

# 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)

- Jesus Christ makes it clear that the two commands are inseparable. Both commands must be obeyed and followed by every disciple of Jesus Christ. It's not an option. (Matthew 22:37-39)
3. Love your neighbor "as yourself." (vs. 39)
- The believer must not only see themselves the way God sees them, but also love themselves the way God loves and care for them. (Genesis 1:27, Psalm 139:13-17, 1 John 3:1, Ephesians 1:4, Luke 12:7)
  - a. Because of sin it is natural for mankind to be selfish, conceited, self-centered, prideful, and arrogant. (Psalm 51:5, Proverbs 22:15)
  - b. Because of Christ's love and grace – the believer operates through a love that is supernatural. (1 Peter 5:5, Matthew 23:11-12, Philippians 2:3-4, 2 Corinthians 5:17)
  - c. Because of Christ's love and grace we can love ourselves and share that same amazing love with our neighbors. (1 Corinthians 13:1-8, 13)
4. Jesus declares, "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." (vs. 40)
- The words "law and the prophets" can be referred to as all Scripture.
  - Jesus is teaching His disciples that all Scripture hangs on our love for God and our love for our neighbor.
  - Jesus simplifies it for His disciples, that by obeying and fulfilling these two commandments – you will fulfill them all. (Romans 13:10, 1 Timothy 1:5)
- The Early church believed in and developing disciples of Jesus Christ in the churches that met in homes. (Acts 2:46, 5:42)
  - The early church carried out this practice because of the command given to the disciples by Jesus Christ to love one another. (John 13:34-35)
  - Christ's new command to "love one another" teaches us that love is more than a feeling or personal preference.
  - Christ's new command to "love one another teaches" that it must become a way of life for His disciples.

- Christ's new command to "love one another" teaches that it must never become a distraction, but an attraction for to world to see and know that they were true followers of Jesus Christ.
- Notice Jesus command through Scripture to His disciples.
  - (John 13:34) – "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."
  - (John 13:35) – "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."
  - (John 15:12) – "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."
  - (John 15:17) – "These things I command you, that you love one another."
  - The love being commanded is the love of Jesus Christ Himself. (John 13:34)
    1. This type love is both spiritual and supernatural.
    2. This type love is distinct because it comes from Jesus Christ and dwells in the hearts of His disciples.
    3. This type love is powerful because of the Holy Spirit's ability to create and operate within our hearts the same love of Jesus Christ toward one another.
- What are the results of Embracing Christ's love as a Disciple? (vs. 35)
  - The world would know that the disciples were true followers of Jesus Christ.
  - The church would continue moving forward in making disciples of Jesus Christ.
  - The disciples would continue to follow God's will for their lives and influences others to follow God's plan for their lives.
  - In the New Testament Scripture, we see the "one another" phrase used by the apostles in their letters addressed to the churches. Why was it important? (1 Corinthians 11:1-2)
  - In those letters to those churches, they describe how a disciple (true follower of Jesus Christ) should live and love each other.

- The disciples were living examples of what it means to live in Christ's love. (Philippians 1:19-21, Ephesians 4:30-32, 1 Peter 4:8-11, 1 Peter 5:5-6)
- 1. The word "fervent" means intense, passionate. It describes the ultimate love that every disciple of Jesus Christ should have for one another. (vs. 8)
  - a. Fervent love is the ultimate love. It must be put above our personal feelings and emotions.
  - b. The fervency of a disciple's love for each other and for those who have lost their way – God can use us to "restore them and not destroy them." (Galatians 6:1-2)
  - c. This allows the Holy Spirit to produce the fruit of love and meekness in and through our lives in order to win those to Jesus Christ who do all manner of evil against us. (Galatians 5:22-23)
- 2. Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. (vs. 9)
  - a. Hospitality was essential for the early church and it's essential for the church today. (1 John 3:17-18)
  - b. They were willing to serve one another with a cheerful heart and not a grudging (complaining) heart. Not expecting anything in return.
- 3. Be good stewards over every gift entrusted to us by God. (vs. 10)
  - a. As stewards of God, that gift don't belong to you. It was given to us by God to serve His purpose in the earth. (1Corinthians 12:11)
  - b. God has required us to be faithful stewards – "Not to glorify our name, but Jesus Christ name. Not to do our will, but to do God's will."
- 4. Be ready to speak the Word of God. (vs. 11)
  - a. The disciple of Jesus Christ must speak the Word of God in season and out of season (2 Timothy 4:2).
  - b. Be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you (1 Peter 3:15).