



fellowship
Love God. Love People. Develop Disciples.

Lesson 3

LOVE PEOPLE.

WHY we do WHAT we do...and YOU

September 20, 2015

The supernatural result of loving God is loving those He has created in His image. Today we rediscover what God expects when He tells us to **LOVE PEOPLE**.

2 weeks ago we kicked off this new series: **WHY we do WHAT we do...and YOU**.

In **Acts 2** we saw how the fledgling 1st century church grew rapidly as people turned from their sin and trusted Jesus.

Acts 2:42–47 (ESV)

⁴² And they devoted themselves to the **apostles' teaching** and the **fellowship**, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³ And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ And all who believed were **together** and had all things in common. ⁴⁵ And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ And day by day, **attending the temple together** and **breaking bread in their homes**, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And **the Lord added to their number** day by day those who were being saved.

We should be challenged by their example to...

BIG TRUTH: Don't just SHOW UP. SELL OUT!

Their marching orders are OUR marching orders to:
Love God, Love People, and Develop Disciples.

Last week we discovered what it means to LOVE GOD:

BIG TRUTH: Know who God IS. Do what God SAYS.

God reveals THAT He is through NATURE, but God reveals WHO He is through Scripture. And that's why it was so **important** for the early church to be **devoted to the apostles' teaching**. They taught the people WHO God is and commanded them to do WHAT God says.

And the supernatural result of LOVING GOD leads to **LOVING PEOPLE** created in His image. Today we rediscover what God expects when He tells us to LOVE PEOPLE.

Remember the response of Jesus when He was asked...

Matthew 22:36–40 (ESV)

³⁶ “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” ³⁷ And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

³⁸ This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: **You shall love your neighbor as yourself.** ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

These 2 commands are the foundation of ALL the 613 commands God gave the Jewish people. Here’s what that looks like in real life (Ex. 20:1-17).

LOVE GOD.

1. No other gods.
2. No images to worship
3. Honor God’s Name [character].
4. Remember the Lord & rest. “the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God [you, your employees, & your animals]. This principle of REST still applies in the New Testament, but the specific day (Saturday) is not a focus in New Testament. This was meant to recharge your batteries and remember our Great God.

LOVE PEOPLE.

5. Honor your father and mother
6. No Murder [no taking of human life without just cause]
7. No Adultery. [sexual intimacy outside of a marriage relationship]
8. No stealing.
9. Don’t lie about others.
10. Don’t crave what others have [stuff or relationships - wife/husband, employees]

These commands simply tell us **to treat people the way you want to be treated.**

Paul uses same OT commands to challenge New Testament believers to LOVE PEOPLE.

Romans 13:9–10 (ESV)

⁹ For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: **“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”** ¹⁰ Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

In this case, Paul mentions what love DOESN’T DO. **Love does no wrong to a neighbor.** Love treats others the way you want to be treated. We are to love our **neighbor**, so WHO is that?

In **Lev. 19:18**, where the command is first given.

Leviticus 19:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall **love your neighbor as yourself:** I am the LORD.

So first, **loving your neighbor** means loving your own people - those who live near you, many who have mutual commitment to the one true God.

You might call these people **BELIEVING FRIENDS**. But there is something interesting here. Why might a person want to **take vengeance or bear a grudge against** believing friend? Because that person has WRONGED you in some way. In other words, instead of choosing to get mad or get even, God tells His people: LOVE your neighbor as yourself.

So let's define what is meant when we say we are to **LOVE PEOPLE**.

This is more than having fluffy feelings for those who treat you well.

To LOVE PEOPLE is choosing to...

BIG TRUTH: Demonstrate Care Before it's Deserved.

That's FUN when everyone is treating you well, but what happens when a believing friend has wronged you? Your response? **Demonstrate Care Before it's Deserved.**

Did you know it's possible that believing friends could hurt your feelings? When that happens, and it will, here should be our response:

1 John 4:19-21 (ESV)

¹⁹ **We love because he first loved us.** ²⁰ If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. ²¹ And this commandment we have from him: **whoever loves God must also love his brother.**

We demonstrate care before it's deserved...because that's what GOD has done for us!

We love because HE FIRST LOVED US. There's not much sweeter than believers who are willing humble themselves & work through problems - THAT'S WHAT FAMILIES SHOULD DO.

