

A Love That Costs

Today's Reading: John 13:34–35; John 15:13 | Audio: Day 4

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you... By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

— John 13:34–35 (KJV)

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

— John 15:13 (KJV)

DEVOTIONAL

Jesus did not simply repeat an old commandment—He raised the standard. It was already written that we should love our neighbor as ourselves, but Jesus said something deeper: love one another as I have loved you. Our model for love is not our mood, our culture, or our own sense of fairness. Our model is Jesus.

And how did Jesus love us? He laid Himself down. He loved when it cost Him. He loved through rejection. He loved through betrayal. He loved while being misunderstood. He loved when people did not deserve it. He loved all the way to the cross. That kind of love is not cheap. It costs pride. It costs comfort. It costs the right to retaliate. It costs the need to always be seen, praised, or proven right.

This is where love becomes our greatest testimony. Jesus said the world would know we are His disciples by our love—not first by our religious activity, not by how much we know, not by how loudly we speak, but by how we love one another.

That brings love very close to home. It is easy to talk about loving the world in general; it is harder to love the person sitting closest to us—the spouse, the child, the parent, the church member, the coworker, the person who offended us. But Jesus says this is where discipleship becomes visible. If we want to show people who Jesus is, we begin with how we treat the people in front of us.

Love that costs does not mean we never set boundaries. It does not mean we ignore harm or pretend everything is fine. It means we refuse to let bitterness become our home. We refuse to become cruel because we were hurt. We refuse to return offense for offense. Instead we ask, “Jesus, how did You love me?”—and then take one step in that direction.

COSTLY LOVE MAY LOOK LIKE

Forgiveness • Humility • A hard conversation spoken with grace • Serving someone who cannot repay you • Saying “I was wrong”

DAY 4 • JOURNAL & RESPONSE

REFLECT

1. *Who is God asking you to love in a way that costs you something?*

2. *What would change if your closest relationships became your clearest testimony of Jesus?*

RESPOND: TODAY'S PRACTICAL STEP

- Choose one costly act of love today—not for applause, not to win an argument, but because Jesus first loved you.
- Take the step before the feeling catches up.

The step I am taking, and with whom:

DAY 4 • PRAYER

PRAY

Lord Jesus, You loved us with a love that cost You everything. Forgive us for the times we have loved only when it was easy. Teach us to lay down pride, bitterness, selfishness, and fear. Help us love the people closest to us in a way that reveals You. Let our lives become a testimony, not just through our words, but through our patience, mercy, and sacrifice. In Jesus' name, amen.

My own prayer:

REMEMBER THIS

The world sees Jesus when His people love like Him.

Going Deeper: 1 Corinthians 13:4–7 • Colossians 3:12–14 • Matthew 5:43–48

This devotional is a tool for reflection, not a substitute for pastoral care or professional counseling. If what surfaces feels too heavy to carry alone, please reach out to a pastor or a trusted, qualified counselor at New Life Tabernacle Carrollwood.