

"Love One Another"

Tremendous division seems to face our country, and anger over differences, troubles our unity and ability to communicate. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." How can we love one another?

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. Looking to the cross and the love of God can transform our lives. What we know about God's love comes from a thoughtful study of the Scriptures. With the love of God comes peace and forgiveness, things necessary for people to live in harmony. Without a knowledge of that love shown on the cross, people continue to fight and hate. This book gives us reason to love, and we must love one another and even our enemies. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

What is the greatest priority in your life? Many say family, job, or achieving some goal.

A religious lawyer once asked Jesus, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 22:36 to 40). Our first priority is to love God fully in every way. Another priority like it is to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Some think they can love God but not love their brother or neighbor, but they may not be thinking clearly. 1 John 4:20 to 21 says, "If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother." We all need reminding to love even those who are hard to love.

Now, we offer this study free on loving one another. And if you'd like a printed copy or a CD of our study and you live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from 1 John 3:16 to 18, and we'll explore how important loving one another truly is.

Our reading today comes from 1 John chapter 3 verses 16 to 18. And here the writer John is talking about what it means to love.

We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

That's how God wishes us to love. In deed and in truth. Let's pray together. Oh Father, help us to love our neighbors as our selves. And help us to love You with all our heart and soul and mind and strength. And to do Your will and to treat others as we wish to be treated. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Love is at the core of all Christianity. We're called to love God and to love others. If we fail to love, we have failed at the most important task of life. 1 Corinthians 13:1 to 3 says, "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing." A loveless Christianity is no Christianity at all.

God distinguishes those who love others from those who don't. 1 John 3 and verse 10 says, "By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother. For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another." When people fail to love others, they will also fail to keep the Lord's commandments. Being a child of God means loving others the way that God has loved you.

Love is the motivator for all that we do as Christians. 2 Corinthians 5 verses 14 and 15 says, "For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised." The cross of Christ moves us not only to love Jesus but also to commit totally our hearts and our lives to Him. That means we must die to ourselves and live for Him.

Jesus wants us to love others the way that He loved us. The Lord Jesus said in John 13:34 to 5, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, (and that is) if you have love for one another." We're to love as Jesus loved. If we define love the way some people do, we'd hardly love anyone at all. We got to outgrow our self-centered ways and put others first, just as Jesus did. Philippians 2 and verse 3 says, "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves."

Now, you might ask well, "How did Jesus love people?" Well, first, Jesus cared for those who are in need physically. 1 John 3:16 to 18 it says, "By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, (He says,) let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth." You see, Jesus led the way! He healed the sick, He fed the poor, He showed compassion to all who were in need. The Lord Jesus speaks honestly to us about feeding and clothing the poor and visiting the sick and those in prison in Matthew 25 and verse 40. He said, "Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even (to) the least of them, you did it to Me." When we give to help others today, we're giving love to them and to the Lord Jesus.

Second, Jesus cared for their souls as well as their bodies. Luke 5:31 to 32 says, "And Jesus answered them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but (to call the) sinners to repentance." Jesus, by leading a perfectly sinless life, leads us to live more righteously. He forgives our past, which allows us to change and become people who have a good conscience. Jesus helped people change by the life that he lived and by His preaching and teaching. In Mark 1:38 Jesus said to His disciples, "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out." He wanted everyone to be spiritually healthy.

Third, He sacrificed his body and his life for them. 1 Peter 2:24 says that, "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed." Jesus personally sacrificed Himself so that we could live with Him forever. He died so that we might live; He suffered so that we could be forgiven and enjoy everlasting life. He bore whips

and nails, and beatings and spit, and mockery and humiliation. He didn't fight back, but He bore it for your sake and for mine. He loved us.

Fourth, Jesus suffered for their sins to bring us to God. 1 Peter 3 and verse 18 says, "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God." You see, He was not content to leave us where He found us. He wanted something grander for us. He wanted to give us an opportunity to know our Creator, the One who made and sustains us and the One to whom we pray. To Jesus, God was not merely "my Father"; He's "our Father." And because of Jesus, we can be His children. He wanted to be in our lives now and forever. And there's no greater blessing in life than to have God as our Father.

Fifth, Jesus forgives and wants us to forgive. 1 Peter 4 and verse 8 says, "Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins." Jesus loves us and is willing to cover a multitude of our sins. He taught us how to forgive. And we forgive because of what God has done for us and because we are God's children. You remember the Lord Jesus said in Matthew 6:14 to 15, "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions."

