

Conversation Starters

- Are you on social media?
- What are your goals with your social media use?

Discuss

In His final words before His death on a cross, Jesus commanded and prayed for His followers to love one another. The observable love between those who called themselves His followers was everything to Jesus because it alone would arrest the world's attention and confirm that He was from the Father. It is the ultimate mark of a Christian.

This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. ([John 15:12 NLT](#))

“I’m praying not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me because of them and their witness about me. The goal is for all of them to become one heart and mind - just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, so they might be one heart and mind with us. Then the world might believe that you, in fact, sent me.” ([John 17:20-21, Msg](#))

- What’s so attractive about someone who is unconditionally kind?
- Are you taking ownership of the responsibility of a Christian to spread the gospel?
- Does your behavior (including politically) reflect who Jesus was?

Many of us, Christians included, aren’t reflecting the loving relational unity Jesus wanted for us because we don’t seem to know how to disagree with someone agreeably.

- If you disagree with someone, does anger stir up rather quickly?
- Do you sincerely try to empathize with others and understand their opinions?
- When you disagree with someone, do you take a moment to see their humanness?

Many of us have also stopped seeing poor behavior for what it truly is - sin. Jesus and James remind us that our words are just as sinful as our physical behaviors can be.

“You’re familiar with the command... ‘Do not murder.’ I’m telling you that anyone who is so much as angry with a brother or sister is guilty of murder. Carelessly call a brother ‘Idiot!’ and you just might find yourself hauled into court. Thoughtlessly yell ‘Stupid!’ at a sister and you are on the brink of hellfire. The simple moral fact is that words kill.” ([Matthew 5:21-22, Msg](#))

“A word out of your mouth may seem of no account, but it can accomplish nearly anything - or destroy it! ... By our speech we can... throw mud on a reputation.... This is scary.... The tongue runs wild, a wanton killer.... With our tongues we... curse the very men and women [God] made in his image.... My friends, this can't go on.” ([James 3:5-10, Msg](#))

- Does your social media feed and online presence reflect the loving unity Jesus commanded and prayed for?
- Do you rationalize your poor behavior to make it seem okay or normal?
- What's an action step you can take to reduce and eliminate poor behavior?

Next Steps

How we interact with each other over politics matters because when we disagree with each other, we can either maintain the ultimate mark of a Christian or betray it. We should be a shining light to the world, an example of how the Christian faith creates radical community even in the midst of honest disagreement. How can you go against the cultural grain and show someone you disagree with love this week?

Oct 26: [Let's Talk: Race and Faith](#)

Oct 28: [The Grounds Online Book Club: “A Gentle Answer”](#)

Oct 30: [The Meck Fall Trail](#)

Nov 9/12: [TeamLife Online](#)

Further Reflection

Read John [15:9-12](#); [17:20-21](#); [Matthew 5:21-22](#); [James 3:5-10](#).

Pray

God, you are love and gave us the ultimate example of love through Jesus. Forgive us for every time, whether in our thoughts or verbally or online, that we have not shown that love to others. Help us to be careful with our words and actions to reflect the love that you have shown us, so that we can allow others to see you.