

THEY WILL KNOW THAT YOU ARE MY DISCIPLES



“By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

John 13

It's the rock-bottom command for all who follow Jesus.

A command, not an option.

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”

“This I command you: to love one another”

John 14

Yet, it is a rare thing to see followers of Jesus manifesting love for one another
.... across all the barriers we have created.

“Are those people really believers?”



We sniff out their doctrines.

We check their politics.

We measure their commitment.

We evaluate their grasp of scripture.

We roll our eyes at the way they worship.

The fire of God is falling on the Body of Christ worldwide,
calling us to repent and obey the Master's basic command.

This fire is dividing those who *repent* from those whose love is *missing, limited, or false*.

“That you love one another as I have loved you.”

“Lord, how can I love that Republican hypocrite?”

“By getting over yourself and seeing that person as I do.”

“Lord, how can I love that Democrat do-gooder?”

“By getting over yourself and seeing that person as I do.”

“Lord I'm tired of hearing her say she is saved and can never be lost.”

“So you can't love her?”

“Lord, that guy says he believes every word in the Bible. As far as I can see his life doesn't show it.”

“So love him anyway.”

“Sister Brown says she's 'Spirit filled'. So how come she's the town gossip?”

“I'll do the judging. You do the loving”

And how do we love our sisters and brothers with the Lord's kind of love?



We treat them with high honor.

It is impossible to love someone with Christ's love unless we treat them with high honor.

His love in us belittles no one.

His love in us sees the “thou” in that person as holy.

We care about them.

God's love moves us to care about every sister, every brother who claims Jesus as Lord.

We repent of the jaundiced eye and the cold heart and allow the Lord's love to humble us.

....Until we care enough to wash their feet and serve them.

We pray for them constantly.

Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects.

1 John 5

We lift them up before the throne by name day after day, these sisters and brothers with whom we have only one thing in common: **Jesus.**

We may not see eye to eye on doctrine.

We may be on opposite sides of a thousand issues.

We simply trust that they are trying to follow the same Jesus we are.

Maybe they're misguided.

Maybe we are misguided.

What better thing to do than to lift them before the Father every day and plead his blessing on them?

We listen to them with the ear of the Lord.

When Jesus encountered the woman at the well, or blind Bar-Timaeus, or even Simon the Pharisee, he listened with grace and responded with quiet truth.

His ear was as open as the ear of his Father.

And our ear needs to be as open as the ear of our Master.

Back off, be still, and listen.

We speak to them and with the grace we've been given.

Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer every one.

Colossians 4

We repent of our attitudes and opinions as we speak to a sister or a brother in the Lord.

We speak with integrity and humility.

Our desire is to encourage and bless.

If we think a rebuke is needed, may the Lord enable us to do it with fear and trembling.

We forgive and ask for forgiveness.



The Body of Christ is a School of Forgiveness.

In his wisdom the Lord puts us together with people with whom we have nothing in common but Jesus.

Irritations arise.

Conflicts emerge.

Now Jesus is giving us a little exercise in the practice of patience, forbearance and forgiveness.

At the same time the Master is using our strange ways to try the patience of sisters and brothers.

The more we practice forgiveness, the more our love for one another increases.

We walk through fire with them.

Held together by the Master's love and by our love for each other,
.... we approach the coming days with faith.

We will walk together through smoke and flames and the chaos of a world in free-fall.

Suddenly our differences will evaporate and the Master's love in us will become.....

our strength, our unity, our power, our authority over evil.

We let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts.

***And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts,
to which you were called in the one Body.
And be thankful.***

Colossians 3

No matter how violent the storm, we are together in the boat with Jesus. This time he does not raise his hand and rebuke the wind and the waves.

This time he simply says to us,

“Peace be with you.”

And we are not afraid.

His love in us,

Our love for him,

Our love for each other,

is all we need.



Prayer- Lord we fall before you in our great failure to love one another as you love us. We repent of this, we grieve that the love we should have is stopped up by our opinions and attitudes and divisive thoughts. We know this separates us from you. Without this love pouring out of us, we are dead inside and outside. We seek to come to life again. Lord, we seek true love for our brothers and sisters... even though we struggle with feeling it, Lord, help us to act on it until it is real. Help us to treat our brothers and sisters with dignity. Help us to truly care for them. Help us to be there for them. Help us to pray for them constantly. Help us to listen to them with true attention and concern. Help us to speak lovingly, kindly and graciously to them. And Lord help us to pour blessings on them. Light our hearts with the knowledge that we all cling to you together. Nothing, no difference between us changes that. May we draw closer to each other, leading us to find your love and your peace in the love we have for one another and opening the eyes of the world to the power of your love.MM

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