

E-Series

Only Wanna Be With You



34 When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, **35** and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. **36** "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" **37** He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." **38** This is the greatest and first commandment. **39** And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." —**Matthew 22:34-39**

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On Sunday we continued our series called *The Vow* with a sermon entitled "Only Wanna Be With You."

Mostly, however, we talked about how, so often in life, we get our loves out of order.

In the late fourth/early fifth century, one of the most prominent early church leaders, St. Augustine, identified this as our primary problem. We far too easily get our loves out of order. We love the wrong things. We elevate things that ought to be peripheral. We exchange what should be on the top of our loves list for what belongs on the bottom.

Jesus' answer to his Pharisee antagonist in Matthew 22 can help us with that. When this hotshot Pharisee approaches Jesus, his intention is to trap him. As usual, however, Jesus bested him and taught us a valuable lesson. There are 613 commandments in the Old Testament, but they can all be encapsulated in these two according to Jesus: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." Then, "love your neighbor as yourself."

Obviously Jesus' intent was not to give us marital advice. That wasn't the context. Yet, those of us who are wise can apply these two—most important—commandments to enrich our marriage relationships.

So often and easily we get our loves out of order. Instead of occupying first place in our lives, we push God down to third or fourth, if that. And, once our loves start getting out of order, everything goes awry. Of course, God's rightful place is #1. That is given. He is the Creator. We are the creatures. God, the One who gives us breath and life, obviously deserves our worship and love. Then who or what? For those of us who are married, that answer is easy. Our spouses. God has given you your spouse to share life, to be your companion, and to love in such a way that your love together will reflect God's love to the world. Your marriage relationship is a witness to God's love. So, how are you doing on that?

Truth is, sometimes we don't do so well. Our loves get out of order. On Sunday we talked about two of the primary things/relationships that cause us to get our loves out of order. The first was career. Again, it's good to work. It's even good to love your work. Nobody wants to go through life miserable, hating their work. But, the problem comes in when work gets elevated above our relationship with God and our relationship with our spouse. How does the time, energy and passion that you have for work compare with that for your spouse? When you get home to your spouse, does he or she just get your leftovers after you have given your best to everyone else? Our spouse deserves so much more than our leftovers.

So, career can throw your loves out of order. This might be especially true for husband, generally speaking. But, if career is more of a temptation for men, then the next love dis-orderer is more of a temptation for women. The second? Children.

On Sunday I quoted parenting guru, [John Rosemond](#). I think Rosemond is dead-on when he describes the shift that happens in most families once the children are born. Instead of the primary relationship in the family being the husband/wife relationship—the God-designed bedrock of the family—after the first child is born, what often happens is that the primary relationship becomes the parent/child relationship. More often than not it is the **mother**/child relationship.

It is easy to see why this happens. For the first two years of a child's life, our job as parents is to orbit this child in a ministry of servitude. We put food in their mouths. We bathe them. We change their nasty diapers. We do everything for them.

Even in this harried time of little sleep and lots of demands, however, we must remember our spouse. Then, after about the second birthday, Rosemond contends, it is time to bring the curtain down on this stage of parenting. Each day our job is to do a little less for them, to teach them to be more independent. AND, to re-establish the primary relationship in the family as the husband/wife relationship.

When children know that their parents are a team, when they can rest assured that that relationship is secure, it gives them confidence and mental and emotional stability. The husband/wife relationship is the foundation for a strong marriage.

So, does your marital relationship get pushed aside for every whim of a four year-old? Do your children see the kind of love relationship between you and your spouse that you can be proud of? Not only does a strong marriage give our children confidence and stability, but also it provides them with the marital blueprints that they will carry for the rest of their lives. Fathers, your sons will become the kind of husbands that you are—or they will have to fight everyday to resist your bad example. Fathers, your daughters will think it only natural for their husbands to treat them the way you treat their mother.

Mothers, your daughters will be the kind of wives they see you being. Your sons will likely find a wife who treats them like you treat their dad.

All that being said, let's be sure our loves are in order. Hopefully, this praying this prayer will help:

"God, I said, "Til death do us part," and I want to mean it. Help me to love You more than her/him and her/him more than anything or anybody else. Make us one, as You are One—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Lord, I want to hear her/him, cherish her/him, and serve her/him so she/he will love You more. Fill us with your perfect love and help us to reflect that love to those around us so that we will bring you glory. Amen."

Again, go to www.michaelaturner.net and share your thoughts.

Trying to get my loves in order,
Pastor Michael

PS

Tomorrow, we'll explore something I didn't have time for on Sunday.