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A Graphical Representation of Matthean Account on Functional Relationship and The Quest for Peace and Conflict Resolution in African.

Bitrus, Nuhu
Religious Studies Department,
Faculty of Arts,
Adeleke University, Ede,
Osun State, Nigeria

Abstract

The concept of Functional Relationship occupies a significant place in Christian theology and practice, particularly as articulated in Matthean's account of Matthew 22:37-40. This passage, which emphasizes the principles of peace and conflict resolution, has influenced Christian attitudes towards family, communal, organizational, and otherwise disputes over the centuries. This paper proposes a linear graphical representation in the "theological interpretive method of analogia scriptura" (analogy of the scripture) of Matthew 22:37-40 exploring its scientific application of peace and conflict resolution in the African context. The passage, which emphasizes the principles of functional relationships in peace and conflict, is a foundational text for understanding the Christian approach to crisis-oriented questions. By examining the Matthean community's historical and cultural reception of these verses, the study reveals how interpretations have evolved and influenced Christian thought and practice regarding peace and conflict resolution. The paper delves into faith and science integration, and modern theological perspectives, highlighting the enduring impact of functional relationships. The analysis demonstrates that while the core message of peace and conflict resolution, its application has been shaped by varying cultural contexts and theological emphases over time. This comprehensive approach not only provides insights into the historical development of peace and conflict resolution but also offers practical implications for contemporary faith communities seeking to embody the principles of functional relationships in today's world.

Keywords: Functional Relationship, Graph, Peace, and Conflict Resolution.

Introduction

Conflicts despite their deteriorating perception have become the order of the day. It has become an inevitable tool for describing political, ethnic, religious, community, and otherwise existence. Conflicts have become the way of life in the 21st century. Conflicts emerge usher peace summits being panacea and often involving clergy with sacred-oriented counsels to affected victims.

The research tends to graphically view the conflict-oriented setting behind the encapsulating summary of Jesus in the Matthean account (Matthew 22:37-40) noting synopsis consideration. It is evident that "the parallels to Matt 22:34-40 are found in Mark 12:28-34 and Luke 10:25- 28. It is not necessary here to do a

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full analysis of these parallels nor to determine the exact tradition behind the Synoptic"[1]

The conflict resolution community seems to pursue conflict resolution efforts in Africa from a variety of purposes and interests and with policies that are often replete with ambiguities and contradictions. This situation may be why many African conflicts may be silenced but remain largely unresolved. Scholars assert thus:

> although African conflicts involve the activities of seasoned peacemakers using the best of personal skills and recently developed knowledge about ways of managing and resolving conflict, international efforts at conflict management have not been particularly effective or efficient in overcoming the disasters that have brought them to the continent. The critical question then is how we understand the problem of conflict resolution in Africa when the actors, mainly external to Africa, propagate the idea of peace and conflict resolution correspond mainly to their interests and view of Africa and the world[2].

The Matthew 22:37-40 Conflict Setting.

The confrontation of Jesus on the Torah signifies an attack at the epicenter of Heaven's principle of justice and mercy. It is an attack on God's existence because God's Torah is the exact expression of His character. The irrational Pharisees asking a relational Savior intending to debase Him before Jesus' followers led to an inspiring word that is "love" solution which is an undeniable tool for peace and conflict resolution.

The Pharisees calculated the number of commandments given to Moses to be 613 because there were 613 Hebrew letters in the Decalogue (the Ten Commandments). In addition, they separated these laws into 365 negative ones, i.e., "thou shalt not," and 248 positive laws, i.e., "thou shall."[3] That is one prohibition, something you were not to do, for each day of the year, and one prescription, something you should do, for the number of parts they supposed were in the human body. Beyond these laws being categorized into positive and negative categories, they were also divided into heavy or light. The heavy ones were binding and must be done. The light ones were less binding and more discretionary[4]

[1] D.L Turner., *Matthew*, Baker Academic, Grand Rapids. (Baker exegetical commentary on the New Testament, 2008), 354.
[2] Feldman, R.L. *Problems plaguing the African Union peacekeeping forces.* In Defense and Security Analysis, 24 (3), (2008), 267–279.
[3] https://www.gracebibleny.org/*the-greatest-commandments-matthew*-2234-40-mark-1228-34
[4] ibn

