

7 Working in Love

Though there were several boys in Kim's Bible class he was having trouble teaching. He carefully prepared lessons for his students and taught as well as he could. He thought of interesting things for them to do as part of their learning, but there were times when they did not pay attention. Often the boys said things that were disrespectful. This disturbed Kim. Yet he knew that the Lord had guided him to this ministry.

One day during the week Kim was reading his Bible and thinking about his class of boys. As he read John 13 he noticed that Jesus washed His disciples' feet. Then in verse 34 he read the new commandment that Jesus gave to His disciples: they were to love each other as Jesus had loved them. Though Kim had read these verses before, now he saw them in a new way. He realized that there was more to working for the Lord than just using his ministry gift. He must learn to love those he helped and worked with, and that included the boys in his class.

As you study this lesson, you will learn more about the kind of love you need to have as a Christian worker. You will learn about where it comes from and what impact it can have in your life.

The Plan

- A. Love Is From God
- B. Love Is Needed
- C. Love Brings Results

The Goals

1. Describe the love a Christian worker should have.
2. State why Christian workers need to show love.
3. Demonstrate God's love to others.

A. LOVE IS FROM GOD

Goal 1. Describe the love a Christian worker should have.

When we read the Bible we do not need to search long to find that God has shown His love to us. John writes, "This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins" (1 John 4:10).

There is no love greater than God's love. The Father loves us so much that He gave His Son. The Son loved so much that He gave His life. Jesus died for His friends and His enemies. Can any love be greater? Paul writes, "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

In Luke 15:11–24 is the story Jesus told of a young man who left home and wasted his life and money. At home his father waited patiently for the son to return. On the day the son came home, the expectant father saw his son from afar. Overjoyed, he threw his arms around his son and rejoiced, for his wayward son was home at last.

Why did Jesus tell this story? He wanted us to know how God feels about everyone. God does not love only the pretty ones or the clean ones or those who have tried to be good. His

love is far greater than human love. God is love, and He loves all people—from all races, cultures, and social groups.

A story is told of a pastor who discriminated against people who attended his church. He could not embrace the way they dressed. Though he welcomed them into the church, he did not really love them because they were so different.

One day while the pastor was in prayer, the Holy Spirit said to him: “John, you do not love these young people. You only love those who think like you. You only love those who are like yourself.”

This surprised the pastor. He knelt in prayer for a long time. He did not want to admit his sin. Over time, he allowed God to change his heart as he began to welcome the youth. He taught them God’s Word, and they brought their friends. God’s love reached them because the pastor allowed God to change his heart and love them through him.

Application

1 In one or two sentences in your notebook, tell what aspect of love is most clearly shown by each of the following:

- a)** Jesus as described in Romans 5:8
- b)** The father in Luke 15:11–24
- c)** The pastor in the above scenario

2 In your notebook, answer the following questions:

- a)** Who are my enemies that I need to love?
 - b)** Who are the people different from me that I need to love?
 - c)** Who are the people who have wasted their lives in sin that I need to love?
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B. LOVE IS NEEDED

Goal 2. State why Christian workers need to show love.

God has given Christians a great responsibility. Matthew 5 states, “You are the salt of the earth. . . . You are the light of

the world . . . let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (vv. 13–14, 16).

Unless the lives of Christian workers are different from those of the unsaved, how will the world see Jesus? When people see your light they will be drawn to Jesus, the Light of the world. When they see your love they will be drawn to God, who is love. When they see the good things you do, they will know that God is in you and they will praise Him (Matthew 5:16).

It will not always be easy to be like God. When Jesus was here on earth, it was not easy for Him. Your love will be tested. You will not always feel like going the second mile. But if you do, you will be showing the Father’s love.

Our ministry will change people’s lives when we are changed by the Holy Spirit. True love will act. We will be drawn to those who have need when we are ready to minister to their needs. Love flows into the area of need. John sums it up: “Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth” (1 John 3:18).

Application

- 3** Which statements give the most important reasons why Christians workers need to show love?
- a)** It is very difficult to love everyone.
 - b)** A Christian worker’s love will be tested.
 - c)** True love will draw people to God.
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C. LOVE BRINGS RESULTS

Goal 3. Demonstrate God’s love to others.

If Christ is in us, His love is in us. He lives in our actions and will be in us as we allow Him to express himself. God’s love reaches where your love alone will not go. Since God

loved us when we were still sinners, God's love in us will love sinners. Because God loved His enemies, God's love in us will love our enemies. And since God loved those who rejected Him (Luke 23:34), God's love in us will love those who mistreat us (Matthew 5:11–12).

Therefore, it is possible to love everyone only as we let God's love work through us to them. This love is for you. It will do many things that your own love will not do.

Application

- 4** We especially need God's love to be able to love those who
- a)** love us.
 - b)** are sinners.
 - c)** are our enemies.
 - d)** hate us.
 - e)** are kind to us.
 - f)** reject us.
 - g)** understand us.
 - h)** mistreat us.
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What a wonderful gift the Holy Spirit is to us! The Holy Spirit does not just come upon you once. The Spirit abides with you. Jesus said, "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever" (John 14:16).

While the Spirit lives in you, He works to produce the fruit of the Spirit in you. This fruit is not any natural goodness that a person might have. Read Galatians 5:19–21 and see what the natural person is like. How opposite is the product that the Holy Spirit grows in the believer!

Application

- 5** Read Galatians 5:22–23 and 1 Corinthians 13:4–7, and answer the following questions in your notebook:
- a)** Which Scripture names a total of nine qualities that the Spirit produces?
 - b)** Which Scripture describes at least fifteen ways in which love acts?
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Do you see that in 1 Corinthians 13:4–7 we are told how love shows each of the qualities named in Galatians 5:22–23? How important it is for a Christian worker to show God’s love. As we read in 1 Corinthians 13:2, “If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.”

When God made the world He made everything to produce after its kind (Genesis 1). This is true with the Holy Spirit’s work in us too. Producing after His kind, He makes it possible for us to love.

Application

- 6** According to 1 Corinthians 13:2 the ministry gifts are
- a)** useless without love.
 - b)** unrelated to love.
 - c)** not important.
- 7** Circle the letter in front of each TRUE statement.
- a)** The ministry gifts are listed in Galatians 5:22–23.
 - b)** If we try hard, our goodness will make us love as God loves.
 - c)** It is the Holy Spirit’s work in us that makes it possible for us to love as God loves.
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Check Your Answers

- 4** **b)** are sinners.
c) are our enemies.
d) hate us.
f) reject us.
h) mistreat us.
- 1** **a)** Love for those who were still sinners
b) Love for one who had wasted what was given to him
c) Love for those who were different from him (You may not have used these exact words. But the ideas you have should be similar.)
- 5** **a)** Galatians 5:22–23
b) 1 Corinthians 13:4–7
- 2** Your answer. I hope you will ask the Lord to help you love each person you have named.
- 6** **a)** useless without love.
- 3** **c)** True love will draw people to God.
- 7** **a)** False
b) False
c) True

