



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC Love One Another

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THEME Family Relationships

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MESSAGE SUMMARY

UNDERSTANDING THE CALL TO LOVE

Words can have different meanings to different people. Before we even consider the reasons why we should 'Love One Another', we must, then, first understand for ourselves, what it means to love. The world today interprets 'love' as a feeling, an emotion to be felt or experienced.

But Christians know better. As we read through 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, Paul's description of what love *is*, reads more like a list of attitudes and actions, postures that we can choose to conduct ourselves in, rather than emotions that we are helplessly subject to.

Love is: Patient, Kind, Rejoicing in the truth, Protective, Trusting, Hopeful, Persevering.
Love does not: Envy, Boast, Become Proud, Dishonour others, Seek its own, Become angry easily, Keep a record of wrongs, Delight in evil.

We might say that 'love' is a willingness to choose to extend oneself for the benefit of another. A willingness to choose Christ-like, sacrificial attitudes or actions, that show love in deed and in truth.

WE LOVE BECAUSE ...

Just as the bible is clear on the meaning of love, it is likewise also clear on the reason for love. John 13:34-35 tells us, "**A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.**"

And so, as disciples of Jesus Christ, we have these three reasons why we should love one another.

1. JESUS HAS COMMANDED US TO LOVE

Jesus has the authority to command us to love because He is our Lord and master. This is one aspect of His relationship with us and we grow in this relationship and in our knowledge of Him through submission to His commands out of devotion to Christ.

Submission may not come naturally to us, but we can take confidence in the fact that our Lord has already modelled obedience for us through His suffering (Heb 5:8), that He

encourages us to follow His example, walk in the light (1 Jn 1:7) and be obedient even unto death (Ph 2:8), and that His commands are not burdensome (1 Jn 5:3).

2. JESUS HAS LOVED US

As we are reminded in 1 Jn 4:9-11, it was God who loved us first, sending His son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins even before we knew Him.

So once we know of God's love, it is then up to us how to respond to it.

If we reject it, as Judas Iscariot did, then we are doomed to destruction.

However, if we choose to experience God's love, then the transformation of John the disciple is a telling picture of what the love of God can do to us.

Early on in the Gospels, John and his brother James were referred to as 'Sons of Thunder'. They were known as hot-tempered men, quick to anger, suggesting that Jesus allow them to call down fire from heaven to destroy an errant Samaritan village (Lk 9:51-56). They also were filled with earthly ambition, asking to be seated next to Jesus when He comes in glory (Mk 10:35-37).

However, by the time John got around to writing his gospel, he no longer identified himself as a son of thunder, but rather as 'the disciple whom Jesus loved'. Not so much because Jesus did not love the other disciples, for we know that Jesus loved all of them, but simply because Jesus' love for John was the foundation in which John now identified himself with. A selfish, carnal, ambitious man, transformed forever by the love of Jesus.

3. THE WORLD WILL KNOW JESUS THROUGH US

The final reason why we are called to love, is because, as we are reminded in 1 Jn 4:12, those in the world who have yet to come to know Jesus, will know Jesus through our love.

And so even though we know that we are not a part of this world, and that we will be persecuted by the world just as our Lord was persecuted, we are nevertheless called to love. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear... (1 Jm 4:18a).

CONCLUSION

So as disciples of Jesus Christ, we choose to love. We are not controlled or enslaved by our emotions or feelings, but carefully choose our attitudes and actions so as to extend ourselves for the benefit of others. Our love may be communicated not only in words, but in deeds and in truth. We choose to love because our Lord Jesus has commanded us to do so and we rejoice in obeying Him. We choose to love because God first loved us, and as we accept His love, we are transformed by love, to love. Finally, we choose to love because that is how those who have yet to know Christ will know of Him, through our love, and we love to make Him known.

QUESTIONS

Which of the three reasons to love one another is most compelling to you? The command to love? That Jesus loved us first? Or that the world will know Jesus through us? Why is your reason so compelling to you?

Would you describe yourself as a loving person? Who do you find easy to love? Who do you find difficult to love? Why? Give examples.

Who is one person (or group of people) that God is calling you to love? What can you do in the following week to love this person or group? How can the CG members pray for you in this?