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The presupposition that, no moral laws exist in the Bible but a moral law and hence no one is to obey the law as an entity but corporate obedience is the essence of this paper. In Matthew, this hostility is described much sharper and more continuously than in the other Gospels. Whenever Matthew writes about the religious leaders as opponents of Jesus, the Pharisees emerge prominently as the main opponents[5]. Hence Jesus' manner and means of handling the Pharisees are pivotal in ensuring a viable approach in African conflicts if adopted. Zartman pointed out, "Although conflict situations are always specific, attempts to resolve the different conflicts ought to be about the desire to raise and address the fundamental issues that divide the parties to a conflict rather than the simple desire to reduce or eliminate violence as has been the case."[6]

Structurally, the role of the Torah, both the written version and the Jewish scribal teaching. Jesus' response to the question about the greatest commandment (22:34–40) forms an important component of the discussion of the Torah in Matthew.[7] This is a viable scientific model of accessing Hermeneutics being a science and arts in this respect plotting Torah on a sheet of relationship to ascertain linear graph slope in peace and conflict resolution.

Furthermore, this research relates important exegetical works on biblical and scientific graphs against the belief of some contemporary exegetes and theologians who conclude that the Bible does not contain scientific law sketches. Matthew used the pericope of the vertical and horizontal (dual) love command, love to God and neighbor, to summarize Jesus' teachings, as well as the laws of Moses, and to continue to demonstrate Jesus' prowess as a teacher in the presence of his Pharisaic opponents. Jesus is depicted as the undisputed victor in these conflict settings.

Matthew 22:37-40 Graphical Analogia Scriptura.

The research adopted the "theological interpretive method of analogia scriptura" (analogy of the scripture), and employed the scientific graphical method correlation of the Matthean account (Matthew 22:37-40) to establish a harmonious relationship within the confinement of the prophetic timeline. The analogy of the scriptures is a viable research tool. This method deals with "the understanding of unclear, difficult, or ambiguous passages of Scripture by comparison with clear and unambiguous passages that refer to the same teaching or event."[8]

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[5] B. Repschinski, *The controversy stories in the Gospel of Matthew*: Their redaction, form, and relevance for the relationship between the Matthean community and formative Judaism, (Vandenhoeck&Ruprecht, Göttingen, 2000), 326. http://dx.doi.org/10.13109/9783666538735

[6] William I. Zartman. *Traditional cures for modern conflicts: African conflict 'medicine'*. Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000) 99.

[7] William P. Brown, ed., *The Ten Commandments: The Reciprocity of Faithfulness* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2004).

[8] Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy*, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725, Volume Two – Holy Scripture (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003 [Second Edition]), 206-23

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An example of this would be utilizing a passage in Matthew to help understand a passage dealing with the same subject in other scriptures. This principle presupposes the divine inspiration of Scripture. This is "the theory that guides exegesis; exegesis may be understood … to be the practice of and the set of procedures for discovering the author's intended meaning."[9]

