

The One Person You May Forget to Love This Valentine's Day and Beyond

It's Valentine's Day, a day to tell that special someone how much you love them. So let me just say this, please don't forget about loving and taking care of yourself so you can love the others in your life.

Did you know that you are beautiful, precious and treasured both by me and our loving heavenly Father? So then act like it. Love and take care of the treasure that is you.

Loving God

We easily forget how much God loves us and how much He wants us to take care of ourselves. If we don't take care of ourselves, we can't love others. More importantly we cannot even love God unless we love ourselves.

You might say, "Wait. Where is that last one in Scripture?" Let me show you.

Jesus answered him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets" (Matt. 22:37b-40).

These verses would have been one thought in Jesus' time. Not three. Later generations just divided them into different verses to find them quicker. So let's look at them that way. What Jesus was saying is that because the Lord our God is the only God we have, we must love Him with everything we have.

What Do You Have?

Here's a question for you: What do you have? You have your heart, which is the seat of your emotions; your soul, which is your very life itself; your mind, which is your thoughts; and your strength, which is your physical body.

How can we love God with everything if we have buried our emotions, greatly comprised our life, don't have control of our mind and our strength is totally gone? If we have not taken care of ourselves, we obviously don't love ourselves.

To love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength we have to let God have control of every area of us. However, for years I had given control of all of me to another god. I had made my stomach my god (Phil. 3:19). I couldn't love God because He was not my one and only God.

However, God will not fight us for His love. He doesn't demand that we love Him. He can tell if we do or not if we follow what He tells us to do and obey Him. He says, "If you love me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15).

Love Yourself

The other day, I heard a heart-wrenching story. A woman who was on a weight-loss journey said that she lets herself have several sweet treats in the morning and evening because she needs to be kind to herself.

Unfortunately, this is the way a lot of us think. We think that sweets are something we do for ourselves. But this is something we do that is slowly killing us, especially if we know we have a problem with losing weight.

We are setting ourselves up for being tempted to overindulge and go back to our old habits. Before we know it we will be binging and overeating sugary and starchy foods. We haven't surrendered these things to God because we want to keep that for ourselves. We aren't loving Him with *everything* that is in us.

We aren't taking care of the body God gave us. Our bodies are just on loan to us from God. We were a very expensive purchase paid for with tears of blood. Think about that. We need to be treating ourselves much better than we are. We are worth everything to God.

"Have you forgotten that your body is now the sacred temple of the Spirit of Holiness, who lives in you? You don't belong to yourself any longer, for the gift of God, the Holy Spirit, lives inside your sanctuary. You were God's expensive purchase, paid for with tears of blood, so by all means, then, use your body to bring glory to God! (1 Cor. 6:19-20, TPT).

Love Others

"And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself' (Matt. 22:39). Remember, this verse comes after the other two we discussed, but it gives us another clue as to why we need to love ourselves.

We have to love ourselves before we can love God or others. These two statements are not different. In the first, Paul just reinforces that God is the only God and we have to put Him first to love Him with everything in us. Then he tells us, "Oh and also love your neighbor like you love God with everything that is in you because you have taken care of what God has given you and you then have something to give them."

Healthy living is at the heart of both of these verses. By healthy living, I don't just mean eating right. I mean exercising, sleeping, working, recreating, embracing and dealing with your emotions, feeding your mind the good stuff and living the kind of life you know God wants you to live.

Put Your Oxygen Mask on First

My husband and I took care of mentally challenged teens and

adults for almost 20 years. We were professional caregivers. The individuals we served lived in our home. What I have learned from coaching for five years is that most people who have weight issues are caregivers either professionally or as their personality bent.

We are teachers, ministers, chaplains, nurses, doctors, professional musicians, houseparents, foster parents, adoptive parents, grandparents raising grandchildren and so much more.

Just to be a Christian means we want to love others, but we are not supposed to kill ourselves when we do that. We are so bent on giving everything to everyone else we have forgotten to put on our own oxygen masks first.

Love God. Love yourself. Love others. And don't leave any of those out. {eoa}

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