

FOCUS

TAKE A CLOSER LOOK

PRETEEN



READ 1 CORINTHIANS 13.

As you read 1 Corinthians 13, circle every time you read the word "love" or "it," when it's referring to love.

How many circles did you draw? _____

Now go through and underline all the things that Paul wrote are greater than love.

Hmmm, you didn't underline anything, did you?

You could sum 1 Corinthians 13 up in two words: Love wins. Love is greater than all of the other things Paul mentions in this passage.

But Paul didn't originate this idea. Jesus Himself said two things are the most important above all the other commandments. Read Matthew 22:36-40 and underline the things Jesus said are most important.

Love God. Love others. If you can just focus on those two things, you'll LIVE for God.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 13.

Many of the ways that Paul describes love in 1 Corinthians 13 have to do with what we say or how we speak.

Love is patient.

Love is kind.

Love doesn't brag.

It doesn't dishonor other people.

It is full of joy when the truth is spoken.

Hopefully you love your family and friends. But do you speak to them in a way that shows them love? Do you say kind things? Do you talk back to your parents or do you honor them? Do you speak truthfully?

If there's someone in your life that you haven't been talking to in love, find them today and tell them you're sorry. Tell them that you do love them, and you recognize that the way you've been speaking to them hasn't shown them love. Promise them you're going to try to speak in love, and then ask God for help keeping your promise!



If you don't have someone you feel you should apologize to, then take today to focus on speaking in love to EVERYONE! Speak kindly, show honor, tell the truth, and don't brag—all of these things will communicate love to others!

The Greatest Commandment • Matthew 22:36-40; 1 Corinthians 13

Bottom Line: You can LIVE for God by loving others.

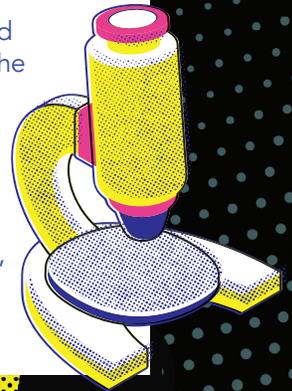
READ MATTHEW 22:36-40.

Isn't it great that Jesus comes right out and tells us in Matthew 22:36-40 what the most important thing is? The Bible has a lot of words, and while they're all worth reading, it can be overwhelming to think about living out everything you read in it. But Jesus summarized it all so perfectly. There's just two things that we have to focus on, and if we do, we'll be living for God! Love God. And love others.

Not so fast. I mean, it's true. And it IS simple. But just because it's simple, that doesn't mean it's easy, does it? Loving God is probably easier for most people. But loving others? ALL of the others? Even the ones that are annoying? Even the ones that are mean to you? Even the ones that are . . . boys? (or girls?) Yep, all of the others.

The news gets better, though. Jesus isn't asking us to do anything that He hasn't already done. And when we put our trust in Him, the Holy Spirit will give us the strength we need to love others—all the others. All we have to do is ask for help.

Draw a heart on a sheet of paper. Then write the names of the people you find it pretty easy to love. It might be your mom or dad or your best friend. Then write the initials of the people you find it harder to love sometimes. Maybe it's a younger sibling who's always bugging you and breaking your stuff. Or perhaps it's a mean kid at school who is always picking on you. Just write their initials, and then take a couple of minutes to pray. Thank God for the friends and family you find it easy to love. Ask God for help in loving the people who are harder to love. Hang the heart somewhere you'll see it and remember to pray every day for His help.



READ MATTHEW 22:39.

You may be thinking that you get it that love is the most important thing and that we should love God and love others. But what does that look like in your daily life? Go back and read Matthew 22:39, when Jesus is actually quoting an Old Testament passage: *Love your neighbor as you love yourself, (NirV)*. If you're wondering how you can show love to someone, think about what would make YOU feel loved.

That doesn't mean if your favorite food is Cheetos® and you know your sister hates them, you give her a bag of Cheetos since it's what you love. Nope, it means that you would give your sister something that she loves as much as YOU love Cheetos. It means that you take out the trash for your dad—not because you love it when he takes the trash out, but because you know how it feels when someone does something un-fun so you don't have to.

Think of at least two people you should show some love to. One person can be someone it's easier for you to love, but the other person should be someone you find it more challenging to love. Then do something for them that you know will help them feel loved by you. Make your plan here, and then follow through on it.

Take the focus off of yourself today and focus on what others want instead. When you treat others the way you want to be treated, you'll be showing them love. And you can LIVE for God by loving others.



**HOW DO YOU FOCUS
ON OTHERS?**