Beyond believing friends, there are others classified as neighbors in the New Testament:

UNBELIEVING FRIENDS & NEW ACQUAINTANCES.

As we studied through **Luke's Gospel - chapter 10** - we talked about the story of the **Good Samaritan**, a story that was prompted by this question by an expert in the religious law. The man asked what he needed to do to inherit eternal life (v.25). Jesus then asked him a question, "*What do you think the Law says about that?*" He responds.

Luke 10:27-29 (ESV)

²⁷ And he answered, "You shall **love the Lord your God** with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, **and your neighbor as yourself.**"

²⁸ And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live." ²⁹ But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

Jesus answered with the story of the Good Samaritan. Two Jews who should have helped the fellow Jew, refused to demonstrate care. Yet the Samaritan saw this Jewish man - a man with a different faith - a man he never met, who had needs he COULD meet - and he did. Jesus then asks the question: "**Which man proved to love his neighbor?**" (v36). The answer is obvious. The Samaritan was the true neighbor, the one who chose to...

Demonstrate Care Before it's Deserved.

So we are to love our friends - believing and unbelieving - as well as care for the needs of people we've just met. So That's everybody...right? NOPE.

Jesus commands us to love... our Enemies!: those who oppose us.

LOVING PEOPLE, especially our enemies - doesn't mean having warm fuzzies and forgetting how they have mistreated us. Instead it means we are committed to **demonstrate care before it's deserved.**

That's what Jesus commands His followers to do.

Luke 6:27–36 (ESV)

²⁷ "But I say to you who hear, **Love your enemies**, do good to those who hate you,
²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. ²⁹ To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. ³⁰ Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. ³¹ And **as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.**

Jesus is not calling us to be door mats, never protect ourselves and those we love. Instead, we are to treat others with Godly graciousness. We want people to love us, pray for us, to bless us rather than curse us, and give to us if we're in need. We want others to **demonstrate care before it's deserved** so we should love them first.

Jesus continues...

³² "If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³ And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴ And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. ³⁵ But **love your enemies**, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for **he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil**. ³⁶ **Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.**

How could we LOVE like that? The willingness & determination to **demonstrate care before it's deserved** can't happen without God's help. It is our Father's example that we follow.

Romans 5:5–8 (ESV)

⁵...God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. ⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— ⁸ but **God shows [demonstrates - NET, NIV, NAS] his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

The Supernatural result when we LOVE GOD with all we are, is that HIS LOVE that **overflows our lives** into the lives of others and empower us to LOVE PEOPLE, to **demonstrate care before it's deserved.**

This is **WHY We Do WHAT We Do...and YOU.**

FEET2FAITH

1. **Love God.**

- Turn from your sin and follow Jesus.
- Start your day in Scripture.
- Pray throughout the day.
- Practice His Presence. (Know and live like God is near)

2. **Love People.** Ask God to help you to **demonstrate care before it's deserved.**

- Start in your home. Care for your family.
- Care for your brothers and sisters in Christ.
- Look for opportunities to demonstrate care to unbelievers in our community.
- And...**CHOOSE to Love your enemies** - in personal prayer, with a kind smile, a thoughtful response, & an act of service. You are not responsible for the response. You are responsible to obey Jesus...and who knows? Maybe the Lord will use your example to penetrate a calloused soul.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These open-ended questions are designed to help you LIVE what you LEARN with your Family, Friends, or Community Group.

1. **Read Matthew 22:36–40 & Exodus 20:1-17.** Does it surprise you, help you, or confuse you to see that all the Laws of God fall under the umbrella of loving God or loving people? Explain your answer.
2. **BIG TRUTH: Demonstrate Care Before it's Deserved.** Even if you are frustrated by someone else and don't get the 'warm fuzzies' about them, how does this definition help you reconsider how to LOVE PEOPLE?
3. **Read 1 John 4:19–21.** Since the first people we are called to love are brothers and sisters in Christ, why is it so important that we seek to make things right with each other?
4. **Read Romans 5:5-8 & Luke 6:27-36.** When comparing these 2 passages, how should God's treatment of us challenge us to treat our enemies with care? Can you share a story about how loving an enemy made an eternal impact?
5. What questions, answers, concerns, or encouragements do today's study stir up for you? What are you going to DO with what you heard today?

* Share your prayer needs and **PRAY to the FATHER** together!