



By Andy Stanley

**Session 4 – “The Irresistible Ethic”
(Intro to Section 3 & Chapter 14)
January 29, 2023**

Opening Prayer

Opening Statement/Question...

In the stream of Christianity I grew up in, sin avoidance was pretty much our guiding light. As I understood it, as long as I wasn't breaking a God rule, I was good with God and God was good with me. It was well with my soul. God was free to hear and, hopefully, answer my prayers. The whole thing was vertical. I was far more concerned about how my behavior affected my standing with God than I was about how my behavior affected anybody else. After all, the Bible says pleasing God is more important than pleasing people. Which led me to conclude that if I sinned against *you*, and asked God forgive *me*, everything would be good between God and me even if things weren't good between you and me. I could have a clear conscience with God while continuing to avoid you in the grocery store...

Of course, there's a bit of hypocrisy woven into all this. My primary concern was not how my sin affected God. My primary concern was me!

What do you think?

Session 4 Video...
(Notes Section)

- “Is _____ a sin?”
- How high can we get?
- When horizontal takes precedence over vertical...
- To love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind...
- To love my neighbor as myself...
- Neighbor-love as evidence of God-love...

Follow Up Questions...

1. **What did you think of this week’s video segment? What struck you as most impactful? Who *is* your neighbor, anyway?**

2. What do you make of the “vertical morality” concept Andy introduced? How do *you* complete the question, “Is _____ a sin?”

3. Have you ever wondered how your behavior sits with God? Who planted that thought in your mind?

4. How does Andy’s explanation mesh with your understanding of our tendency toward “vertical morality” being a remnant of God’s *intentionally vertical* covenant with the nation of Israel? He said, “He (God) was creating a nation from scratch. He needed their undivided attention . The preamble to the Sinai covenant underscores that ...In a nutshell, God’s message to Israel was: “*Keep your eyes on me and my commandments or else!*” Doesn’t get more vertical than that!

5. If you were to take to the streets, asking strangers how they would answer the question, “What do you think it means to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength?” What type of answers do you think you’d receive?

6. What percentage of the expected answers are rooted in old covenant thinking, old covenant relating to God? Why is this?

7. In this week's segment, Andy alludes both to "vertical morality" – how we relate directly to God – and to "horizontal morality" – how we relate to people we come across. Think back on your own spiritual journey. Which statement below is truer to your experience? Select one. Why do think so?
- I feel better about my relationship with God when I am keeping his commands and generally being a "good person".
 - I feel better about my relationship with God when I am helping others gain access to the resources they need, solve problems, and generally sort out life.

SCRIPTURE FOCUS...

1. Hebrews 6:10
2. Galatians 5:13
3. Romans 7:6
4. John 12:26
5. Romans 12:9-13

What is the common denominator you see in all these passages?

8. When you feel unmotivated to show up for others, to extend a helping hand to others, to pray for or serve others, what's most often the reason?
9. Think of a need in someone else's life that you recently helped meet. What explanations/excuses did you have to overcome? How did things turn out?

How might the experience inform your ability to keep showing up, to keep prizing kingdom-of-God living to keep loving your neighbor?

**Love for God is best demonstrated and authenticated by loving one's neighbor.
- Andy Stanley**

***"Irresistible" Session 5 – Sunday, February 5 4:00 PM
(Covers Chapters 15 to 20)***