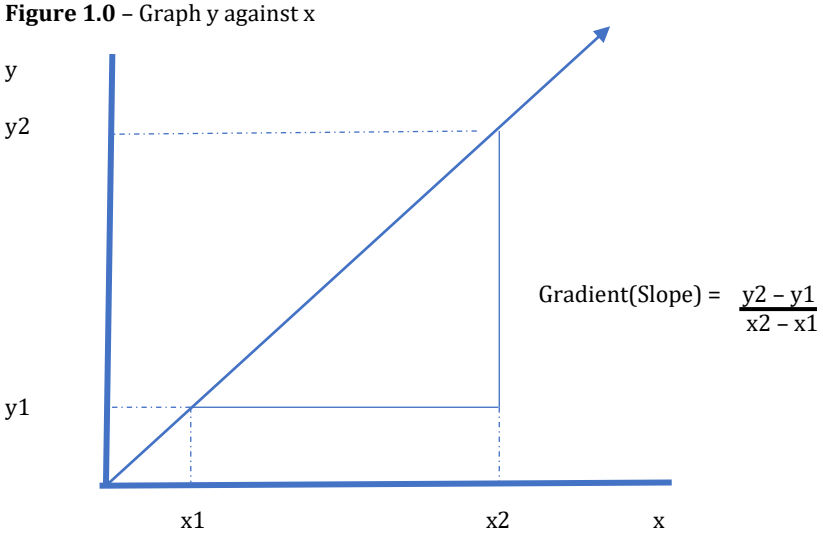
A linear graph is a straight graph or straight line that is drawn on a plane and intersects points on x and y coordinates. Linear equations are used in everyday life and a straight line is formed by graphing those relations. These linear graph applications are described through linear graphs. The linear graph forms a straight line and represents the following equation. For this equation:
y = ax where: y = Vertical axis x = Horizontal axis a = slope.
Taken the table below in to consideration as an example.

Table 1.0 – Linear Graph Illustration.

y (m)	10	20	30	40
X (s)	5	10	15	20

Source: (https://byjus.com/maths/line-graph/)

Graphically, the table below can be represented thus:
Figure 1.0 – Graph y against x



Source: (https://byjus.com/maths/line-graph/)..

Matthew 22:37-40 Old Testament Motif.

These two commandments form the 'hermeneutic program' for the understanding and application of the Torah and Prophets in the Matthean Gospel. According to Matthew, the interpretation and application of the Bible books of Israel should be guided by the two commandments of love. It forms the

[9] J. Peter Leithart, *Typological Hermeneutics: Finding Christ in the Whole Bible* (Course) (Lexham Press, Bellingham, WA, 2016), 57.

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'canon of interpretation'[10] which should steer all the study of the Torah and the Prophets. This is probably also the guiding principle Matthew proposes and expects from his community when interpreting those documents.

The quotations of Deut 6:5 and Lev 19:18 are the nucleus of each commandment. Hultgren thinks these two commandments, introduced by "Jesus said," formed a "free-floating dominical saying in the early tradition.[11] Matthew's setting for the saying follows Mark's order, which places it in Jerusalem during Jesus' last days and is preceded and followed by the same stories. Matthew opened the story by noting that the Pharisees "came together" (22:34) "to test him."[12] Unlike Mark and Luke, Matthew made this a confrontation between Jesus and the Pharisees. A lawyer (nomikos) addressed Jesus as a teacher and asked: "Which is the great commandment in the law (nomos)" (22:36)? Jesus quoted Deut 6:5: "You shall love the Lord your God," thus answering the lawyer's question.

Jesus then continued: "A second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (22:39). The concluding comment (v.40) is usually included in the quotation as part of Jesus' statement, but may have been Matthew's redaction, designed to reflect the rabbinical discussion."~ On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets" is unique to Matthew's Gospel[13]

Analytically, Matthew pictured the Pharisees coming together in a hostile manner to test Jesus with the lawyer's questions. Jesus is addressed as "Teacher/Rabbi." Although he is asked for "the great commandment," singular, he gave them two in one, claimed to be the very foundation of all the law and prophets.

Matthew 22:37-40 Graphical Representation.

Practically, the Matthean account of the moral laws can be tabularize bearing in mind abscissa and ordinate thus:

Table 1:2 – Tabularization of 10 commandments

S/N	Love to God (Vertical axis).	Love to man (Horizontal axis).
1	No other gods before me.	Honor your father and your mother
2	You shall not make an image	You shall not murder.
3	You shall not call God's name in vain	You shall not commit adultery.

[10] H.L. Carrigan, '*Soul'*, in D.N. Freedman, A.C. Myers & A.B. Beck (eds.), Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible, p. 1245, (William Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids & Cambridge, 2000).
[11] W.D. Davies & Allison D.C, *A Critical and exegetical commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew,* vol. 3 (Mt 19–28), (T&T Clark International, London & New York, 2004), 543.
[12] W. Carter, *Matthew, and the margins. A Socio-Political and Religious reading,* (Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield, 2000), 152.
[13] C.S.. Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew. A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids/Cambridge, 2009), 327.

