

## **“To Love Thyself”**

[Love Thyself Image](#)

**Hi friends - it's soooo good to be with you...**

Today I'm going to start us off with some commandments! To spur our spiritual practice...As told in Scripture:

**'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'**  
**38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'Love thy neighbor as thyself. (matthew 22)**

These commandments outline a way to live our lives fully! They are an invitation to enter the flow of God's love.... Streaming within and around us... a WAY of being in the world that hinges on real connection with each other and ourselves. This way of being is all encompassing. It seems to love, in some ways is an all or nothing proposal. It's hard to love someone at 32% or 4% - when you love, you are 100% loving.

AND it is a bold, powerful, and risky way to live in this world. To love our neighbor demands our heart and soul and mind - it takes time and intentionality to listen to voices and stories, it takes attention to learn more about what impacts people around us - what's helped them encounter love - or what has hindered love.... and it takes all of your heart to care, to help, to move in action with our neighbors.

To love - is to have our full selves on display! To have our hearts fully exposed to all of *what* and *who may* come our way.

And I want to show you this image - it's a mural that is in Dorchester, by Artist Victor "Marka27" Quinonez, and it's entitled **"LOVE THYSELF"**

**And i want to invite you to this part of the commandments, that feels key in our days - and as part of this healthy flow of love - which is to love ourselves....**

**Show image - ON**

I want to give you a moment here to imagine what the story of love might be, in this Black woman's life. Where might she have been shown love or been withheld love? How can you imagine that she might love herself? What might it take for her to have her heart wildly exposed and on display....

[5 seconds...](#)

As I talk to many of you, I hear that you are tired. This way of being in the world - to care, to listen, to be honest with yourself and connected with your families, your friends - and your neighbors is wearying - and in pandemic it is even more wearying. Your heart is exposed, and tired.

So I want to offer you this short blessing for your heart and your weariness this morning. Continue to take in this image, we'll leave it up. Allow this woman to speak to you, and God to speak to you - as I read this:

FOR ONE WHO IS EXHAUSTED, a blessing: (By **John O'Donohue**)

<https://onbeing.org/blog/john-odonohue-for-one-who-is-exhausted-a-blessing/>

“When the rhythm of the heart becomes hectic,  
Time takes on the strain until it breaks;

Then all the unattended stress falls in  
On the mind like an endless, increasing weight.  
The light in the mind becomes dim.  
Things you could take in your stride before  
Now become laborsome events of will.

Weariness invades your spirit.  
Gravity begins falling inside you,  
Dragging down every bone.

Something within you has closed down;  
And you cannot push yourself back to life.

There is nothing else to do now but rest  
And patiently learn to receive the self  
You have forsaken in the race of days.

At first your thinking will darken  
And sadness will take over like listless weather.  
**The flow of unwept tears will frighten you.**

Now your soul has come to take you back.  
Take refuge in your senses, open up  
To all the small miracles you rushed through.  
Draw alongside the silence of stone  
Until its calmness can claim you.  
**Be excessively gentle with yourself.**

Gradually, you will return to yourself,  
Having learned a new respect for your heart  
And the joy that dwells far within slow time.  
Sit in silence now. Sit in rest. Sit in the presence of God's love with you and within you.  
AND GIVE ATTENTION TO YOUR HEART.

**IMAGE OFF**

Chat:

What's one thing that you can do to love yourself - to be excessively gentle with yourself?

**PRAYER: "Be still and know that I am God "**

(you can say it outloud with me, if you'd like - we'll say it in 5 consecutively diminishing phrases)

**Be excessively gentle with yourself and others.**

**Be excessively gentle with yourself.**

**Be excessively gentle.**

**Be excessive.**

**Be.**

God you promise that you will show your love to a thousand generations of those who love you, and keep your commandments. Help us to love ourselves well.

Amen.