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## Love One Another

### John 15:12-17

July 17, 2005

**John 15:12-17** – <sup>12</sup> This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. <sup>14</sup> You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. <sup>15</sup> No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. <sup>16</sup> You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. <sup>17</sup> These things I command you, that you love one another.”[NKJV]

#### ❖ Introduction

As a collection of people, it is frequently easy to forget ourselves as part of a collection. We rarely forget that we are individuals but it is far easier to forget the connections that exist between us as individuals, especially the connections as families, and even sometimes easier still, as a church. But Jesus was careful to instruct His disciples that we are to love one another and gave us the example of the manner in which we obey this command. The Scriptures teach us that this is the greatest of the graces and if we neglect this command we cannot deem ourselves to be His disciples. In fact, a lack of loving one another undermines all else that we might do in our lives and we deceive ourselves.

#### ❖ God Commands Us to Love

- “ Twice in our opening verse Jesus states that the instruction to love one another is a command. This is not optional. This is not some suggestion that tends to help in certain situations. He gives us no exceptions or conditions but He does give us a *pattern*. These words are spoken by the Lord Jesus Himself as a command and we do not have the luxury of deciding when we want to obey it. The details of whatever situation you are in do not give a way out from underneath the weight of the command. After we stop the wriggling, then we must seek to learn from God what this command means and how we are to obey Him.

#### 1 John 3:10-12

- “ The command to love one another is not a new idea that came with the new covenant but has existed from the *beginning*. The division of the human race began back in the garden when, after the fall, God put enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. Here John divides the race by the children of God and children of the devil and the distinguishing marks are *obedience and love*. Cain was under the command to love his brother just as we are.

#### 1 John 3:22-23

- “ The command of God for us to love one another goes hand-in-hand with our faith. Notice that John explains to us that God's commandment for us is to “...believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ *and love one another*, as He gave commandment.” One of the first evidences of the work of God in our lives at conversion is manifest love for others.

#### ❖ God Provides What He Commands

##### 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

- “ Lest we crush under the weight of the command, we must always remember that we are not doing

things *for* God. God, who is sovereign over all things, is the One who is doing things *through* us. The works that God calls us to are the ones that He has prepared beforehand for us in Christ that we should walk in them (Eph. 2:10)

- “ This concept of God providing what He commands applies to all things—we are called to love one another; we are called to rejoice; we are called to live in peace; we are commanded to be anxious for nothing—and yet, all of these are the fruit of God’s Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, etc.) and are only possible when obeyed by faith and even the faith is provided to us.
- “ What then are we to understand is our role in obeying the command to love one another? Look to Christ. Ask the Father to mature the faith in you and ask Him to teach you how to love others as His Son has loved us. How does He teach us? Via His Word, His example and His Spirit. (cf. *1 Thess. 3:12-13*)

#### ❖ **Our Love Toward Each Other Is An Imitation of Christ’s Love**

##### ***John 13:34***

- “ Jesus here again gives the command to His disciples to love one another. But He adds to the command that we are to consider how He has loved us and thus accordingly love one another. Jesus tells us to look to Him in how He has shown love for us and then imitate that in our love toward each other. As we consider this love of Jesus toward His disciples it brings to mind numerous instances of how He provided food for them, encouraged them, admonished them, understood them and showed kindness to them despite their weaknesses.

##### ***1 John 4:9-11***

- “ Notice here again, that we are to consider the love of the Father in how He first loved us and sent His Son into the world. He did this not because of our love for Him but because of *the Father’s* love for us.

#### ❖ **The World Sees God As We Love Each Other**

##### ***John 13:34-35; 1 John 4:7-8, 12***

- “ It is the biblical love we have for another that is the primary mark of genuine Christianity. By this love for one another, “...all will know that you are My disciples...” the world sees something extraordinary. Christians, as a class of people, frankly like to be or look distinct—but they often choose other things by which they wish to be distinguished. Either we have bumper stickers or fish emblems on our cars, or we boycott certain things or we march in rallies for various causes. But note here, *the central mark* by which the world sees Jesus Christ living in us is our love for one another.

#### ❖ **Love For One Another Is Fervent, Emotional and Deferential**

##### ***Romans 12:9-13***

- “ Although love is not *defined* emotionally, it is a completely true thing to say that our emotions must be involved in love. Instead love is defined by obedience to God’s commands and He commands us to imitate Him in how we love each other. His command to love not only comes to our minds but also to our emotions and our emotions are to be brought and taught under the instruction of the Holy Spirit and the Word. Our emotions cannot lead us in love but they follow the Spirit.
- “ The phrase “brotherly love” is the Greek word *philadelphia*. The phrase “kindly affections” is *philostorgos* which CS Lewis writes about in his work called “The Four Loves”. This “*storge*” love is the broadest of all of the four words for love but at its heart is the idea of family love. But specifically it comes from the love of *familiarity and comfortableness*. This paints an amazing picture of what our love toward one another should look like—the kind of contentment and ease that exists when around good friends and fellowship is sweet.
- “ This kind of love grows with familiarity. But one thing that stifles this love is the fear of vulnerability. As we get closer to each other, there is greater chance of our offending one another and, as such, some will attempt to protect themselves by not allowing familiarity. But God does not command us to defend our vulnerabilities, He commands us to love.
- “ Going further, this love is also deferential. It gives away its own rights so that others might be

blessed. It forgets about self and is lost in thoughts about caring for others.

### **Galatians 5:13**

- “ In Christ, we have extraordinary liberty and as slaves to Him, we find His burden is light. But notice here how Paul teaches us that the way we use our liberty is a means of serving one another is love. Our liberties in Christ should not be used to trample the sensitivities of some other brother or sister. Instead, we can show love to one another by foregoing our grasp on our liberties. Yes, your position in Christ gives you joyous freedoms and you are able to fully appreciate life but you are also free in Christ to give up your freedoms in love for one another.

### **Ephesians 4:1-3**

- “ Again we have a connection between the heart of Christianity and the love of one another. But specifically here it says that we are to be longsuffering and “...bearing with one another in love.” This means that our love is patient and that we are able to “put up” with each other. As we live with each other in close social proximity (cultivating the storge love) it will increase the chances that we will offend each other. But here Paul instructs us to be slow in being offended. This kind of love protects our emotions by not allowing them to be offended. Naturally, we should be quick to seek forgiveness when offenses occur and we should be as quick to extend mercy and grace. Yes, there are some sins between us which may be of such gravity that they cannot just be covered and dismissed. But when God cultivates love between us, this should not be a frequent occurrence. How do we tell the difference between a “coverable” sin and one that needs to be directly addressed? Bible study and wisdom. Some situations are easier than others to determine.

### **1 Peter 1:22; 4:8**

- “ Peter teaches that our “fervent” love is a fruit of a purified soul and is connected to our obeying the truth through the Spirit. This fervent love does not tire easily. It does not give up. It does not presume the worst but strives to honor and defer to others.
- “ Lastly, we see that this fervent love is extremely powerful—it covers a multitude of sins. As we dwell with each other, it should be a common occurrence that sins are being covered and never mentioned because they are forgotten.

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