

LOVE REDISCOVERED: BE KNOWN BY LOVE

FEBRUARY 11, 2024

WORSHIP

By Your Love, Your Love Awakens, The Same Jesus, No Greater Love

WELCOME

What is your favorite local or international brand in the food industry? What is this brand known for that made it your favorite?

WORD

JOHN 13:34-35

³⁴ “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.
³⁵ By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

What enters our mind when we think of CHRISTIANS? Based on “**Jesus in America**”, an Ipsos Study (2021), respondents with no religious affiliation describe Christians this way: **hypocritical, judgmental, and self-righteous**. If unbelievers look at Christians this way, we need to humble ourselves and ask: “What am I really known for?”. What people think of us matters; after all, our aim is to share the gospel and win the world for Jesus! But we are not defined by our past or what people think of us. We all have a past – but Jesus can see our future too! God wants us to be known by our love for one another. What is love to you? We find it hard to define love precisely. Let’s rediscover what love is based on teachings in the Bible!

Jesus introduced “a new commandment” in **John 13:34-35**. Though not entirely new (**Leviticus 19:18**), what’s new is to love “**just as I have loved you** (His disciples)”. Jesus said that love is so important because it is the most powerful way of telling people how to come to Him – it is the final apologetic (Francis Schaeffer).

What is this “way” with which we were loved by Jesus?

COMMITMENT	FEELINGS
Unconditional	Conditional
Endures	Temporary
Submit to one’s will	Submit to one’s emotion
God-honoring	Self-centered

LOVE IS AN UNCONDITIONAL COMMITMENT...

Matthew 22:36-40 shows us Jesus’ response when asked about the greatest commandment; He said it is to love God and love others. Do you know the difference of commitment and feelings? **John 13:1** sets up the context and described Jesus as loving His own and loving them to the end. That is His commitment! Moms would know best what love out of commitment is like – all those late nights of feeding, lacking sleep, is worth it because of a mother’s love for her child.

The difference of commitment and feelings is clear:

Jesus loved His disciples with an unconditional commitment. **Deuteronomy 7:7-8** describes the amazing love that God had for His people. It’s not just an unconditional commitment, but also a commitment made –

TOWARDS IMPERFECT PEOPLE...

True love is based not on the recipient, but the giver. Jesus loved His disciples who were imperfect people. Nobody’s perfect – even ourselves. What is it like to live with a person like yourself? Some of the hardest people to love are family members. Why? Because the more time spent with them, the more imperfections we see in them (and they in us, too!). The “porcupine dilemma” tells us that closer relationships tend to have the most potential for hurting each other. How do we go around this challenge? The mission is not just to love imperfect people, but that we should love them for a purpose, and that is...

TO SEEK THEIR HIGHEST GOOD...

Philippians 2:3-5 is a meaty reminder for us to cease being self-centered, and to seek the good or even the best for the other person.

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This is not sentimentalism. We know of situations when what is seemingly an act of love can be destructive. Love should not be just to seek to please others – sometimes it may mean you say NO, or you discipline. Today we think “whatever makes you happy” is love. True love involves discipline; God is more concerned about our eternal being than our temporal being. Love is tolerance, being able to accept others, but we cannot impose values, or embracing values that we know are wrong. This means, for parents, you may choose not to give your children cellphones at a very young age. For singles who are in a relationship, true love is not engaging in physical intimacy outside of marriage. If you truly love each other, you must take your relationship to a committed, God-guided marriage.

WHICH MAY REQUIRE SACRIFICE...

Luke 6:27-28 tells the “heavy” part of being commanded to love even our enemies, or people who offend and hurt us. Do we really do good to those who hate us? Do we bless those who curse us? Do we pray for people who don’t treat us properly? Love is costly and will require us to do what is difficult or impossible. The principle is **motion before emotion** – we obey God first; the feelings will follow. Countless couples who were on the verge of separation had their marriages saved because they chose to love God, follow Him and His instructions. What motivation should we have for this sacrifice? The love of God.

Jesus was invited to Simon’s (a Pharisee) house to dine with him (**Luke 7:36-50**). When there is a Rabbi in the house, anyone can come in to listen to the teachings of the Rabbi. A woman who had a bad reputation was there, started crying and washing the feet of Jesus with her tears and anointed His feet with expensive oil. When the Simon saw this, he judged the woman and Jesus in his own thoughts and heart. But Jesus addressed Simon directly and gave him a parable – one man who owed 500 denarii and one who owed 50 were both unable to repay the moneylender and he GRACIOUSLY FORGAVE THEM BOTH! The question of Jesus was “**which of them will love him more?**”, and Simon answered that it would be the one who was forgiven more. **Luke 7:44-46** is where Jesus used the woman’s action as a lesson for Simon the Pharisee – He contrasted the Pharisee and the woman in this way:

SIMON THE PHARISEE	WOMAN
Religious	Sinner
Self righteous	Aware of her sinfulness
Blind to his own sins	Repentant, grieving over sin
Judgmental	Humble and Grateful
Intellect	Heart
No devotion for Jesus	Love for Jesus

In **Luke 7:47-50**, Jesus declared forgiveness for the woman, and acknowledged that she loved much, but it was her faith that saved her. **Ephesians 2:8-9** reminds us that it is all by grace through faith. We should be conscious of our own sinfulness and acknowledge that we are recipients of a gracious kind of forgiveness, out of the LOVE freely given to us. We ought to love others as we have been loved. Love like Jesus!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. Self-Check.

Why do you think love is “the final apologetics” for the Christian faith?

2. Setting It Right.

How would you accomplish loving imperfect people?

3. Living It Out.

In what specific way can you make someone feel and know Christ’s love this week?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for family, friends and loved ones that you know are struggling with loving people in their lives for various reasons. Demonstrate Jesus’ kind of love to other believers, and extend that love to unbelievers, too. Share the gospel to them as an important way of expressing God’s love for them this week!

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives.

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of public servants; repentance and salvation for government leaders and citizens for a Christ-centered Philippines.
- God’s help and comfort, salvation for Israel, wisdom for their leaders in government, military and their soldiers as they defend themselves against terrorists’ attacks. PRAISE GOD for the release of hostages so far! Continue to pray for the release of the remaining ones.
- War in Ukraine to end, loss of lives prevented; conflict in African, East Asian and Middle East countries to stop. Pray for Christians from different countries who have been persecuted, attacked and killed in recent weeks.

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples.
- Elders, pastors, dleaders, and families (holy, humble, harmonious, happy, heart-working).
- Ministries and churches expansion worldwide.

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God.
- Righteous living.
- Salvation of family and friends.

MEMORY VERSE

LUKE 7:47

47 “For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.”