

# The Entanglements of Love

by J.R. Miller

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*The law of love requires us to love and serve others, not just to avoid doing them harm, and it is through obedience to this law that we grow in character and love.*

**Scripture:** Luke 6:32, Romans 13:8

**Topics:** "Love", "Service to Others"

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## Description

J.R. Miller emphasizes the profound obligation of love we owe to others, highlighting that love is not merely a sentiment but a duty that binds us to serve those around us, regardless of their character or how they treat us. He stresses that our neighbors are anyone in need, and true Christian love requires us to act in service, fulfilling the law of love by considering the rights and needs of others. Miller warns against the dangers of self-interest and encourages us to embrace opportunities for service, asserting that in giving love, we actually enrich our own hearts. He reminds us that neglecting the needs of others is a serious failing, as love is demonstrated through action and service.

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## Transcript

"Owe no one anything, except the continuing debt to love each other. For he who loves his fellow man, has fulfilled the law." Romans 13:8

There are other people -- we are not the only ones. Some of the others live close to us -- and some farther away. The law of love brings all of these, far and near, into certain relationships with us. They have claims upon us. We owe them love, duties, service. We cannot cut ourselves off from any of them, saying that they are nothing to us. We cannot rid ourselves of obligations, and say we owe nothing to them. This relation to others is so binding, that there is not an individual anywhere on the round earth, who has not the right to come to us with his needs, claiming from us the ministry of love. These other people are our brothers -- and there is not one of them that we have a right to despise, neglect, hurt, or thrust from our door.

We should train ourselves to think of the other people. We ought not to leave them out of any of the plans we make. We should think of their interests, when we are thinking of our own. They have their rights, and we must consider these when asserting our own. No one may set his fence, a hair's breadth over the line on his neighbor's ground. No one may gather even a head of his neighbor's wheat, or a cluster of grapes from his neighbor's garden. No one may enter his neighbor's door unbidden. No one may do anything which will harm his neighbor. Other people have rights, which we may not invade.

Then, we owe them more than their rights -- we owe them love. To some it is not hard to pay this debt, for they are lovable and winsome. They are congenial, giving us in return, quite as much as we can give them. It is natural to love these, and to be kind and gentle to them -- but we have no liberty of selection in this broad duty of loving other people. We may choose our personal friends -- but we may not choose whom we shall love in the neighborly way. The Master said: "If you love those who love you -- what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you -- what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' do that. 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. 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 sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked." Luke 6:32-35

So we see that our neighbor is anybody who needs us. He may not be beautiful in his character, nor congenial to us; he may even be unkind, unjust, and undeserving of your favor; yet if we persist in claiming the name Christian -- then we owe him the love which seeks not its own, which bears all things, endures all things, hopes all things.

The love which we are taught to bear to other people, means service. Love without serving -- is only an empty sentiment. It is not enough just to avoid doing people harm. Jesus taught that sin is not merely in direct acts which are wrong -- but also in the neglects to do the things which we ought to do. Those on the left hand at the judgment day -- will be those who have not fed the hungry, nor clothed the naked, nor visited the sick. They may have been very respectable people in many ways -- but their failure to do the ministries of love to those around them, puts them among those condemned by Christ.

We never can get away from these other people. We may have our fine theories of living for self; of laying up in the summer of prosperity -- for the winter of adversity; of providing for old age -- but all these economic plans have to yield to the exigencies of human need. The love which seeks not its own, plays havoc with the plans of mere self-interest. We cannot say that anything we have is our own -- when our brother stands before us needing what we have to give.

Every day brings to us its opportunities for service of love. Every one we meet, needs something which we have to give. It may be only common courtesy; or gentle kindness at home; or the patient treatment of others in business; or the thoughtful showing of interest in the aged, in children, or in the poor. On all sides the lives of others touch ours -- and we cannot do just as we please, thinking only of ourselves -- unless we choose to be false to all the requirements of the law of love.

We should never forget that it is by obedience to this law of love, that we grow. In this realm, at least, it is true that what we keep -- we lose; and that only what we give out -- do we really keep. Then in giving -- we do not rob ourselves or empty our own heart. When we give out love, not less, but more love remains in our heart. Sharing with others, adds to our own store.

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