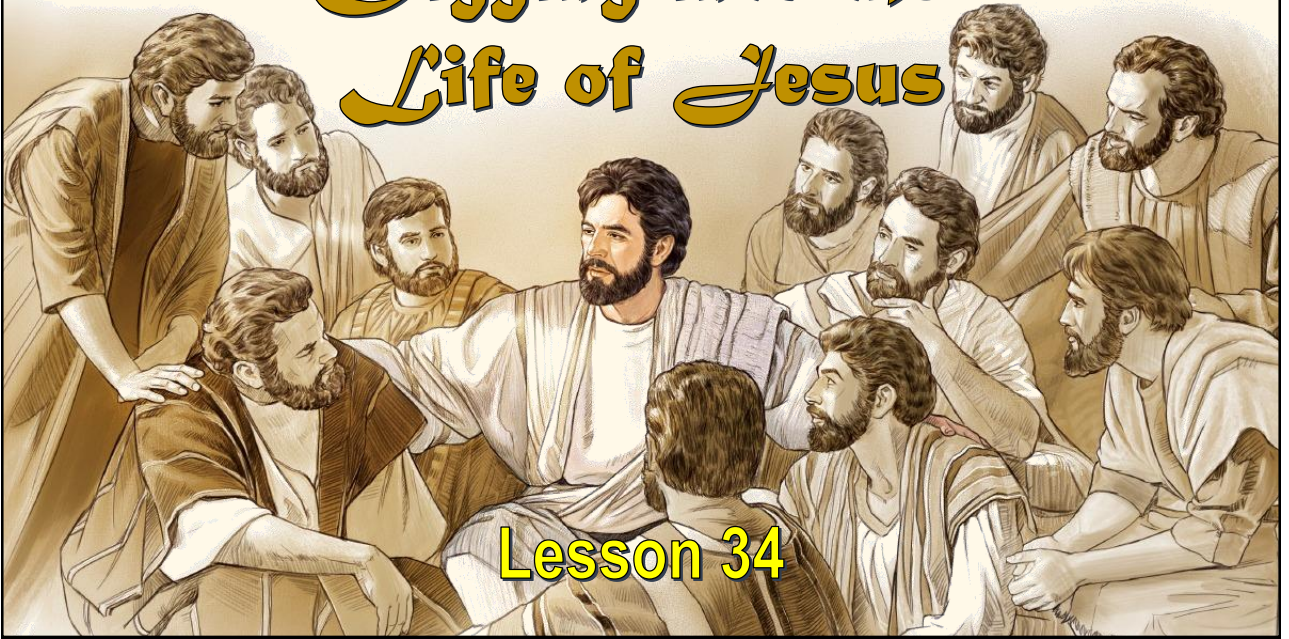


Digging into the Life of Jesus



Lesson 34

The Relation of the Disciples to One Another 15:12-17



RELATIONSHIP

the way in which two or more people talk to, behave toward, and deal with each other

Together
IN CHRIST

12. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.
13. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.
14. You are my friends if you do what I command you.
15. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

16. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

17. These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

12-13 This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

These two verses are a restatement of John 13:34: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

Repetition: Jesus wanted them to love according to the measure and quality of His love for them.

Jesus repeated that command because He knew that the effectiveness of their ministry depended on their attitude towards one another.

These Values Must Govern the Disciple's Attitude and Work:

Unity instead of discord, division and dispute,
trust instead of misgivings and suspicions,
obedience instead of defiance and willfulness



Love is demonstrated by what we do. It is the power that moves us to keep God's commands, and Jesus' example shows us how to manifest it.

Love is a willingness to give of oneself for the good or wellbeing of others.

And the greatest love is that one would be willing to give his life for his friends.

This Not Only Illustrates Love, it DEFINES it!



God's
Love

**God doesn't just love you: He is love.
That's His character.**

He can't be unloving.

**His love has no limits. You can't wear Him out or
be too much for him to handle.**

God's love is not dependent on us.



