

Embracing God's Love as Christ's Disciple



John 13:33-35

- Jesus was fully aware that His time on earth was drawing to an end. He had spent much of His time teaching, equipping, and preparing the disciples for both His death and resurrection.
- He had just given them a powerful lesson on humility as He washed His disciples' feet and even the one who would betray Him. (vs. 2-14)
- Jesus gives His disciples a new commandment on love (vs. 34). What made this moment so different and very significant?
 1. Jesus would soon depart and ascend to heaven. (vs. 33, Acts 1:9-11)
 2. Jesus knew that after He departed, the disciples would need the Holy Spirit's presence in their lives. (John 16:7, 13-16)
 3. Jesus knew that after He departed His disciples would also need each other. (vs. 34)
 - a. The new command meant that the disciples were to love each other as Jesus Christ loved them.
 - b. The disciples were to live out Christ's command to "love one another."
 - c. Jesus never used the word "demand" – The Scripture doesn't quote Jesus saying, "A new demand I give you, that you love one another.
 - d. Jesus "commands" by the life He lives and the love He unconditionally gives. (John 3:16, 15:12-14, Romans 5:8)
 4. Jesus's "new command" meant that His disciples were to demonstrate His love toward one another. (John 15:12-14)
 - a. The disciples were commanded to reciprocate that same "agape love" that God had shown them through Jesus Christ to each other. (John 15:12-14)
- The word "agape" means unconditional, selfless, and sacrificial love. It describes God's love for people.
 - b. The disciples were commanded by Christ to genuinely, affectionately, and passionately care about the well-being of each other.
- 5. Jesus' new command to "love one another" was not a new suggestion or option. The disciples were to fully obey His command. (vs. 34)

- a. There is a difference in “liking” someone and choosing to “love” someone.
 - To “like” someone can be characterized by feelings of admiration, high regard, and respect. But, those feelings can fade over time based upon a person’s negative actions and attitude.
 - To “love” someone cannot be characterized by feelings alone. To “love” someone may or may not have any feelings whether emotional or physical attached to it.
 - Love is a choice. It is a decision that a person chooses to give regardless of their feelings toward another person.
 - One of the Fruit of the Holy Spirit is love. The Holy Spirit can produce these Nine-character traits of Jesus Christ in our lives as disciples. (Galatians 5:22)
 - The Purpose: To teach us the significance of Christ’s love for us, our neighbor and each other.
 - The Goal: For every true disciple to embrace Christ’s love and begin to demonstrate it toward one another.
 - The Spiritual Principles: Authority, Obedience, Agreement, Unconditional love, Faith, Grace
- The Great Commandment demonstrated love for God and neighbor. (Leviticus 19:1, 18, Deuteronomy 6:4-6, Matthew 22:34-40)
 1. In the Old Testament, a commandment was given to Moses by God to deliver to His people. (Leviticus 19:1, 18, Deuteronomy 6:4-6)
 2. In the New Testament, Jesus quotes the Old Testament scripture and calls it the first and great commandment and the second is like it. (Matthew 22:34-40)
 - (vs. 34-35) – The religious leaders (Sadducees and Pharisees) saw Jesus as a threat to their power, position and livelihood among the people.
 - The Sadducees and Pharisees were known as experts in the law. They studied, taught, interpreted, and answered questions pertaining to Jewish law. They were commonly called Scribes (Mark 12:28).

- They functioned both in the Sanhedrin courts and in the Synagogues (Luke 7:30, 10:25, 11:45-46, 52, 14:3).
 - They asked Jesus a question in order to discredit Him saying, “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” (vs. 36)
 - In the Old Testament, there were at least six hundred commandments given to the people of God.
 - The problem, none of the people of God could keep from breaking all these laws.
 - They were commanded to keep all the law. If they break or disobey one of the laws, they were guilty of them all. (James 2:10)
 - (vs. 37-39) – Notice Jesus responds by quoting the Old Testament scripture, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.”
 - Jesus didn’t come to diminish or to destroy the Law or the Prophets, but to fulfill it. (Matthew 5:17)
 - Jesus knew that keeping the law could not save a person from the penalty of sin which was death both physically and spiritually. (John 8:23-24, Romans 5:17-21, 6:23, 8:1-4, Hebrews 10:1-7, Ephesians 2:8-9)
- Jesus’ response to these religious leaders was prompt and powerful. (vs. 37-39)
 1. Love God. “You shall love the Lord your God.” (vs. 37-38)
 - The word “your” denotes two things as it relates to God.
 - a. First, the believers’ relationship with God should always be a priority in their life.
 - b. Secondly, the believers should have a personal relationship with God and His Son Jesus Christ.
 - How should we love God? Jesus said with “all” your being such as the heart, the soul and the mind. (vs. 37)
 - 1) The “heart” is the seat of man’s affection and devotion. (Matthew 6:21, 24, 10:37-40, Psalms 9:1-2, 119:10-11)
 - 2) The “soul” is the seat of man’s breath and life or consciousness. (Genesis 2:7, Psalms 103:1-5, 146:1-2)

- 3) The “mind” is the seat of reasoning and understanding. (Romans 12:2, Philippians 4:8, 2 Corinthians 10:5)
2. Love your neighbor. “You shall love your neighbor” (vs. 39)
- Love is action. If love is going to be experienced, it must be demonstrated.
 - a. If a person says he truly loves God, it will be demonstrated through his acts of service, devotion, praise, worship, obedience and faithfulness towards Him. (John 14:23, 15:10, Matthew 15:7-9, Isaiah 29:13)
 - Love is not a religious ritual or church activities that we do only to feel good about ourselves.
 - Loving our neighbor is also how we prove our sincere love for God.
 - “Your neighbor” – represents all the people in the world. (Matthew 5:43-45)
 - a. Jesus commands us to love our neighbor – “No matter their race, gender, age, ethnicity, friend, enemy, co-worker, church member, etc.”
 - b. Jesus commands us to love our neighbor – “No matter their positive or negative attitude; in spite of how they treat us whether good or bad; no matter his/her status, conditions or circumstances.
 - c. Jesus’ command teaches us that the believer’s love always starts vertically with God and then flows horizontally to everyone else. (Matthew 22:37-39)
- When a person experiences the love of God for themselves, it becomes impossible not to share that same love with their neighbor. Three things:
- Jesus Christ’s love for all mankind in the world was demonstrated through His death and sacrifice. (John 3:16, 1 John 4:19, 21, Romans 5:8)
 - Jesus Christ’s love should compel us to love our neighbors everywhere in the world. (Mark 16:15, 2 Corinthians 5:14-15)