

Sin: A Relational Barrier

Scripture Reading — Matthew 22:34-40

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." — Matthew 22:37

"Love, love, love--all you need is love." That line carries some of us back to a song by the Beatles. But they didn't create the idea. People have sung about love for eons. God has been talking about it even longer.

Of course, not everyone agrees on what love means or how it works. Romance novels give love an erotic slant, friends tie it to loyalty, and faith groups add religious definitions. As a youth in the 1970s, I recall having had enough of all the love talk; it seemed like mostly chatter and little reality. Life is not easy, and neither is loving.

But love is the issue. It's the heart of how we are intended to relate to each other and to God. The Bible says that love is hard work, takes sacrifice, and demands that we live out our tough side as well as our sentimental side. Of course, the Bible assumes we want real love, deep love--not just some temporary emotional high.

When we understand that real love is the issue, then we look at sin not merely as a wrong act but as a relational barrier. Sin gets in the way of loving God. Sin changes my ability to connect with God.

When I understand that, I aim to do whatever I can in God's strength to keep those barriers out of my life. That's why God gave his commandments, which are not just about me, but about me with God. What I do with those commandments shows how serious my love is.

Prayer

Lord, at times love sounds so easy, and other times it sounds like a lot of talk. Help me see where I need to be in loving you, and give me the strength to grow in it. In Jesus, Amen.

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