

“The Excellence of True Christ-like Love”

John 13:33-38

³³ Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come,’ so now I say to you. ³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵ By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

³⁶ Simon Peter said to Him, “Lord, where are You going?”

Jesus answered him, “Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward.”

³⁷ Peter said to Him, “Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for Your sake.”

³⁸ Jesus answered him, “Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times. John 13:33–38 (NKJV)

I remember reading and memorizing **John 13:34-35** when I was 20 years old.

I am pretty certain I **DID NOT** see them as connected to PETER’s failure which Jesus prophesies in in **John 13:38!**

Loving is a wonderful thing!

Yet, LOVING as Jesus commands, **“as I have loved you”** is beyond ordinary **LOVE!**

Peter thought he really loved Jesus Christ ...

He says to Jesus, “Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for Your sake.”

But he (Peter) denied Jesus three times!

Loving Jesus, or each other, like Jesus LOVED us, is a high, high calling!

I. “Little children” –

1. A term of endearment, these men who were with Jesus at this point were His true born-again, children of God, followers.
2. A description of their level, they had been with Jesus Christ, three years, but they were still beginners. They still needed to mature, they needed to learn and grow.

In **1 John 2:12–14** the Apostle John speaks of three levels: little children, young-men, and fathers.

² as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, 1 Peter 2:2 (NKJV)

¹⁸ but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen. 2 Peter 3:18 (NKJV)

3. Jesus was going to be with them, **a little while longer.**

³³ Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come,’ so now I say to you. John 13:33

A. Jesus was about to die.

B. He would resurrect.

C. He would also ascend into Heaven.

4. Following Jesus was and is, for true Christians, a matter of growth and being ready -

³⁶ Simon Peter said to Him, “Lord, where are You going?” Jesus answered him, “Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward.” John 13:37

II. A new commandment –

³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵ By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:34-35 (NKJV)

1. What is new? Both loving God and loving your neighbor were taught, commanded, in the OLD Testament -

⁴ “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD *is* one! ⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. Deuteronomy 6:4–5 (NKJV)

¹⁸ You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I *am* the LORD. Leviticus 19:18 (NKJV)

2. What is NEW is the requirement of Jesus Christ-likeness –

³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. John 13:34 (NKJV)

- A. Christ raises the bar on the level of LOVE required by His level of humble service –

¹⁴ If I then, *your Lord and Teacher*, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. ¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. ¹⁶ Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. ¹⁷ If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. John 13:14–17 (NKJV)

- B. Christ will raise the bar even HIGHER with His self-sacrifice on the cross –

¹² This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. John 15:12–13 (NKJV)

“Love them dearly hold them to the highest.” Amy Carmichael

Meaning I am not loving you unless I call you to the highest levels of commitment!

C. This means we too should be –
ὕπήκοος **hoop-pay-koss** obedient

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross. Philippians 2:8 (NKJV)

We have been redeemed from the curse of God’s Law, but not from its command!

D. Self-sacrifice is our reasonable service –
12 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is your reasonable service.* Romans 12:1 (NKJV)

3. This Christ-like level of love, obedience and self-sacrifice is not natural but SUPERNATURAL -
²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. Galatians 5:22–23 (NKJV)

A. *Before His death on the cross, before His resurrection, and ascension into Heaven, Jesus told and taught His disciples about the Holy Spirit –*
²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. John 14:26 (NKJV)

B. *Yet, before the Holy Spirit comes Peter and the other true disciples would learn their weakness with Him –*
³⁷ Peter said to Him, “Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for Your sake.” ³⁸ Jesus answered him, “Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times. John 13:33–38 (NKJV)

- Peter will be made to feel his WEAKNESS before he is given strength!

- We need to abide in Jesus Christ –

⁵ “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. ⁸ By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. John 15:5–8 (NKJV)

III. Beware of instant, one step, two step, three step, four step Christianity –

Four Spiritual Laws:

- (1) God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life.
- (2) Man is sinful and separated from God, therefore he cannot know God’s wonderful plan for his life.
- (3) Jesus Christ is God’s only provision for man’s sin. Through Him you can experience God’s wonderful plan for your life.
- (4) We must individually receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. One short prayer is all you need.

The entirety of the four spiritual laws is a booklet, about 18 pages. It was meant to be a tool to help “Christians” share their faith and help non-believers become believers. It is like much of our modern instructions, SIMPLE, SIMPLE, SIMPLE –

It fits well with the altar call, in that it calls us to receive Christ, but its DANGER is that its sparse, shortened, simplified message has been termed – ESSENTIALS! Making other things non-essentials!

1. The problem this causes is a peace, peace when there is no peace Christianity –

¹⁴ They have also healed the hurt of My people slightly, Saying, ‘Peace, peace!’ When *there is* no peace. Jeremiah 6:14 (NKJV)

I would argue that the entirety of the Bible is ESSENTIAL –

¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16–17 (NKJV)

2. *You have hired me, to take you beyond the basics, my purpose, my calling is beyond the norm in our instant age –*

¹¹ And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³ till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ¹⁴ that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, ¹⁵ but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. Ephesians 4:11–16 (NKJV)

3. *Christ Himself instructs us to ask, seek, knock –*

⁹ “So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ¹¹ If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? ¹² Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” Luke 11:9–13 (NKJV)

A. *Seek with all your HEART –*

¹² Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. Jeremiah 29:12–13 (NKJV)

Notice what is does not say -

¹³ And you will seek Me and find Me, when you have prayed even just one time, even if the preacher was helping you, giving you words, and you did not understand a thing. NOT-Jeremiah / not the Bible

B. We are to make our calls and election SURE –

⁵ But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, ⁶ to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, ⁷ to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. ⁸ For if these things are yours and abound, *you* will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

¹⁰ Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; ¹¹ for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 1:5–11 (NKJV)

- *Sunday morning, Sunday evening, Wednesday Bible study and prayer / women's meetings / men's meeting / Personal Bible study / Family Devotions!*

4. If you want to impact an ungodly world –

³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵ By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:34–35 (NKJV)

Let us aim for a Christ-like and Christ-level of love, service and self-sacrifice. This will have more real impact than a thousand tracts.

A. Why do people reject churches? Often because they find the same fighting they find in other places.

B. Christ calls us to LOVE, and not a worldly-level love, but His LEVEL of LOVE –

- *It is supernatural! A fruit of the Spirit!*
- *It must be cultivated! It takes work, it is not easy or simple ...*
- *This is a HIGH LEVEL of LOVE, something we GROW to, it is a love we aim to increase ...*

John 15:12–13 (NKJV)

¹² This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. John 15:12–13 (NKJV)