

Riverview Baptist Church
A Fresh Vision of Discipleship, Part 2
The Disciples' Relationship with Other Disciples
January 11, 2015
John 13:34-35

Memory Verse: *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."* John 13:34-35

Essence of the Lesson in a Sentence: Jesus calls those who follow Him as disciples into a new relationship of loving one another!

Review last week's lesson. Remember that our memory verse told of Jesus' command to come and follow Him. Some disciples literally left their nets, boats, and family to follow Jesus. Reflect on this past week – have you left something to follow Jesus?

This week, we will discover how our walk with Jesus requires that we enter into loving relationships with other followers of Jesus Christ.

❖ Jesus' Disciples must **learn** to **love** one another as they follow Jesus together

Read Mark 12:29-34

"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

"Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."

When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.

So, who should Jesus' disciples be able to love?

1. Disciples should be able to love **God** and their **neighbor** (other disciples and lost people). "Our neighbor" includes both those who follow Jesus and those who do not follow Him.
 - A. This is the **greatest** command! Mark 12:29-34, 1 John 3:23 - *And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.*
 - B. This shows **everyone** that we are His disciples! John 13:35 - *By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*

It is sometimes difficult to love others! Especially if we feel as though someone has hurt us, or is behaving sinfully toward us. This happens in the non-Christian world. But truthfully, it also can happen within the church among fellow disciples. God gives us instructions for "how to" love others.

2. Disciples are able to love because God has loved them **first!** 1 John 4:19, John 3:16, Romans 5:8, 1 John 4:7

Read the following verses – what does each verse teach us about God’s initiative in the love among disciples?

1 John 4:19 - *We love because he first loved us.*

John 3:16 - *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

Romans 5:8 - *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

1 John 4:7 - *Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.*

- ❖ Some insights would include, God loves first, he loves by sending Jesus to provide eternal life to all who believe, He loved us while we were still in sin, our love for others comes from God after we have known God and been born again.

Disciples are to love one another with the divine love of God. It is the description of God’s reason for our salvation. God allows us to love one another through that same saving love. It is only possible to love the hard to love person, through God’s love in us!”

- ❖ *Let God show you a hard to love fellow disciple that you need His help in loving. Ask God for the spiritual ability to love that person.*

3. Disciples love in specific ways!

Love is far more than an emotion. Love is a verb and is a decision of the will that leads to specific loving actions on behalf of others. What does love look like? The Bible tells us. Let’s examine and see.

- A. Love is a **debt** we owe one another!

Rom 13:8 NIV - *Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law.*

- B. Love means **devotion** to other people and showing them **honor!**

Rom 12:10 NIV - *Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.*

- C. Love means striving for full **restoration** and requires **forgiveness!**

2 Cor 13:11 NIV - *Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.*

Col 3:13 NIV - *Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.*

- D. Love means using our **freedom** to serve someone other than ourselves!

Gal 5:13 NIV - *You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.*

- E. Love should be **shown** in appropriate ways!

1 Pet 5:14 NIV - *Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.*

4. Disciples learn to love over time!

A. Love can **increase**!

2 Thes 1:3 NIV - *We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love all of you have for one another is increasing.*

B. Love can be **encouraged** to grow!

Heb 10:24 NIV - *And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds,*

C. Love requires **patience** as we bear up under unlovable junk/stuff, etc.!

Eph 4:2 NIV - *Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.*

D. Love comes from the heart only when the heart is **purified** through obedience to the truth!

1 Pet 1:22 NIV - *Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart.*

SO WHAT?

- ✓ Identify a fellow Christian that it is hard for you to love!
- ✓ Ask God for the spiritual strength to grow in love for that person!
- ✓ Forgive, or seek forgiveness, if that is necessary!
- ✓ Perform one unselfish, loving action for the person God has shown you!