



Love

Adapted from “Demands of Discipleship” series by Dennis Marquardt.

This demand of discipleship is so fundamental to everything about being a Christian. In fact, so important is love that Jesus actually stated that the entire law of both God and man was summed up in this one thing, love! Without love, there is no Kingdom of God, no faith, no hope, no eternal life! There is no empire or civilization that has ever endured that is built on anything else but love. Love is the most powerful thing God has given us.

Madaleine L'engle wrote:

My son-in-law, Alan Jones, told me a story of a Hassidic Rabbi, renowned for his piety. He was unexpectedly confronted one day by one of his devoted youthful disciples. In a burst of feeling, the young disciple exclaimed, "My master, I love you!" The ancient teacher looked up from his books and asked his fervent disciple, "Do you know what hurts me, my son?" The young man was puzzled. Composing himself, he stuttered, "I don't understand your question, Rabbi. I am trying to tell you how much you mean to me, and you confuse me with irrelevant questions." "My question is neither confusing nor irrelevant," rejoined the Rabbi. "For, if you do not know what hurts me, how can you truly love me?"¹

The Bible teaches us that no follower of Christ can be without godly love. This love will supersede the character of love the world has to offer. A Christian man's life is to be proven by his love for both God and man.

¹ Madeleine L'engle, *Walking on Water: Reflections on Faith and Art*, (New York: Convergent Books, 2001), 125.

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COURAGE

C1. Read and answer or discuss the following.

1 Peter 1:21–23 (ESV) Who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God.

Matthew 5:46–47 (ESV) For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?

John 13:34–35 (ESV) A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

- How does it make you feel when you think of God’s Love for you shown by Christ’s action of going to the cross?
- What are your thoughts regarding there is no faith, no hope, no eternal life without the love of God?
- When you accepted Christ as our Lord and Savior, did it change the way you love? How?
- Do you understand the supernatural love that comes from God for you and through you?

- Before we came to know Christ, how did you love? Has your view of love changed since knowing Him? If you love those who love you, are you any different than the world?

- Discuss a time when you loved not because of being loved but because God loves you?

- Are you being transformed by the love of Christ?

- Loving those who do not love you back is difficult. Discuss how and why you should love regardless of being loved back.

- Discuss ways that we can share Jesus Christ by loving others.

STRENGTH

S1: Read and answer or discuss the following.

1 Peter 1:21–23 (ESV)

Matthew 5:46–47 (ESV)

John 13:34–35 (ESV)

- Have you become comfortable in loving others in your walk with Christ?
- How do you go about changing the way you love others based upon what Christ did for you at the cross?
- If people were to judge you based on how you love others, what would they say?
- Where do you find the strength to love those who do you harm or do not love you back?
- Jesus gave you a command to love others as He has loved you. Are you honoring that command in how you love?
- Why is it so hard to love those who do not love you back?

- Mother Theresa stated, “I have found the paradox that if I love until it hurts, then there is no more hurt, but only more love.”² How have you loved to the level where it hurt?

- How can you use what you have learned about love through this lesson to strengthen your love for others?

S2: In the next thirty days, write down how you love others, even those who you find hard to love, and strive to love as Christ loves you. How can you improve showing others the love of Christ?

² “Mother Teresa Quotes”, BrainyQuote, <https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/m/mothertere142106.html> (accessed July 20, 2017).

ENDURANCE

E1: Read and answer or discuss the following.

1 Peter 1:21–23 (ESV)

Matthew 5:46–47 (ESV)

John 13:34–35 (ESV)

- As mature believers, you should be loving others as Christ loves you. How are you accomplishing this love?
- Understanding that there is no Kingdom of God, no hope, no eternal life without love, what are you doing to share the love of Christ with the world?
- Many times, you will be hurt as you love. How do you overcome hurt and keep on loving others as Christ loves us?
- You are the greatest example of Christ's love today. How do people see God's love through you?

E2: As men, it can be difficult to show love in your work place or your community outside the church walls. Discuss ways that you can find endurance to keep loving as Christ loves us in the following areas:

- The co-worker who looks for trouble
- Your wife when she seems difficult to love

- Your children when they have not followed your directions
- The person who has a different view of politics and/or religion that you do
- The unlovable by the worlds standards