



# Kingdom Call – Love

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Love has been talked about much in recent years, particularly in the wake of the same-sex marriage debate. Advocates of same-sex marriage carry banners that say, “Love is love”, assuming that the definition of love is obvious and universal to everyone. Their understanding is that to be loving to another is to acknowledge and affirm their deepest desire. In this case, they want to affirm and acknowledge their same-sex attraction with marriage, and thus their push to change the legal definition of marriage. To deny and suppress the deepest desire of the heart is considered unloving and bigoted.

However, in our Bible passage today, Jesus also calls his disciples to love one another. Does he have the same meaning of “love” as what we have today? What are some of the things that mark and display this “love” of one another? Even though our passage is short, it is packed with rich theological significance that will benefit our souls once we dig deeper.

## Launch

- 1) What are some ways that we “love” the things or people in our lives? How can we tell if one person loves another person?

## Love One Another

**Read John 13:34-35**

- 2) Who was Jesus talking to in this passage? (cf. John 13:5, 30-31) Who was not there?
  
- 3) What did Jesus command his disciples to do? (v34a)
  - a. In what way is this commandment “new” given what Jesus said earlier in his ministry? (cf. Matt 22:37-40) It is hardly “new” when the Old Testament seems to call for the same thing.
  
  - b. How has Jesus loved his disciples? Take the time to list out the many ways that Jesus has loved his disciples given your biblical knowledge.
  
  - c. What is the greatest expression of Jesus’ love for his disciples? What makes that the greatest expression?



- 4) Given your answer to Questions 3b and 3c, how are we to love one another in the same way? What would that look like in your life circumstances?
  
- 5) Who do you think the “everyone” is referring to in v35? What implication does that have for who the “one another” is?
  
- 6) How does loving one another show everyone that you are a disciple of Christ?
  
- 7) What are some practical ways that we can love one another?
  
- 8) Based on your answers to these questions, how does this “love” differ from the “love” that you read/see or experience in this world?
  
- 9) Do you find it hard to love your brothers and sisters in Christ? Why or why not? Do you think people find you easy to love? Why or why not?

We are called to love one another in the same way that Jesus has loved us. That is the new commandment that Jesus gives to his disciples. The *new* aspect of the commandment is not that we are called to love one another. That has already been established long before in the Old Testament laws. However, what is *new* about Jesus’ command is that we are called to love one another *in the same way that he has loved us*. The greatest expression of Jesus’ love for his disciples is that he willingly went to the cross and be crucified for our sins. Indeed, that is how God himself loved us in Christ.

There is a particular “concreteness” to Christ’s love for his disciples. He did not just “love” us by his emotions. There was a determined action and response on the part of Christ to do something for his disciples for their wellbeing and good out of love. Love then is not mere emotions, but rather it also involves committed and determined actions for the other party. “Love” then is as much about the will as it is about the emotion. It is a commitment that we make – to love one another as disciples of Christ in the same way that Christ has loved us – through self-sacrificial love.

This is how everyone will know who we are as disciples of Christ – that we love one another. This is not a general love for everyone. There is a particular priority reserved for the family of God (cf. Gal 6:10) just as how we have a particular priority to our own biological family. This love for one another is a breath of fresh air in this increasingly-toxic world that many will find it attractive and be drawn to it.