

Practicing Christian Love

1 John 3:13-24

Introduction

Love is compassionately and righteously seeking the well-being of another. Love is different than “like.” Liking someone has to do with a relational enjoyment of another person as opposed to love, which is a decision to do the best for another person. Love is what you do and goes beyond how you feel.

Practicing Christian love is critical because it affects our personal experience with God. The person who doesn’t love others is not operating in the realm of God’s intended plans and purposes. 1 John 3:17 points out that when we can love in action and choose not to, we must then question whether the love of God abides in us. When we choose not to exercise love in tangible ways toward others, we unfortunately, are choosing to distance ourselves from God because His very nature is love.

Love matters to God, and there is a direct correlation between our love for others and God’s work in our lives. If God is leading you to do something and you choose not to act, you then hinder God’s activity in your life. The conviction of the Holy Spirit will confirm if you are operating in love when you are faced with the choice of tangibly caring for another. If God is leading you to meet a need and you have the ability to meet it, respond to God’s prompting. Do not shut it down! Practicing Christian love, especially in the body of Christ, is physically providing for needs that you are able to meet. Every opportunity God gives you to meet a need is also an opportunity to experience more of Him.

Getting Started

1. When was the last time someone made you feel loved? What did they do?
2. After listening to today’s sermon, what would you say is the “big deal” about love? How does it benefit you?

Let’s Get Personal

1. Who in your own life is easy to love because it’s also easy to “like” them? Who in your life is difficult to love because you don’t necessarily “like” them? How do you successfully show tangible love to both types of people?
2. Think about specific opportunities God has brought your way to love others, yet you shut down rather than help. What made it difficult for you to meet the need, to show love, or to respond to the situation or person?
3. Have you experienced a sense of conviction after choosing not to meet the need of another? What can you do now to prepare yourselves to act in love when God prompts you next time?

Take the Next Step

1. Are there opportunities available for you to show love? After hearing today’s sermon, what will you do this week to meet them? Share with your group.
2. Take time in your group to pray about being sensitive to the Spirit so that you are able to regularly and adequately respond to those opportunities that He wants you to address.
3. Want to dig deeper? Look at James 1:27, James 2:14-17, and Galatians 6:10. What do these passages tell you about the importance of love in the life of a believer?

Renew Your Mind

“...let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.” 1 John 3:18