

April 26, 2020 "Love" Bible Studies for Senior Adults

We are beginning a new unit of study. It is called "Dealing with Messy Relationships." We will study 6 traits named: Love, Encourage, Forgive, Serve, Yield and Accept.

How do the people you love (whether close friends, spouse, or family members) know that you love them?

You tell them	You make them feel important in your life
You show them	You do special things for them
You make them feel loved	You are kind, understanding, forgiving

The starting point for any strong relationship is love. Jesus modeled this kind of love for us, and He calls us to do the same. The quality of your relationship with others will always be tied to the quality of your relationship with God.

John 15: 1- 8, Jesus used the imagery of a vine and its branches to teach His followers that the Christian life requires us to be connected to Him. Verses 9 – 14 tells the crucial importance of remaining in Him.

Jesus spoke to the issue of how to love.

- He said we should base every relationship on the unconditional love He has for us.
- Jesus challenges us to **let love permeate every relationship (The Point).**

Read John 15:9-10 "As the Father has loved me, I have also loved you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love."

How does Christ teach us to love?

- By example
- He obeyed His Father's commands
- He remained in His Father's love

What appeal to the disciples did Jesus make in these verses?

- Remain in my love
- Obey my commands
- Follow my example

Remain is a key word in these scriptures. To remain somewhere is to dwell there continually. Remain is a believer's continual connection to Christ, like branches to a vine, is necessary for spiritual health and yields the fruit of love for others.

What evidence does Jesus mention about abiding in Christ's love?

- obedience of Christ's commands
- follow Christ's example of obedience
- Christ's joy is in us
- joy made complete

Jesus told the disciples that “If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love.” If you do what Jesus tells you to do, you will feel His affection. You will know Him more deeply and you will experience His love.

How would you describe the connection between love and obedience?

- God loves us, and His commandments are for our good.
- We want to please Jesus who loves us.
- We can follow the example of Jesus who obeyed His Father’s commands.
- When you love your parents, obedience is one way of demonstrating that love.
- A child that knows they are loved and loves in return does not want to disappoint others.

Jesus used His relationship with the Father as a model for our relationship with Jesus. We need to have a constant and trusting love. Jesus and the father share a perfect and eternal love. Because of Jesus’ love for the Father, He obeyed the will of His Father. One example is when Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus agonized over the terrible cost of bringing salvation to a lost world. While pleading with God to give Him some other way to fulfill His saving mission, Jesus surrendered His life to obey God’s plan, no matter the cost.

What does this passage tell us about God’s design for us?

- God wants joy for us.
- Even when times are tough, we can know the assurance of God’s love.
- The church, the Body of Christ will support one another with love.
- When we are walking in God’s love, it will be contagious, it will be passed along to others.

In the next verses, we will be reminded that our love for others must mirror Jesus’ love for us.

John 15:11-12 “I have told you these things so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. This is my command: Love one another as I have loved you.”

Is the joy of Christ living in you? Do you exhibit the joy of the Holy Spirit? Is your outlook on life refreshing to those around you? These are some powerful questions for us to think about. Living in Christ should produce joy in our hearts! In the book of John, you find multiple times where Jesus used the word “joy.” When we have the love of Christ flowing in and out of us, others should see that. When we love Jesus and are obedient to His commands, we will experience the joy that Jesus knew. He calls it “my joy.” When we accept Christ’s death and resurrection, we experience the joy of salvation. Our joy is made complete when we are in Heaven with the Lord.

Jesus said: “Love one another as I have loved you.” How did Christ do that? He gave. He forgave. He pardoned. He was gracious, kind, merciful, sacrificial and intentional.

What does it look like to love others in the same way Jesus has loved us?

- We show kindness and love to others.
- We are willing to go out of our way to minister to others.
- It may mean giving money, time, physical and emotional energy.

How have you experienced the joy of someone showing love to you during the recent pandemic?

- people called to check on you and your family
- someone offered or picked up your groceries
- you received a note or card in the mail
- someone helped you do yard work
- someone shared needed supplies
- people faithfully prayed for you

When do you struggle with loving others the way Jesus has loved you?

- when the other person is not so nice
- when they repeatedly act like they expect it
- when thank you is not expressed

Christians are called to love one another. This means we will need to love some people who are not deserving of it. These commands are not always easy, but we can love others if we abide in Christ and depend on His presence and strength. It is a “perfect love” shown to us by Jesus.

Matthew 22:37 – 40 says, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

In verses 13 – 14, we will see the love of Jesus that flows through us to others does not always work at our convenience.

John 15:13–14 “No one has greater love than this: to lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.”

According to Jesus, what was the greatest act of love?

- lay down one’s life for a friend

What does it mean for a person to lay down his life?

- can be literal, such as another person giving their life for another
- can also mean giving of one’s resources – time, finances, energy, skills – to help someone else

Jesus gave up His own life which was the greatest sacrifice of love. Christians can lay down their life by giving of themselves to help others, witness, listen, teach, and serve wherever possible.

What does it mean to be friends with Jesus? How do we show we are His friend?

- obey His commandments
- follow His teachings
- trust Him daily
- live depending on His indwelling presence in our lives

John understood that his job was to serve Jesus humbly and point others to Him. Jesus has chosen us to be His friend. Our friendship is found in our willingness to do what He commands. We are to love one another like He loves us. We are to seek no glory for our works.

We demonstrate true friendship with Jesus when we obey His command to love one another. Salvation is through grace by faith in Christ alone. Our obedience to Him demonstrates the genuineness of our faith. I John 4:19–21 says, “We love because he first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.”

When have you experienced the power of *sacrificial* love?

- parents worked hard to provide for you
- people ministered to you during an illness
- someone helped you with a financial problem
- a friend stood with you when you were in legal trouble

What can you do this week to show your love for others?

There is a song by Fr. Peter Scholtes that says:

We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord;
We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord;
And we pray that all unity will one day be restored.

Chorus: And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,
yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand;
We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand;
And together we'll spread the news that God is in our land.

We will work with each other, we will work side by side;
We will work with each other, we will work side by side;
And we'll guard each man's dignity and save each man's pride.

All praise to the Father, from whom all things come;
And all praise to Christ Jesus, His only Son.
And all praise to the Spirit who makes us one.

Chorus: And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,
yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