You know, people will always offend us. If we don't learn how to react to offenses, we'll spend our lives in misery. Revenge doesn't end the heartaches; it keeps anger alive. Anger will not achieve the righteousness of God but spreads to violence! Anger breeds anger, and hatred breeds more hatred. If we let anger grow in our hearts, it'll destroy our soul and it'll ruin our life. Ephesians 4:26 to 27 says, "Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity." We live in a cruel and violent world, because people have never learned to forgive as Jesus did.

Eph. 4:31 to 32 says, "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you." Recently I've seen where members of the church have forgiven others, even when someone has killed a family member. You see this is how Christ lived and how He wants His people to live.

The Lord Jesus taught in Matthew 5:43 to 48, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

Jesus practiced what He preached. The Lord Jesus said in Luke 23 verses 33 to 34, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." Jesus was willing to forgive those who were hurting and killing Him. Nailing Him to a cross. Stephen also showed the same love. When they were stoning him to death, Stephen cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them" (Acts 7 and verse 60).

Sixth, Jesus confronted those who were thinking wrongly and those who sinned. Matthew 16 verses 21 to 24 says, "From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. Well, Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! This

shall never happen to you." But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."

You might wonder how a rebuke like this is loving. You know we're so easily offended these days, and we've decided that anyone who criticizes another is somehow hateful, or mean-spirited or judgmental. Well, unwarranted criticism, slander, and judging is certainly wrong; but rebukes that lead to righteousness can be the most loving things that one can do. Proverbs 27 and verse 6 says, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy." Agreeing with and approving sin doesn't help anybody to repent. The Lord Jesus said in Revelation 3 and verse 19, "Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent." You know leaving a soul in sin is the most cruel thing that one can do.

Love is a verb; and it reveals itself by what it does. And we all want to hear those precious words, "I love you." However, we want love to be shown, not just be told. Love is not only an emotion; it's a way of life. And it's evident by what it does. God demonstrated His love in giving Jesus to us, and God wants us to demonstrate our love by loving Him and loving others.

Paul described love this way in 1 Corinthians 13:4 to 7 when he said, "Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." You know when a person acts like this, you don't have to wonder if they love you, you see it in their lives and know it's in their hearts.

1 Corinthians 13 and verse 8 simply says, "Love never fails." Jesus never stopped loving us! John 13:1 says, "Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end." Jesus washed the disciples feet, knowing they'd scatter. He washed Peter's feet, knowing that he would deny Him three times. Jesus even washed Judas Iscariot's feet. Jesus endured the trials, the beatings, and the cross; and through it all He never stopped sacrificing Himself or loving us! He was not a fickle, fair-weather friend. When we love God, we should love Him to the end. When we love the church, we should love it to the end.

Let's pray together. Oh Father help us to be people who know how to love and who practice our love for You at all times. In Jesus name, Amen.

1 John 2:3 to 6 says, "And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked." To love God means keeping His commandments, and loving others the way that He loved us is a big part of that!

Do you love the Lord? Well of course you do. Well, can people see that by the way that you keep His commandments? Can they see you walking like Jesus walked and living like Jesus lived? Do you love others? Well, if you miss doing this; you miss what it takes to be a Christian. When God's love is in your heart, you'll find life beautiful and glorious. When God's love is in your heart, you'll choose to do what's right and you'll treat others the way that you want to be treated. When God's love is in your heart, you act kindly to those in need. When God's love is in your heart, you'll stop fighting with God. You'll simply trust and obey His commandments.

You see love moves us to place our trust in the Lord Jesus, to give up our sins and live in righteousness, to confess Jesus Christ as God's Son, and to be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. Whatever God in Scripture asks of us, we'll do. We'll listen to Him rather than human sources that may lead us astray. Love means focusing our close attention on Jesus Christ and being like Him.

Well we hope that today's study about loving one another has encouraged you to love others the way that Jesus Christ loves you. If you live in the United States and you want a free printed copy or a CD of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now, you can download these lessons or a newsletter online at our website: www.searchtv.org. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches that are in your area. You can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Just subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now, don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to point God's way to heaven.

Get your heart focused on God today by worshiping at church. There's probably a church of Christ in your area. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. Well, we'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us. Tell a friend about this program, encourage them to watch. Let them know that you care about it and that it has something of value and encourage them to watch. As always we say to you, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.