



Sunday Teaching Guide

Five Directions, Week 5

September 3, 2023

Bible Texts

- 1 Corinthians 12:12-17
- Matthew 22:34-39

Important Terms

- **Greatest Commandment:** Jesus was quoting verses from Leviticus (19:18) and Deuteronomy (6:4-5) in his answer.

Sermon Notes

- Our unity in Christ, as Paul says, comes from our shared mission and vision, and the mysterious work of the Holy Spirit uniting and binding us together. Mary Parker Follet says, "Unity, not uniformity, must be our aim. We attain unity only through variety. Differences must be integrated, not annihilated, not absorbed."
- One story from Matthew tells about Jesus being questioned by religious leaders. They asked him what the most important commandment was. In short, Jesus says to love God and to love others. In Jesus's answer, we see the different directions God wants to take our lives. We are commanded to love God. Loving God results in loving what God loves and joining in with others as we bring God's love to those around us.
- To learn how to love God and love others, you first have to learn how to love who God created you to be. If we are going to learn to love God and love others with our whole selves, we are going to have to learn to understand ourselves at a profound level and be self-aware enough to be able to learn to see ourselves through the eyes of the people around us. And that takes a level of trust, vulnerability, and skills that many of us have never been taught. But if we're going to learn to love God and others, we have to learn to love and understand ourselves.
- We believe that responding to God's grace and mercy includes focusing on and learning who God created us to be. We need to learn what drives our passions, fears, and behaviors. This is so powerful because as we learn about ourselves and others, we begin to see our differences and learn to celebrate the unique beauty of the body God is forming with us.

Reflection Questions

- How do you view your abilities compared to how others view your abilities?
- Why do you think that we tend to downplay our own abilities even when others may praise or complement us for them?
- How would you explain the connection between the ability to love God and others with your ability to love your self?
- Reflect on the idea that God has created you to be who you are. What type of person do you believe God created you to be?
- What is your experience with personality tests? Do you find value in them? Why or why not?
- In what ways do you have to learn to become who God created you to be?
- What are some ways that you can explore who you are? How can you use prayer, scripture, and others to help you discover more about yourself?

Prayer for the Week

- Almighty God, your Son has shown us how to love one another. May our love for you overflow into joyous service and be a healing witness to our neighbors through Jesus Christ our Lord. May we demonstrate love for our selves as we also love our neighbors. Amen.

Additional Readings

- Psalm 139
- Romans 12:3
- 2 Corinthians 12:9