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4	Remember the Sabbath day	You shall not steal.
5		You shall not give false
6		You shall not covet

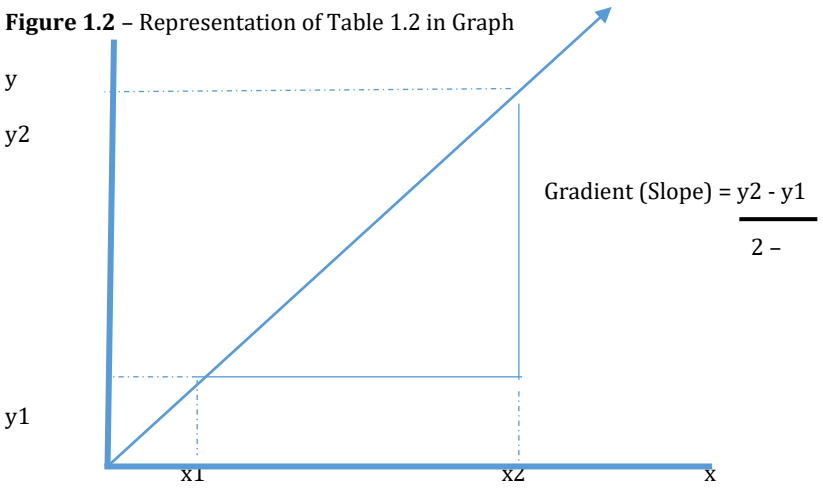
Source: (Exodus 20:1-17).

The essential unity of the Ten Commandments with the rest of the law, and their continuity with the New Testament, invites us to apply them to today's work broadly in light of the rest of the Scripture. That is, when applying the Ten Commandments, we will take into account related passages of Scripture in both the Old and New Testaments.[14]

Following the above table, it is evident that the ten commandment can be format and interpreted in to a graph of this given thus:
y = ax …… (1)

Equation one is the simplest form of a straight-line positive graph. Following this the Matthean account be presented graphically thus:

Figure 1.2 – Representation of Table 1.2 in Graph



Source: (https://byjus.com/maths/line-graph/).
Graph Data Analysis

y= Vertical axis (ordinate) = y2-y1 = Commandments 1-4 = Matthew 22:37-38
x= Horizontal axis (abscissa)= x2-x1= commandments 5-10 = Matthew 22:39
Gradients (slope) = Love (indispensable in functional relationship) = Matthew 22:40

Therefore, John 13:34-35 encapsulates love as the only exact commandments in the whole scripture enshrining everything (Matthew 22:40) which characterizes God's nature. Hence one can uphold that, One God On

[14] https://www.theologyofwork.org/*old-testament/exodus-and-work/israel-at-mount-sinai*-exodus-191-4038/instructions-about-work-exodus-201-17-and-211-239/the-ten-commandments-exodus-201-17/

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Matthew 22:37-38 Vertical Dimension

In the first part of His response, Jesus focuses on the first table of the Decalogue and describes the vertical dimension between a human and God. This response is uncontroversial and not polemical but defuses much of the challenge. While Matthew used words like ἐπηρώτησεν [he interrogated], the intensified form of questioning, and πειράζων [testing] to describe the challenge put by the expert of the law, he uses a non-polemical neutral word, ἔeu [he stated] to describe Jesus' response[15]

Though without the opening words of the Shema as in Mark, Matthew's Jesus cites the part of the Shema dealing with the commandment (Dt 6:5), ἀγαπήσεις Κύριοντύρθεόνσουέοὔου καρδίδσου καυ έα ὅαυ τα ψυχδσου καυ έα ὅαυ τα διανοίο σου [love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind]. The citation of the Shema is significant as it was a central and well-known text in Judaism.[16]

