from this week’s sermon?

READ

John 8:1-11; Leviticus 20:10;
Matthew 5:17-20, 27-30

According to Jewish law (Lev. 20:10), did the adulterous woman deserve death? Who else deserved stoning? What does this say about the Pharisees’ value on keeping the law?

Did the Pharisees need Jesus’ approval in order to stone the woman? Whose approval did they need? (check study Bible notes) Why then did they bring the woman to Jesus? (John 8:6)

Did Jesus break the Old Testament law on adultery? Is He “soft” on sin here?

How did Jesus’ handling of this situation “fulfill the law” (Matt. 5:17ff)? What do you notice about the way he treated the Pharisees?

After Jesus invited those without sin to throw the first stones, the text says that the oldest Pharisees left first. Why do you think they did?

What makes the difference between times you want to “throw the book” at someone, and times you balance judgment with mercy? How have you grown in this area?

REFLECT

Dorothy Day said, “I really only love God as much as I love the person I love least.” Think about a person you find difficult to accept, let alone love. What makes them so difficult for you? Is there anything you can appreciate about that person? How is the Holy Spirit nudging you to reach out to that person?

RESPOND

“The one who is forgiven much loves much (Luke 7:47).” We increase love for others when we consider and confess our own sins to God and to receive His forgiveness. Take time during group to do that privately.

Come back together to thank God for His mercy and forgiveness. Consider reciting The Lord’s Prayer or this traditional prayer:

“Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy.
Lord have mercy.”

