

Weekly Devotions: LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER 2

To Love One Another is a Mandate

Sometimes the most difficult people to love are those in the church; people who professed to love God but behave no different from those without God. Their conduct not only brings dishonor to God's Name, it also stumbles others. However, to love one another is not Jesus' suggestion on how we should relate to others in the church. It is Jesus' command; we either accept and obey or reject and disobey. It is an important mandate which Jesus repeated a number of times in His final teaching (Jn. 13: 34-35; 15: 12, 17). The phrase 'one another' occurs 101 times in the NT and 'to love one another' is mentioned 58 times. It is the code of conduct expected of all believers.

The reason why we love other believers is because we love God and we want to do what He expects of us. It has nothing to do with whether they deserve our love and kindness. Whatever we do for them, we do it out of love and obedience to Christ.

Read John 14: 15-26

Jesus emphasized that keeping His commandments is the expression of their love for Him. To obey His mandate to love one another is not to earn our salvation or reward in heaven but is the natural response of our love for God.

What Jesus expects of us He also enables and He promises that the Holy Spirit who dwells in us will be our *parakletos* (16) translated 'Helper' (ESV, NASB). His Spirit will be with us and will remind us of what Jesus had taught (26). The Spirit will also sanctify us that we may be like Christ.

Leon Morris said in his 'Reflections on the Gospel of John' that it is significant that Jesus describes the Spirit as the Holy Spirit, instead of calling Him the 'mighty Spirit, or the 'exciting Spirit' or the 'signs and wonder Spirit'. While the Spirit can do many things, His key characteristic is His holiness. As the Holy Spirit, one of the primary influences in our lives is to help us to be holy in our being and doing, and in our relationships, especially with one another.

Questions to ponder

1. Jesus repeated three times in verses 15, 21, 23 the importance of keeping His mandates. What is the reason and what would be the results when we do what Jesus expects? What does our refusal to obey say about us (24)?
2. What did Jesus say about the Holy Spirit and how can the Holy Spirit help us to love fellow believers? Is there someone in your church that you have problem loving and what can you do this week to love this person?

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