

Daily Discipleship

John 13:31-35

Prayers of Discipleship *To Love Another*

Focus Question: *How can I show my love for God by loving people?*

word of life

“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.” John 13:34 (NRSV)

Read John 13:31-35

On the night of his arrest, Jesus gathers his disciples together to celebrate the festival of the Passover. It is his last supper with the disciples. Not only had he taught them, but he had healed people, walked on water, and performed other miracles. They had learned much from him, but there was much yet to learn.

To show his love for the disciples and those whom they would be called to serve, Jesus knelt down and washed their dirty and dusty feet. (John 13:1-20) Cleaning feet was an act reserved for servants. Precisely. Jesus took the form of a servant and washed their feet.

1. *What would it have felt like to have your feet washed by Jesus?*
2. *What comes to your mind when you hear this passage?*

Jesus predicts the betrayal of one person at the table. This baffles the disciples; they try to determine who among them might do such a thing. They trust each other and their good intentions. Nevertheless, it is Judas who leaves that intimate scene to do just that.

After Judas leaves, Jesus shares some final words with his students. It is not a speech of gloom, but rather points to God’s glory. The path of Jesus towards death and resurrection is a path which ultimately brings glory. Jesus knows the coming days will not make sense to the followers gathered in that room. It is too much for them to comprehend.

His words become tender as Jesus addresses them by calling them “little children.” As much as Jesus loves them, he knows he needs to leave them in order for God’s glory to come to fruition. He alone must walk this path to his death and to resurrected life. The disciples may think they are ready to accompany Jesus, but he knows they are not yet ready.

3. *What does it mean for Jesus to call his disciples “little children”?*
4. *What does Jesus mean when he says “Where I am going, you cannot go”?*

Then Jesus gives his disciples a new commandment. It is short and easy to remember. Jesus mandates his disciples to love one another. That command might not seem too hard, until Jesus defines the standard of love. These very human disciples are to love as Jesus loves. That means washing the feet of people, forgiving others, and even giving one’s life for them. His model of love is that of God.

5. *What does it mean to love like Jesus?*

Jesus knows people will be watching his disciples. Will they give up after Jesus is no longer with them? Is Jesus merely a fad? Jesus knows these disciples will be a positive witness to Jesus and his love if and when they love one another as Jesus loves them. Love like Jesus. It is a tall order, but those are the final words of Jesus to his disciples of every age.

6. *How do actions of students reflect their teacher?*

word among us

The principal of the high school stopped by the baseball field to see his team play in their first baseball game of the season. Having been a baseball player in high school and college, he was always eager for that first pitch of the season. But it was a painful game for the principal to watch. His high school team played horribly. The catcher couldn't catch the ball. Not at all. What a disappointment!

As the principal walked to the parking lot, he noticed the catcher staring at a flat tire on the player's car. That same catcher who couldn't catch the baseball was proving he couldn't change a tire either. The principal sighed and offered to help. As the principle rolled up his sleeves, he began to sweat in the heat of the day. The student protested, "No, you are my principal. You can't get dirty while changing my tire. This is not right."

But the principal kept on with his task, getting more sweaty and dirty with each passing moment. And in each moment, a special relationship between the principal and the catcher was being forged.

1. *How might that relationship between the principal and catcher change once they work together on the tire?*
2. *What are some other examples of a teacher or leader who reverses things by taking on the role of a servant?*
3. *If Jesus lived today, what parallel task of a servant might he have done, instead of washing feet?*

Jesus follows up his action of love by commanding the disciples to love another. Love, love, Love! It seems that is all Jesus talks about.

4. *Why does Jesus keep repeating this message of love?*
5. *What makes it challenging to love the people in your world?*

Just because someone, even Jesus, commands us to love, it just doesn't happen automatically. But clearly, Jesus places love as a high priority on his list. The standard is *his* kind of loving.

6. *How does the way Jesus shares love compares or contrasts with what is presented on television or in movies?*
7. *Who is teaching you to love like Jesus?*

Loving like Jesus becomes a powerful witness to Jesus. People can observe our behavior and learn something about Jesus and his way of loving.

8. *As people observe you, what might they learn about your teacher Jesus?*
9. *In what situation, do you best reflect the love of Jesus?*
10. *In what situations is it difficult to love?*
11. *Based on these insights, how might God assist you in loving like Jesus?*

Prayer

Loving Jesus, we hear your commandment to love. We are willing, but show us to live your love in a consistent, ongoing way. Amen

Dig Deeper: Revelations 21:1-6

last word

Write LOA on a piece of paper.
Use it to remind yourself to Love One Another.

