

LEARNING TO LOVE, PART 3

“Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.” (Matthew 5:42, NIV)

I’M NOT A BORROWER. No matter how good your new driver looks, I won’t ask you if I can hit it. If you offer, I’ll take you up, but I sure don’t want to put you in the awkward position of saying “yes, you can hit it” if that makes you uncomfortable.

Surely, you know what this means. I can be pretty uncomfortable myself with letting you slash away with *my* equipment. My giving and my lending both can be pretty measured. If Ben Crane wanted to hit my driver, I’d certainly say yes! I might even let him use it in one of those crazy videos of his, where there would be no guarantee that my driver would come back “unharmd in the making of this movie.” But you? Would I let you put that swing of yours on my driver? Probably not.

And therein lies the measure of my love. Limited. Discriminatory. Calculating.

I know that’s a confession, and confessions can make us squirm. *If that guy’s going to open up about his problems, what am I supposed to do?* But sometimes there is no way to address an issue without coming face to face with ourselves. And love is one of those issues.

The way Jesus spoke of love was unquestionably countercultural. He told his followers to love in a way that no one else did. Unconditionally. Equally. Generously. That’s right—in direct contrast to the way I often love.

In Matthew 5, as he wound through the Sermon on the Mount, he painted strong pictures of what he meant: Turn your cheek to the one who disrespects you. Give to those who are grabbing what is yours. Go an extra mile with the one who is already demanding much of you. Are you kidding?

Oh, if it were anyone but Jesus who said this...

Jesus, who moved among the lepers. Jesus, who stood up to the demonic powers that harmed their hosts. Jesus, who selected the scorned and hated ones to be his daily companions. Jesus, whose love took him down a cobbled street, naked and bleeding, to the place of his death for us. I’m not sure I want to learn to love like this, but because Jesus showed the way, I know that I must.

Opening questions When are you generous, and when do you hold back? • What is the most challenging thing for you in loving the way that Jesus loved?

READING Matthew 5:38-42; Romans 12:14-21; Romans 13:8-10

Overserving
How do Jesus’ words in Matthew 5 passage inspire overserving? How could you apply this in situations you regularly encounter?

Loving commitments
Which of the several instructions in Romans 12 affirm what you have already been doing in love? Which challenge you to love in new ways?

Debts of love
What do you think Paul was driving at when he wrote of our “debt of love” in Romans 13? How is such a debt fulfilled?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2015 Links Players International. A 6-minute video accompanies today’s study at <https://youtu.be/dhfbdxsQm0>