

How to Christian: Love One Another
The 6 Marks of the Disciple
John 13:31-36
Week of March 28

In this 7-week series, ‘How to Christian,’ we will be looking at the six marks of the disciple that Jesus spoke clearly about. Jesus said that his followers or ‘disciples,’ would be marked by the following behaviors: They would follow Jesus; they would deny themselves; they would hold to Jesus’ teachings; they would love others, they would bear fruit in keeping with who they were in Christ, and they would make disciples themselves. All these behaviors would speak to their new identity in Christ.

As we think of these marks, it’s important to remember that these characteristics were not behaviors to be forced. We’ll find in the text that these came from relationship with Jesus. I can’t make myself ‘bear much fruit’ for Christ. It’s like telling an apple tree to produce an apple on command. The apple comes from *who the apple tree inherently IS*. Who I am is constantly changing as I grow closer and closer to Jesus.

As we are changed by our practices—prayer, walking in faith, listening to the Word, meditating, just to name a few—the Spirit changes who we are on the inside. THEN....we will begin to see that we are loving others, bearing fruit, and denying ourselves. We are not alone in this work—the Spirit is within us, doing it for us as we walk in obedience.

We have this source of power, within us, as believers. The Spirit lives inside us. And we can always ask for the change we want to see in ourselves. He is so faithful to answer that call for change. ‘Lord, I believe, help me in my unbelief!’ I can’t count the number of times I have asked God to change my heart when it wasn’t going the right direction. You can too. The only person that wants your heart change more than you—is the Spirit himself!

As you enter prayer now, take a moment to settle your mind. Put aside your concerns and what needs to get done today, or what didn’t get done today. Take a slow, deep breath. Center yourself in His Peace. He is the Alpha and Omega. The Beginning and End. You are found in Him.

Be Still.

Pause and Pray.

Jesus, I am here because I want to experience You. As I meditate on this passage, draw to mind those things that You would have me become more aware of. Center my heart and mind on Yourself. Use your Word to draw my heart to You. Amen.

Our reading today is from John 13:31-36.

When he was gone, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him. ³²If God is glorified in him,[¶] God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.

³³ "My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.

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

³⁶ Simon Peter asked him, "Lord, where are you going?"

Jesus replied, "Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later."

REFLECT.

Take a moment to think about the last time you felt loved. PAUSE.

Try to put words to the feeling. PAUSE.

Warmth. Joy. Feeling treasured, special, worthy, appreciated. Feeling at home, welcomed.

Comforted. PAUSE.

There are so many ways we can lose our awareness of knowing we are loved.

- The drive to accomplish, to be worthy of love, can take away our awareness.
- Comparison, that tells us that we aren't as loveable as another.
- Listening to the evil one, who is keen to tell us that we are failing, and that we aren't loved.

It is critical that we stay in touch with the love that God has for us. When we lose track of it, when we aren't fueled by it, we will not be able to love one another.

In today's reading, Jesus is telling his followers how they will be known-by their love for one another. And as he is giving his final directives to them, He is also getting ready to die. And they will be following Him. Not now, but eventually.

This circle of love. They had known his love, and now they would know it in a new way, through His death and resurrection. His love would empower them to love and to willingly lay down their lives for the greater truth that is the reality of Jesus, and walking with Him.

They were only men. Tax collectors. Fishermen. Businessmen. A doctor. But they were transformed by the truth of who Jesus was in their lives and they would never be the same

again. We are the same. Some of us are accountants. Grocery store workers. Businessmen. Doctors. We are also only humans. But we are also encountering a transformational Savior.

So love one another might feel like a lot. But there is really none of that love that comes from within you and I. Instead, it is produced when we soak in the love of our Father, and then go out to shine it in a world that is thirsty for love.

We won't be able to produce it. But if we take the time to soak Him in, we will be able to reflect it onto others.

PAUSE, PRAY AND ASK.

Jesus, so desperately I need You in this. I don't have patience for my fellow man, let alone love. But I rest in the knowledge that it is not something I produce, but something I receive from you. I reflect today on your immense sacrifice for me, and I rest in the knowledge that I am loved and treasured by you. Take my heart and fill it with love for others. May they know the love you have for them because they see your reflection in me.

YIELD.

We return to John 13:31-36.

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CLOSE IN PRAYER.

Loving God, fill my heart with the love that you freely give. Make love my first and last thoughts. May I love others and freely give to them. Make my spirit a spirit of joy, happiness, and love for both my friends and my enemies. Help me love as abundantly as you have loved me. Amen.