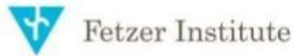


“Great, Greater, Greatest” Sermon by Dan Harrison (10/29/17)

³⁴ But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees with his reply, they met together to question him again. ³⁵ One of them, an expert in religious law, tried to trap him with this question: ³⁶ “Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?” ³⁷ Jesus replied, “You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.” ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.”
-Matthew 22:34-40



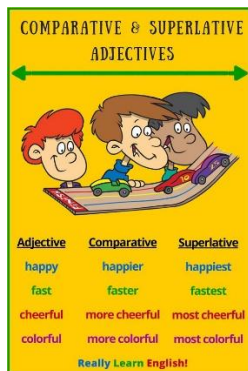
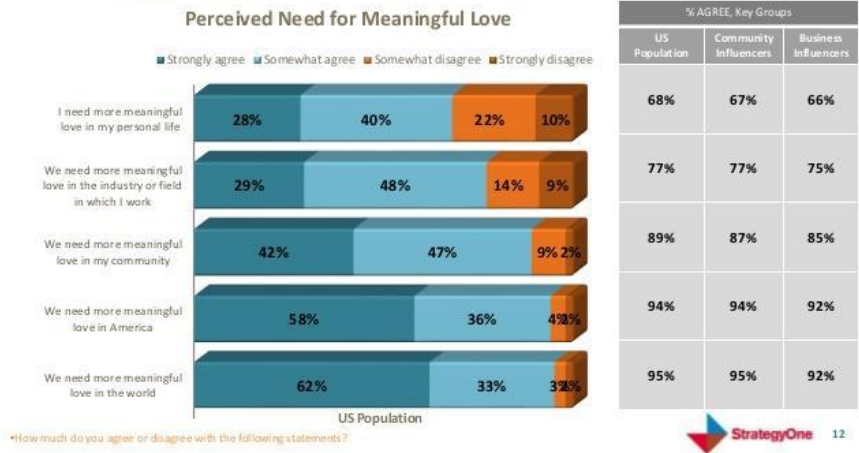
Americans indicate a strong desire for more meaningful love in their lives, particularly at the community and societal levels.

- I. Love on Social Media – *online confessions*
- II. **Premise 1:** We need more love in this world! (*Fetzer Inst. study*) →

a. Murfreesboro, TN:
Murfreesboro Loves!

- III. **Premise 2:** Greatest = Greatest

- a. Living our lives with **adjective, comparative, superlative**
- b. is no “greatest”



and then “a little less greatest”

- IV. **Premise 3:** Everyone’s your neighbor

- a. The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)
- b. The Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12)
- c. Love your friends or... love your enemies? (Matthew 5:43)
 - i. The Buddha (*Karaniya Metta Sutta*): “Just as a mother would protect her only child with her life, even so let one cultivate a boundless love towards all beings.”
 - ii. Grenfell Tower (June, 2017)

- V. **Premise 4:** Loving others is the ultimate worship (Romans 12:1)

- a. Jesus changes the conversation from God-centered to Human-centered = God-centered:
 - i. John Piper: “loving God is made visible and manifest and full in our visibly, practically, sacrificially loving others”
 - ii. F.B. Meyer: “Wherever there is true love, there must be giving, and giving to the point of sacrifice.”
 - iii. Agape Love: “the New Testament declares *agape* to be the character trait around which all others revolve. The apostle John writes, ‘God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him’ (1John 4:16).” – John MacArthur
 - 1. Agape (*agapaō*) is different than *phileo* (fraternal love) which is emotional. Agape is by choice, not dependent on emotion, unrestrained and unconditional. (mentioned 115 times in the New Testament)
- b. How can you love others if you don’t love yourself? (*thank you Larry [and Pastor David]!*)
 - i. “...if we truly loved ourselves we would never harm another, because if we harm another it is in some way diminishing who we are; it is taking away from rather than adding to our lives.” – Sharon Salzberg (*The Kindness Handbook*, 2008)
- c. God loves you, so should you love you (John 3:16) – **now do the greatest thing you can do, go and love others!**