**God's love has our ultimate good in
mind.**

**His love can't be earned. It can only
be received.**

**We can never be good enough to gain His
love and never bad enough to lose it.**

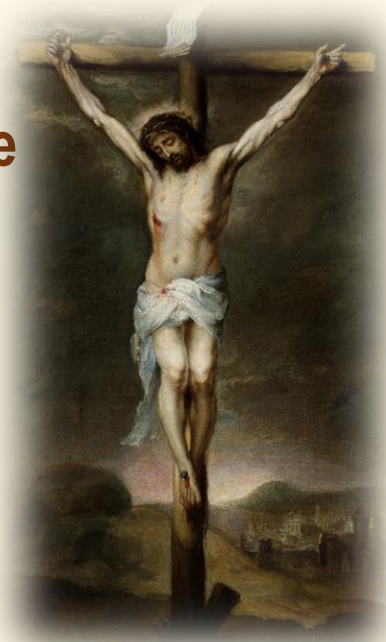
- **Is it difficult for you to receive the love that God has for you? Why or why not?**



**Receive
God's
Love**

- **What are some of the obstacles that you have in your life to receiving that love?**
- **What are some things in your life that make it easier for you to receive that love?**

The measure of their love for one another is that of His love for them, which would be further verified by His forthcoming sacrifice.



**14 You are my friends (φίλος)
if you do what I command you.**



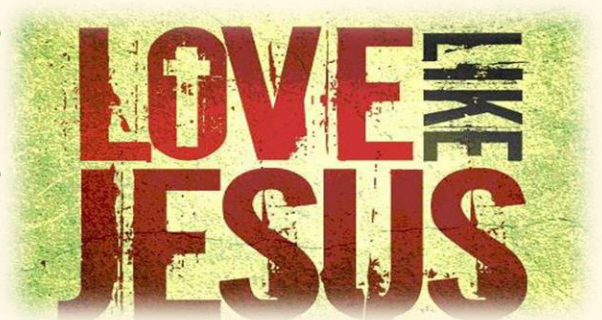
Again Jesus defined friendship in terms of obedience.

He showed His love by dying for us. We respond by showing we love Him in obeying His commands.

In a sense, Jesus loves all men and wants to be friends with them all. He died to extend forgiveness to all.

Those who say that they are the friends of Christ but do not love one another are deluded and are walking in darkness (1 John 2:9-11).

The command to love one another as He had loved them is a call to love one another sacrificially (“as I have loved you”).



Most Christians do possess that sincere desire to love as instructed and modelled by Jesus.

Unfortunately, they knowingly or unconsciously allow subtle impediments to build up inside them.

Slowly, these little barriers to form larger blockages, which over a period of time begin to harden their hearts and dissolve their intentions.



15 No longer do I call you servants (δοῦλος), for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.



It is true that we still must obey Jesus. But our relationship is that, not merely of a slave, but of a friend.

Our Master loves us and reveals God's intentions to us.

Jesus gives a specific example of the difference between a friend and a slave:

A master does not bother to explain to a slave what his plans are. He just gives orders and the slave must obey.

A friend, however, explains His requests and ideas.



“A slave is never given a reason for the work assigned to him; he must perform it because he has no other choice.

The friend is a confidant who shares the knowledge of his superior’s purpose and voluntarily adopts it as his own.” (Tenney)

The simplest definition of a friend is someone we want to be with.



Your relationship with Jesus becomes deeper as your love for Him increases, and as your love for your own life, will, worldly desires decreases.

A RELATIONSHIP WITH
JESUS

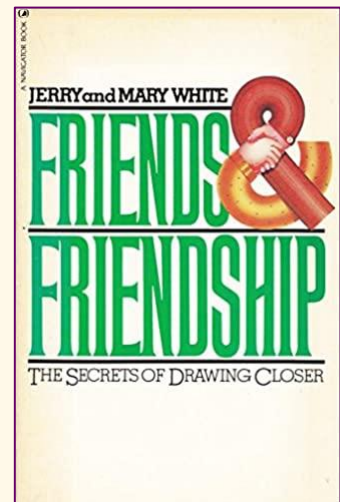
How would you characterize your relationship with Jesus?

