

March 25, 2018
DISCIPLES - Part 2
"Disciples Love"

Many folks acknowledge Jesus, and even will offer him praise, when it's easy or they think he offers them what they want, but they have little desire or intention to trust him and follow him wherever he leads us.

Jesus: "'Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.'" (John 15:4 ESV)

A Working Definition of a Disciple: someone who follows Jesus, looks at what Jesus did and seeks to imitate him.

Jesus: "'As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.'" (John 15:9 ESV)

1 John 4:16 (ESV): "...God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him."

John doesn't say "love is God," that *our understanding* of love defines God but that "God is love," that the nature of God defines what love means.

Four Different Greek Words That Are All Translated Into English As "Love":

- *Phileo* - friendship love
- *Storge* - family love
- *Eros* - passionate, romantic love
- *Agape* - unconditional, sacrificial love

Agape Love: choosing to accept someone for who they are, and sacrificially working for their good.

1 John 4:7 (ESV): "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God."

Agape love is the clearest mark of a disciple of Jesus Christ, the natural outgrowth of that disciple abiding in Christ.

Galatians 5:22-23 (ESV): "22But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23gentleness, self-control...."

Jesus: "'If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.'" (John 15:10 ESV)

Obedience isn't how we *please* God and earn His love – it's how we act *once we understand* that He has unconditionally loved us and demonstrated this love for us through the life, death and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ.

Jesus: ““These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.” (John 15:11 ESV)

Joy doesn't mean everything goes our way, but there's a peace and contentment and knowledge of being in God's love and will that carries us through anything.

Jesus: ““¹²This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:12-13 ESV)

Jesus says this love is his “commandment” – you can't command a feeling, but you can command an action.

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

There's no more defining mark and example of the presence of Christ's Spirit living in us than us loving “one another.”

Tertullian: “See how they love one another.”

Jesus: ““¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.” (John 15:14-15 ESV)

Jesus is telling his disciples that they have this same privilege of being “friends of the king,” this intimacy with God Himself through Jesus.

Jesus: ““¹⁶You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. ¹⁷These things I command you, so that you will love one another.” (John 15:16-17 ESV)

Jesus has “chosen” you to “bear fruit,” fruit that will “abide” or last – He wants to work through you to have an eternal impact on the people around you and our world.

Just as God has pursued you, He's pursuing every person around you, and He wants you to be His witness in their lives, to "love one another" as he commanded you, so you can join him as He saves the world.

1 Corinthians 13:13 (ESV): "So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

Jesus commanded his disciples to go and make disciples and love your neighbor.

We'll never realize how profoundly God is seeking to use us, and we won't experience His joy until we obey him by stepping out and loving our neighbors.