

FOUNDATION FIVE

LOVE.
THE MAIN THING!

NEW NATURE CHURCH

FOUNDATION FIVE

VISION

Every disciple knows God's love for them and lives out this love towards everyone else.

GOD IS LOVE

God is love. He is not just loving, he does not simply display love. He is the embodiment of love.

“And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.”

1 John 4:16

There are many definitions of love in the world, so it is important to go to the word of God, the bible, for our definition of love.

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.”

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Read also 1 John 4:9-10

These verses define love, real love. At the same time they define God because God IS love. As we examine the word we find a love that is selfless, giving, patient, forgiving and prefers others. This is the love we are shown by God and called to live towards each other.

It is not surprising then that the greatest command is to love God and love others.

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

Mark 12:30-31

We believe that God is love and when we take on his nature we become love. It is from this foundation of love that everything flows. Love moves us beyond fear to seek and save the lost, to pray for the sick, to lay down our lives for one another.

“By this all men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another.”

John 13:35

FOUNDATION FIVE

When we love one another, not as the world loves, but as Jesus loved, we create community with one another. Jesus did daily community with his disciples for three years. In Acts 2:42-47 we see the believers in such deep relationship with each other that they are literally selling their belongings to meet each others needs, being compelled by love.

The one distinct difference between Christianity and every other religion is that other religions are based on what we can do, whereas Christianity is based on what He has done.

God loved us so much that he gave us Jesus to give us freedom from sin.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

John 3:16

Not only this but God desires intimate relationship with us, so much so that he made a way for us to become part of his family, adopted as sons when we choose to follow Jesus . He loves us more than anyone on earth ever could and desires great things for his children.

Read Romans 8:15-17

When we live a life full of love, we are completely free from fear because love is the one thing that drives and motivates us!

“There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.”

1 John 4:18

God loved us first, and we have a choice to respond to his love.

“We love because he first loved us.”

1 John 4:19

Jesus said that when we really love him, we will want to do what is right. Just like in a marriage, we want to protect the relationship by doing what pleases the other person.

“If you love me, keep my commands.”

John 14:15



FOUNDATION FIVE

As I focus on love I am elevated to a place of grace and not law, no longer striving in my own strength but living by grace that empowers.

THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT

In the New Testament we read about two types of religious Jewish leaders, the Sadducees and the Pharisees. The Sadducees held wealthy and powerful positions and were more interested in politics than religion. They were part of a priestly Jewish sect that differed from the Pharisees in interpretation of the bible. The Pharisees were in opposition to the Sadducees and mingled more with the common man, although they still strictly observed the Jewish tradition and the law. They were self-righteous, religious teachers and leaders of the day.

“Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him (Jesus) with this question: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

Matthew 22:34-40

In the Old Testament there were 613 laws to keep. Rabbis had tassels on their robes with 613 threads that represented the laws on their garments. What Jesus was saying is that the greatest commandment is to love God and love others. If you can live like this you will have fulfilled all of the 613 laws.

The New Testament believers literally lived the transition from law to grace. It would be like if one day we woke up and the road rules we had followed all our lives had changed! The bible tells us that when we live our lives filled with Holy Spirit that we display the fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the spirit is not only perfectly agreeable with the law, but actually supersedes it. Jesus’ blood and death brings us into this grace.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”

Galatians 5:22

FOUNDATION FIVE

COMPASSION COMPELS US

Compassion - A feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering.

The Greek word for compassion is *splanxízomai*, from *splanxna*, the inward parts. Your bowels, being the seat of your affections. Where your organs sit: heart, lungs, liver, kidney, etc. The inner most part of you being moved.

Therefore compassion is a deep touch, where you are compelled to move by the very depths of your being.

In the bible we see the Father and Jesus often being compelled by love and compassion.

“And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.”

Matthew 14:14

“Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, ‘I am willing; be cleansed.’ As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed.”

Mark 1:41-42

God so loved the world, that He gave. He was so moved with compassion when he looked at humanity, that Christ (His son), was released from heaven (John 3:16).

The value of something is determined by what someone is willing to pay for it. Think about how much God values you because of what he was willing to pay!

Whoever does not love, does not know God for God is love. 1 John 4:8 Love is not an attribute of God, God is the embodiment of Love.

Jesus said “If you’ve seen me you’ve seen the father.” John 14.9.

We can understand God’s love when we look at the life of Jesus. Jesus had compassion for the sick, for thieves like tax collectors, for women caught in adultery, for the robber on the cross and for you, so much so that he gave his life for you!