If a friend asked you to describe what it's like to be in a relationship with Jesus, how would you respond?



- Have you been the kind of friend you want as a friend?
- What type of friends do you value most? Why?
- What do you feel are the main qualities of friendship?
- List and briefly describe the friends who are now in your life.

A friend is a trusted confidant to whom I am mutually drawn as a companion and an ally, whose love for me is not dependent on my performance, and whose influence draws me closer to God.



16-17 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

Jesus chose you, specifically and especially you. Reason?

Isaiah 43:4 Because you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you, I give men in return for you, peoples in exchange for your life.

What does this say about you? A lot!

- 1. You have been marked by divine love.**
- 2. You have been filled with the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead.**
- 3. It shows that you have been chosen - handpicked – by almighty God to “go and bear fruit that will abide (remain)”.**

All around us, there are countless opportunities to bear good and lasting fruit.



Look around: Jesus has placed you in a mission field.

Your family: He wants you to express your love to them everyday – in your speech, in your thoughts, and in your actions.

Your Place of Work. Jesus has placed you there, whatever your daily responsibility entails, so that you can bring Him glory.

What about your neighbours, friends, and even unexpected encounters?

**What is the fruit that will last for all
eternity?**

How can you bear this kind of fruit?

**What keeps you from bearing this
fruit?**

The Relation of the Disciples to the World

15:18-27



Christ's Opponents (15:18-27)

"IF THE WORLD
HATES YOU,
KNOW THAT
IT HAS HATED
ME BEFORE
IT HATED YOU."
JESUS CHRIST



- The world hates us because we are not of this world (15:18-19)
- The world hates us because they hate Christ (15:20)
- The world hates us because they do not know God (15:21-27)

18. "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.

19. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

20. Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.

21. But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me.

22. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin.

23. Whoever hates me hates my Father also.

24. If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father.

25. But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: 'They hated me without a cause.'

26. “But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.

27. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.”

18 “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

“the world” = the unconverted who live according to their own desires, rather than following God’s will, in contrast to the followers of Christ.

The world will hate us, but when it happens we should remember it happened first to Jesus.

**“The perfect tense of the verb ‘hate’ (memiseken) implies that the world’s hatred is a fixed attitude toward him — an attitude that carries over to his disciples as well.”
(Tenney)**

The world assumes this attitude because it rejects all who do not conform to its values, beliefs, norms and ways.

Everyday it is constantly trying to influence us in some way.

When facing persecution, recognize that Jesus has been there first, and then press on ahead.

Jesus was hated from the very beginning. (King Herod sought Him out to kill Him – Matt 2:13-16).

He was hated at the end when the people rejected Him as the Saviour and called for His crucifixion.

The same world would surely hate those who proclaim allegiance to the crucified Lord.



Every day, the world urges and tempts us to accept its vision and version of us, to pursue its promises and believe that it holds the key to our future.

So many voices and images compete for our attention, our time and our energy.



19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

Jesus sets us apart from the world. Note that He assumes His followers will be different from the world.

“I have chosen you” -- Discipleship Begins With A Clear Sense of Calling!

What are the implications of being chosen?

Christians can like others, be captivated and fascinated by what the world has to offer and be seduced into thinking that the world only gives without also taking.



But God's Word and eternity in our hearts reminds us that there is more to this life than we can see.

Make the obvious faith choice -- choose eternal life and eternal hope!

Christians must face the inescapable reality that life in Christ is not an automatic exemption from the world's rejection and resentment.

Our very separation from the world arouses the world's curiosity and hostility.

The world would prefer that we were like them; since we are not, they hate us!



We need to examine to see whether perhaps we are loved by the world because it is easy to pressured to be like the world.

When there is very little difference between us and the world, there is no reason for it to hate us.

In fact, they will love us because we are part of them, for the world “loves its own.”

1 Peter 4:1-4

Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin.

As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.

For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do —living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry.

They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you.

Other reasons why the world rejects Christianity:

1. Christians' values contradict the values of those who do not follow Jesus.



2. Christians believe in absolutes in a world that indulges in relativity

3. Christians return love for hatred and are therefore hated even more.

20 Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.