Pious Jews recited it twice daily. The Israelites had to memorize these words, instruct their children, write out the Torah, and wear fringes to remind themselves of these words. Judaism stresses the importance of loving God with one's whole being (Jub 1:15–16; 16:25; 1 QS. 1.2). By stating the importance of this commandment, Jesus asserts that he firmly stands within this tradition, and thus avoids the embarrassment of the teacher of the Law might have expected.
Interpreting the meaning of the love of God, one must consider the group orientation of the 1st-century Mediterranean world. Love formed part of positive reciprocity within the group.[17]

Balanced reciprocity implies that one should return in equal measure to the favor one receives. The love of God functions on the vertical dimension. The people of God considered themselves as receiving their whole existence and well-being from God (from top to bottom). Matthew depicts God as merciful, gracious, and loving (9:13; 12:7). Such privileged people should respond with honor, loyalty, and devotion (from bottom to top). God formed the ultimate personage of their group. Loving God implied attachment to God and behavior that would honor him within this reciprocal relationship. Love is the fulfillment of required obligations within such a relationship.
Matthew 22:39 Horizontal Dimension

In the second part of His response, Jesus focuses on the first table of the Decalogue and describes the vertical dimension between a human and God. Being loyal to God and his commandments provides a logical link to the second commandment Jesus adds. In the ancient Mediterranean world the identity of the group was dependent on the honor and status of personages (patrons) of

[15] ibn
[16] D A. Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, Word Biblical Commentary 33B (Word Books, Dallas, 1995), 254.
[17] ibn

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the group and members of the group considered themselves embedded into these personages.[18]

Love implied faithfulness and loyalty towards personages in whom one was embedded. This required obedience to prescribed duties towards the one in whom one is embedded. A religious person is embedded into God. Love of God therefore requires loyalty to his will and commandments, which entails loving others. The obligation to show love towards one's neighbors is motivated by the love one receives from God.[19]

Without waiting for a reaction from the expert of the Law, Jesus continues: ἀγαπήσεις τσε πλησίονσουὡοσεαυτόν [love your neighbor as yourself] (22:39). Philo (Decal. 109–110) similarly remarks that the two halves of the Decalogue, the love of God and the love of one's neighbor, are incomplete without one another.[20]

This second part focuses on the second table of the Decalogue, the horizontal dimension. This wording follows that of Leviticus 19:18. It is significant that Matthew's Jesus has cited Leviticus 19:18 twice before. Both of these references are unique to Matthew. Leviticus 19:18 is also the most quoted Old Testament text in Matthew's Gospel. In 5:43 Jesus broadens the meaning of one's neighbor. In 19:19 Jesus cites Leviticus 19:18 to be the fundamental summary of the moral demands of the Decalogue, namely 'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honor your father and mother'.[21]

In 22:39 this commandment is brought into close connection with loving God ὸcomα αύco [similar to it]. This commandment forms an important part of Matthew's ethics. Davies and Allison remark that Matthew thus fuses religion and ethics. This fits well with the connection of religion and group identity in the ancient Mediterranean world.[22] Performing one's duties towards one's neighbors was regarded as part of one's directed at God.

Matthew 22:40 Vertical and Horizontal Harmony.

Jesus concludes 28 his response with ἐi ταύταις ταῖα δυσιςέυσιςαυσ ὅυσι ὸ νόμοςκρέμαται καα οα προφιααι [all the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments] (22:40). This reference to the Law and the Prophets closely links this double love commandment to two other passages in which this reference is also made, namely Jesus' foundational statement on the Law (5:17)29 and his admonishment that one should do to others what one wants others to do to oneself (7:12)30 in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus confirms

[18] B.J Malina. &Neyrey, J.H. *'Portraits of Paul. An Archaeology of ancient personality*, (Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, 1996), 256.
[19] Ibn
[20] W.D. Davies, & Allison D.C., *A Critical and exegetical commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew,* vol. 3 (Mt 19–28), (T&T Clark International, London & New York, 2004),244.
[21] Ibn
[22] T.L. Donaldson, *'The Law that hangs (Mt 22:40): Rabbinic formulation and Matthean social world,* Catholic Biblical Quarterly 57 1995), 689–709.

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that these two commandments are nothing new compared to Israel's Bible. They are its fulfillment.