FOUNDATION FIVE

LOVE, THE WEIGHTIER TRUTH

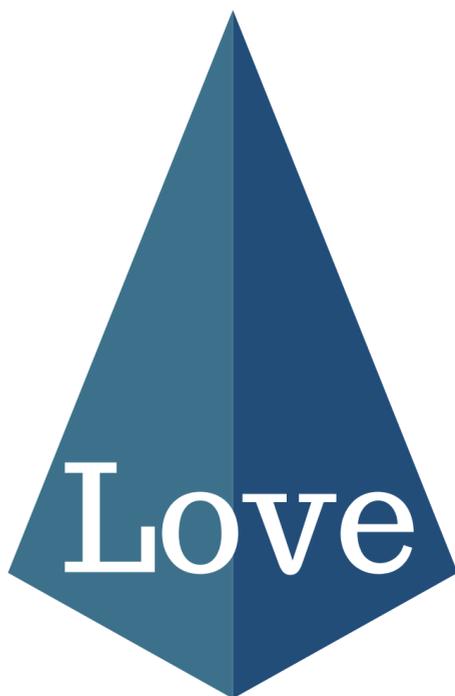
Jesus is speaking to the people & starts confronting the Pharisees (those religious leaders we read about earlier) about their heart towards giving an offering at the temple.

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.”

Matthew 23:23

What Jesus is saying is “you remember what was whispered but forget what was yelled”. There is an order in the way we receive revelation and truth.

Just like with the food pyramid showing daily portions of what you are meant to eat, some are more important for our bodies than others. In the bible it’s not a regular hierarchy as the weightier truths are on the bottom of the pyramid and the lesser truths at the top.



“And now these three remain:
faith, hope and love. But the
greatest of these is love.”

1 Corinthians 13:13

Not all truth is created equal. Not all truths have the same weight. Truth has an order.

For example, in Ephesians 5:22-29 states “wives submit to your husbands” and “husbands love your wives”. Both are truths but if we take truth out of order we could end up with a woman submitting to a man who is physically abusive. The greater truth is husbands love your wives as Christ loved the Church (by up his life as a sacrifice for our sin and to purchase or freedom).

FOUNDATION FIVE



LOVE AND FEAR CANNOT CO-EXIST

When we live a life full of love, we are completely free from fear because love is the one thing that drives and motivates us! Read 1 John 4:18 and 2 Timothy 1:7

John, “the one whom Jesus loved”, was the only disciple left at Jesus’ crucifixion, when all the others had fled in fear (John 19:26). His love for Jesus and Jesus’ love for him overcame all fear about what might happen to him for being associated with Jesus. We see this also throughout the New Testament where the disciples are filled with boldness through the Holy Spirit to go and preach the gospel to the lost, even when it means being beaten or thrown in prison. Their love for fellow mankind and desire for them to come to know Jesus outweighed all fear.

Fear is faith in the opposite realm. The kingdom of darkness is not an equal opposite to the Kingdom of God. There are two primary emotions, fear and love. Often fear will disguise itself as wisdom, but if we allow ourselves to be intimidated this time, what next? Fear will keep on taking ground. Remember God’s wisdom is not the same as the worlds. Read 1 Corinthians 3:19. God’s love for us must always be our foundation for faith as His love never fails. Read 1 Corinthians 13:8.

SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE

Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-8 and Ephesians 4:15-16.

We see in the Bible that often the Pharisees spoke truth, but without love. Jesus told the Pharisees they were like white washed tombs, beautiful on the outside, but dry bones on the inside. We need to speak God’s truth into others, but always from a place of love and not judgement.

Not speaking truth into people for fear of offence isn’t actually love either. It would be like a parent never speaking truth to their children or disciplining them because they didn’t want to hurt their feelings. A parent who really loves takes the time to teach and discipline their children out of a place of love and the desire to see their children grow and mature to be all that God made them to be.

FOUNDATION FIVE

COMMUNITY

When we become part of God's family we also inherit a new family of brothers and sisters. We are designed to live in relationship with this new community/family so that we can encourage each other and spur each other on. The bible says that greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. We are called to love one another just as Jesus loved us. How much did Jesus love us? So much so that he died in our place. This is how much we are supposed to love each other!

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another".

John 13:34

It is through the Holy Spirit that we have love. In our own strength we can not conjure up enough love. Galatians 5:22-23. Love is one of the marked differences about followers of Jesus Christ. No matter who we come across, we are called to show them the love of Christ which dwells within us. If there are people in your life that you are finding difficult to show love towards, ask holy Spirit to help you see them at God the Father sees them.

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God
Eph 3:16-19