If people have such profound hatred that they would even kill the Son of God, how can His followers expect any better treatment?



Why does the world act in this way?

They killed Jesus because they did not know Him. Likewise, if we act in His name, they will also resent us.

They refused to honour Jesus because they did not have a right relationship with God.

The gospel is not religion!

21-22 But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin.

There are two reasons for the world's stubborn attitude:

- 1. obliviousness: "They do not know the him who sent me."**
- 2. resentment of Jesus' claims and standards. Both by His life and words He rebukes human sin and condemns it.**

He uncovers the inner corruption and hypocrisy of men, and they react violently to the exposure!

23 Whoever hates me hates my Father also.

Jesus and the Father belong in the same category; neither can be accepted or rejected without the other.

- I and the Father are one (John 10:30).
- Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me (John 12:44).
- And whoever sees me sees him who sent me (John 12:45).
- If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. (John 14:7a).
- that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him (John 5:23).
- whoever receives me receives the one who sent me (John 13:20b).

24 If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father.

The sin of Jesus' enemies was both deliberate and indefensible.

They had heard His words and had witnessed His accompanying miracles.

25 But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: 'They hated me without a cause.'

To explain His position, Jesus quoted from **Psalm 69:4** **"More in number than the hairs of my head are those who hate me without cause..."**.

It was a partial quotation. Jesus' wanted to emphasize the phrase "without reason."

The irony of His quotation: the men who posed as the champions of the Law were fulfilling the prophecy concerning the enemies of God's servant.



25 But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: 'They hated me without a cause.'

Even in the dark hours, mistrial, torture and crucifixion that lay ahead, Jesus pointed out that nothing strange was happening; all was going according to God's plan.

The Scriptures had foretold all that would happen in the dark hours ahead.

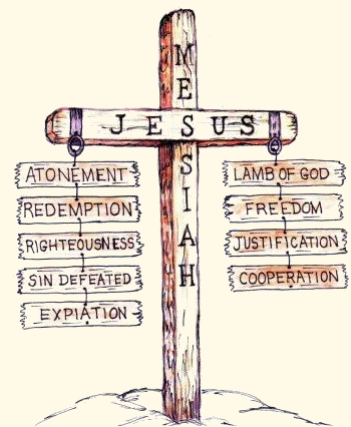
The radical nature of evil requires radical solutions.

It is because the world is totally evil that nothing less would do than the gift of God's Son.

Blessings, warnings, laws and prophets were not enough.

God Himself in Christ had to enter the human arena to absorb sin's power and annul it.

God Himself found the way to empower men and women to live new lives.



In Christ, all that was holy and good was clearly displayed.

Evil attempted to destroy the good. But it was robbed of its power.

Christ triumphed over evil through the mystery of the cross.

- **Life triumphs in death.**
- **Victory emerges in the shame of Golgotha.**
- **God's power is displayed through weakness.**

26 But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.

This is the third time Jesus has told the disciples that He is going to send the Counselor to them, the Spirit of truth (John 14:16, 26).

A major role of the Holy Spirit is to “bear witness” about Christ in the hearts and minds of believers. The influence of the Spirit leads us towards the truth, which is Christ (John 14:6).

Roles of the Holy Spirit:

- **To bear witness to Christ's identity (Jn.1:31-34)**
- **To glorify Jesus (Jn.16:13)**
- **To convict the world of sin, righteousness & judgment (Jn 16:8-11)**
- **To initiate the new birth and true worship in men (Jn.3:6-7)**
- **To strengthen and help those who are born again (Jn.14:16-18)**
- **To guide into truth & foretell events (early church) (Jn.16:12-13)**
- **To produce living water flowing from believers (Jn.7:37-38)**

27 And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.

In response to this attitude of hatred there must be a continuing witness to the love and grace of Christ. He will empower the disciples to maintain the testimony of Jesus after he has left the earth.

The disciples were qualified to bear witness of Jesus because they had been with Jesus from the beginning – they were part of His life and He was part of their life.