All the commandments of the Torah and Prophets are somehow related to the commandment to love God and to love one's neighbor. The whole law and the prophets can be exegetically deduced from the command to love God and the neighbor, they 'hang' exegetically on these.' This statement probably reflects the reaction of the Matthean community against what they experienced as the casuistry of the Pharisees.

Functional Relationship in African Peace and Conflict Resolution.

1. Africans in peace and conflict and resolution should apply knowledge and obedience to God and his commandments. In its vertical dimension love implies reverence, obedience, and commitment to God. In its horizontal dimension love implies unselfish acting towards others with their well-being as a goal.

2. The functional relationship in Matthew Jesus' teaching about loving one's neighbor differs from traditional Jewish teachings just as in the case of Africans. While the Jews as the Africans predominantly limited neighborly love to fellow Jews, proselytes, or aliens within their borders, Jesus taught love beyond such borders. Jesus instructed his disciples to go out and make disciples of all nations (28:19).[23] People of all nations were to be baptized in the name of the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit. Thus, they would be embedded into the community the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit form the basic personages. Love even had to be extended toward enemies (5:43). Loving enemies has implications for self-loving. Jesus takes self-love for granted as a model for the way one should love one's neighbor but extends the neighborhood to include people who the Jews regarded as outsiders. The specific connotation that self-love had in a group-orientated society, implied that one had to be willing to sacrifice oneself for the benefit of the group as Jesus did (20:28). One should be willing to turn the other cheek for the sake of the Kingdom of God (5:39). In a group-orientated community, one unselfishly had to seek the good of other members for the sake of the group.

3. Africans should see the Ten Commandments broken into two recognizable sections, with a bridge linking them. Commandments 1-4 (worship God, make no idols, avoid false oaths, and keep the Sabbath) orient us to God. Commandments 6-10 (do not murder, commit adultery, steal, lie in court, or covet) focus on human relationships and processes. Commandment 5 (honor parents) links the two because reverence for those who give us life relates closely to reverence for the ultimate source of life. Hence, this leads to National development.

[23] Patrick Miller D., *The Ten Commandments* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 123.

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4. Africans should know that it is for the heart in which Christ abides to be destitute of love. If we love God because He first loved us, we shall love all for whom Christ died. We cannot come in touch with divinity without coming in touch with humanity; for in Him who sits upon the throne of the universe, divinity and humanity are combined. Connected with Christ, we are connected with our fellow men by the golden links of the chain of love. Then the pity and compassion of Christ will be manifest in our lives.... It will be as natural for us to minister to the needy and suffering as it was for Christ to go about doing good.

5. Africans should embrace the fact that love is the evidence of their discipleship. When men are bound together, not by force or self-interest, but by love, they show the working of an influence above every human influence. Where this oneness exists, it is evidence that the image of God is being restored in humanity, that a new principle of life has been implanted. It shows that there is power in the divine nature to withstand the supernatural agencies of evil and that the grace of God subdues the selfishness inherent in the natural heart.

6. Africans as peaceful coexisting people within the confinement of social conflict should appreciate love as an obligation. The love of God is first, but this by no means lessens the obligation of love to man; in fact, the first command includes the second. We are to seek our neighbor's conversion because we love him, and we are to speak to him in loving terms God's loving gospel, because our heart desires his eternal good.

Conclusion

Matthew wants to define the lifestyle of his community. They were not to retreat from this world. Love of God should be demonstrated in faithful obedience to God's will and active compassion with people. The Gospel concludes with the assurance that Jesus had received all authority and thus became an important personage in the community. People of the Matthean community were expected to obey everything Jesus commanded them (28:20), which includes his teaching of love.

Love has a vertical dimension, focusing on God as the basic personage in whom all are embedded, and a horizontal dimension, focusing on fellow members of the embedded community. These two dimensions are closely related. One cannot love God without loving one's neighbor. One's love of God motivates one's love for neighbors. Loving community-directed ethical behavior is rooted in a loving relationship with God. Love of God or one's neighbor cannot be absorbed in one another. Though they are inseparable, they are different. Loving God is not the same as loving one's neighbor and love is more than human ethics.

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