

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Christian Living Study Guide

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORLDVIEW

LESSON 13: LOVING OTHERS

INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Disciple Essentials module entitled Christian Life and Worldview. This series of lessons examines the choices and practices that are essential for Christian living. To live as the Word of God teaches us means we understand that the choices we make each day affect our faith. It also means learning to pray, practising the commands of God and learning to serve others. These are important lessons for understanding the practice of Christianity and how to live out our faith within our Church community.

The Student's Guide is intended for an individual to look deeper into a specific lesson on their own. The lessons can be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials, such as the video and audio productions found on www.discipleshipessentials.org.

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CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORLDVIEW

LESSON 13: LOVING OTHERS

WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

Love is central to Christianity - the purpose of this lesson is to communicate how we can begin to love others as God loves us, and to understand the importance of love in our daily life.

JUST SO YOU KNOW...

Everyone's greatest need is to love and be loved. God created us this way, and it is through love that He relates to His children. When we become Christians we should consider each day how we can love those around us. We may still behave selfishly, but through God's power we can choose to love, and to love in supernatural and unexpected ways!

GETTING STARTED

1. What is the most loving thing someone has done for you? How did that action make you feel loved?

2. How do you express your love for God? How do you express your love for others?



STUDY

❖ **GOD’S LOVE FOR US:** The Bible clearly teaches that God loves His children. God loves us unconditionally, and His love does not change based on our actions or what we have accomplished. God does more than just talk about love. It is demonstrated by His very nature. This love is expressed to us in many ways.

➤ **His love is demonstrated through the cross**

- o God loved us so much that he sent His Son to make the costly sacrifice of dying for us. We were not worthy of God’s mercy and grace. (Romans 5:8)

➤ **His love is demonstrated through His patience**

- o God pursues us and is patient with our failings. (Luke 15:11-24; 2 Peter 3:9)

➤ **His love is demonstrated through discipline**

- o He treats us as His children and because he loves us, will discipline us in order that we might mature in our faith and know Him more fully. (Hebrews 12:10–11)

❖ **OUR LOVE FOR GOD:** God’s love for us and His perfect nature should stir us to love Him. The Bible is clear about our love for God:

- **It is a commandment that we love Him.** We are called to love God whole-heartedly with all we are. This isn’t a command because God needs us to love Him, and wants to increase His power – because all power already belongs to Him! It is His love for us that directs us to love Him. He is perfect. Therefore, we will never be disappointed in Him. What do the following verses tell us God commands?

Deuteronomy 6:5	
Matthew 22:37-38	

- **We will obey Him if we love Him.** Part of loving God is trusting and obeying Him. What do these verses tell us about this obedience?

1 John 5:3	
John 14:21	



Romans 12:1	
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- **Our Love for God Motivates our Love for Others.** Our response to the love and character of God is to obey God in loving others. This is often not easy for us, as we struggle against our sinful nature which is selfish rather than loving. But God’s great love for us can motivate us to overcome. What do these verses tell us about loving others?

1 John 4:7-8, 11,21	
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❖ **OUR LOVE FOR OTHERS:** God’s love for us helps us to love others. It is important to note that the Bible talks a great deal about love – it is one of the primary concepts in the New Testament. It isn’t a worldly, selfish love – it is nothing like worldly culture would portray love.

- **We are to love ourselves:** We cannot love others well without loving ourselves first. Matthew 22:39 says, “You shall love your neighbor **as yourself.**” We must learn to see ourselves as God sees us. We are precious and loved by Him even though we fail and are weak. We must see that we are valuable to God. Every person, as a part of His creation, has value. Is loving yourself difficult for you? What can you do to better love yourself?

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- **We are commanded to love others:** God is clear that we must love others. It is natural for a person to love his or her family, or to love the people who act in loving ways towards them. God asks us to love our neighbour which means those who are around us, the people we come in contact with each day. What do these verses tell us about this command?

Matthew 22:36-40	
Romans 13:8-10	
Romans 15:2	



- **We are to love our enemies:** The love God asks of us does not end with loving those in our vicinity or with whom we share something in common. We are asked to love our enemies. Loving our enemies is difficult, and it will take time and God’s help to accomplish. It is one of the most powerful witnesses to the power of God when a Christian can forgive and actively love their enemies. Jesus Himself provides an example of this type of love.

Matthew 5:43-48	
Luke 6:31	
Luke 6:29	

❖ **WE LOVE IN HIS STRENGTH:** The type of love God requires is too difficult to do in our own strength and power. We need the help of the Holy Spirit, and rely on God to give us love when we do not feel it for other people.

- o **Love is a Choice:** We feel love naturally for some people. However, God calls us to love even when it is not easy and doesn’t feel natural. This is a choice we face every day. (1 Corinthians 13:4-7, 1 Peter 4:8-9)
 - o **We must love with God’s love:** We love by faith. In order to love with the love of God, we must be filled with the Holy Spirit and have God’s love within us. We can’t create this kind of love for everyone without God’s help. We must learn to see people as God sees them, and love them as He does. (Ephesians 5:18, Galatians 5:22-23)
 - o **What love looks like:** The supernatural love of God is different from the selfish love we are capable of on our own. God calls us to love others as He loves us. His love is sacrificial, it is costly, it is supernatural, it is life-changing! (John 13:34 1 Corinthians 13, Philippians 2:3-4)
- What are some practical ways you can think of to love others in your community? Consider ways to fulfill practical needs, surprise people with compassion and help – especially those who are overlooked by others in society.



IN SUMMARY

- ❖ God loves us – and his love is demonstrated through His gifts, sacrifice, his patience and discipline.
- ❖ Our love for God is a commandment
- ❖ Our love for God motivates our Love for Others
- ❖ Our love for others requires that we love ourselves, that we follow God’s commandment to love, and that we love and pray for our enemies
- ❖ We must love in the strength and power of God
- ❖ Loving others is something that is sacrificial, God honouring

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What are some practical ways you or your church could love members in your community? Who is especially in need of experiencing love?

2. Consider making a private list of people you are struggling to love. Pray for each person, and ask God to help you demonstrate the kind of love described in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 towards them. It may take much time and prayer to be able to do so.