

## Be a Disciple:

### The Mark of a Disciple: Love

#### 1. God Loves you Unconditionally.

There are three Greek words translated into the one English word "love"; eros, which suggests sensual desire it does not appear in the New Testament; phileo, which is used for friendship or love of one's friends or relatives - it conveys a sense of loving someone because he is worthy of love; and agape, which is God's love: the purest, deepest kind of love. Agape is God's supernatural, unconditional love for you revealed supremely through our Lord's death on the cross for our sins. *Look up the following verses Romans 5:8 / 1 John 3:16 / Romans 8:31-39 / Lamentations 3:22-25 Which of these do you like the most? What about when you sin does God still love us? Read Heb 12:4-11 (Relationship vs Fellowship Illustration) According to 1 John 1:9 what are we supposed to do to restore fellowship with God when we sin?*

#### 2. You are Commanded to Love Others - God, your neighbors and your enemies.

Read Matt 22:36-39 why does God make this the most important command?

**Love God.** How can we love God more completely? What are some ways to grow in our love for God?

**Love Your Neighbor.** *When is it hardest for you to love your neighbor as yourself? Look up Romans 13:8-10 why does love sum up all the commands? In 1 John 3:11-12 says love is a proof of our salvation why is that?*

**Love Your Enemies.** *Look up Matt 5:43-48 why do you think Jesus wants us to love our enemies?*

#### 3. You Cannot Love in Your Own Strength

You cannot demonstrate agape, God's unconditional love for others, through your own efforts. . How often have you tried to manufacture some kind of positive, loving emotion toward another person for whom you felt nothing? It is impossible, isn't it? In your own strength it is not possible to love with God's kind of love. *Look up Galatians 3:2-4 what does this verse teach us about ability to live this life in our own strength?*

#### 4. You Can Love with God's Love

God's love was supremely expressed in the life of Jesus Christ. How does this love enter your life? It becomes yours the moment you receive Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit comes to indwell your life. The Scripture says, "We feel this warm love everywhere within us because God has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love." (Rom 5:4-6) God is Spirit and the "fruit of the Spirit is love..." (Gal 5:22) When you are controlled by the Spirit, you can love with God's love. But how do you make love a practical reality in your life? How do you love? By self imposed discipline? No. The only way to love is explained by the final point.

#### 5. You Can Love by Faith

Hebrews 11:6 says, "without faith it is impossible to please Him." Obviously there will be no demonstration of God's love where there is no faith. If you have difficulty in loving others, remember that Jesus has commanded, "Love each other as much as I love you." It is God's will for you to love. **He would not command you to do something that He will not enable you to do.** In 1 John 5:14,15, God promises that if you ask anything according to His will, He hears and answers you. Relating this promise to God's command, you can claim by faith the privilege of loving with His love.

God has an unending supply of His divine, supernatural, agape love for you. It is for you to claim, to grow on, to spread to others, and thus to reach hundreds and thousands with the love that counts, the love that will bring them to Jesus Christ. **In order to experience and share this love, you must claim it by faith;** that is, trust His promise that He will give you all that you need to do His will on the basis of His command and promise. **Then you need to step out and obey by loving others with your actions no matter how you feel. Love is not a feeling. It is a choice.** I believe that as you accept God's power to love and step out and love by faith no matter how you feel, God will very often bless you with the feelings of love as well.

*Who do you need to love by faith? Is there any action step that God is putting on your heart in relation to loving this person? Why not make this prayer your own: "Lord, You would never have commanded me to love had You not intended to enable me to do so. Therefore, right now, on the authority of Your commands for me to love and on the authority of Your promise to answer if I asked anything according to Your will, I personally claim Your love - the 1 Corinthians 13 kind of love - for \_\_\_\_\_, for all people, and for myself. Amen."*

**Discipleship Challenge:** Do one loving thing for someone this week and be ready to share what you did.

Try and have a SOAP quiet time everyday this week. Memorize: Matt 22:37-39