

Upside Down | Grid #2

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Last week we saw that everyone has a grid – a way of seeing and living in the world. Many people put themselves at the center of that grid, doing what makes them happy and promoting their personal opinions. It's the default tendency of every human heart, and while it seems innocent enough, the Bible teaches that a “me-first” grid is headed for trouble. The ancient wisdom of Proverbs makes it clear:

| **Proverbs 16:25** *There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death.*

[Related Topic: The Futility of a Me-First Mindset]

When asked by religious leaders about what he considered the most important commandment to be ([Matthew 22:37-40](#)), Jesus offered a surprising insight. He didn't give a religious answer, listing one of the Ten Commandments as expected ([Deuteronomy 5](#)). But he also didn't give a secular answer, encouraging people just to follow their hearts. Jesus' response was to point people toward three simple principles centered on love – which is at the heart of a biblical worldview.

The First Principle: Love God

| **Matthew 22:37-38** *Jesus replied, “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.”*

To love God means to be in proper relationship with him. A person who loves God with their heart, soul, and mind lets God be God – rather than trying to take over control. To love God means to respect and submit to him. It means you're willing to come to God on his terms, rather than demanding your way and elevating your own opinions and feelings above his Word. The first four commandments that God gave Moses were all about putting God first. God is God and we are not – that is the essence of this first principle.

[Related Topic: I'm a Christian but I Want God My Way]

A “me-first” mentality, on the other hand, might give lip service to the idea of loving God – but in reality that person is committed to his or her needs above all. When troubles come or sin is revealed, a “me-first” person quickly turns on God and his people.

The Second Principle: Love Others

According to Jesus, the first principle is eternally connected to a second principle. When a person learns to be in right relationship with God, he can begin to live in proper relationship with others.

| **Matthew 22:39** *A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’*

This second principle is reflected in the last 6 commandments, which have to do with how we treat people. When we get right with God (the first 4 commandments), we can reflect the love of God to the people around us.

But the “me-first” mentality turns this principle around. It’s simply not in human nature to sacrifice your wants and desires for another person. The natural order favors “survival of the fittest” and an “every man for himself” mentality. The worldview of Jesus defines love in an other-centered way ([1 Corinthians 13](#)). Ultimately, it’s the best way to live – in mutual love and concern – because everybody benefits. It’s the way God created the world to work before sin (me-centeredness) messed things up.

| **John 15:13** *There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.*

Jesus, of course, didn’t just talk about this principle. He put it into action when he went to the cross for the sins of the world.

The Third Principle: Love Yourself

A biblical worldview doesn’t stop at love for God and people. When Jesus said ‘Love your neighbor as yourself,’ he was clearly implying that a properly functioning human being has love for themselves. People, after all, were made in God’s image ([Genesis 1:27](#)). That gives every man, woman, and child both value and dignity.

A “me-first” mentality often results from a lack of self-esteem or confidence. A “God-first” mentality allows a person to embrace his God-given value. A secular worldview diminishes the value of human life, boiling it down to random chance and an impersonal evolutionary process. A biblical worldview celebrates the God-given beauty of every person.

Not everyone has clarity or consistency when it comes to the most fundamental principles behind their worldview, but Jesus was different. Because God is love, he articulated the meaning of life in terms of that love. The worldview of Jesus applied to society gives a basis for morality (love God), along with its boundaries (love others) while affirming individual benefits and the pursuit of happiness (love yourself). It’s the only grid that can stand the test of time.

Discussion Questions:

1. *Watch the video together or invite someone to summarize the topic.*
2. *What is your initial reaction to this video? Do you disagree with any of it? What jumped out at you?*
3. *What are some ways a “me-first” approach to life creates problems?*
4. *Read [Proverbs 16:25](#). Do you think this verse is talking about literal death? What else could it refer to?.*
5. *Read [Matthew 22:36-40](#). Which of the 10 Commandments relates to “loving God”? Which ones relate to “loving others”? (See [Exodus 20](#) for the 10 Commandments.)*
6. *What do you think Jesus had in mind when he said, “You must love the Lord your God”? Give some practical examples of what this looks like in your life.*
7. *Read [1 Corinthians 13:4-7](#). How would the life of someone who loves others look different from someone with a “me-first” attitude? Give some examples.*
8. *What happens when a person loves God but doesn’t love people?*
9. *What happens when a person loves people but doesn’t love God?*
10. *To “love yourself” sounds like a “me-first” mentality. How are the two different?*
11. *Based on this lesson, how would you summarize Jesus’ “grid” for approaching life?*
12. *Write a personal action step based on this conversation.*