

Discipleship Questions

What does it mean to love God, and how will this impact making disciples?

What does it mean to love others, and how will this impact making disciples?

How will recognizing the love of Christ impact your disciple-making work?

How should love view and act toward those who are spiritually lost?

How is love willing to spend and be spent in discipleship?

How will God view your disciple-making efforts if your life is not full of love?

What are some characteristics of love, and how will they impact your disciple-making efforts?

How must love and truth coexist in your disciple-making efforts?



The work of making disciples for Jesus Christ is the great mission Jesus has given all His disciples (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). It should be considered a great privilege for any disciple to take part in fulfilling this mission. This great work, however, needs the proper engine to run in the way God desires. Therefore, in all the efforts that are made, strategies that can be considered, methods that can be employed, etc., there simply is no substitute for love. For the right kind of love will motivate you to figure out what is needed in the work and do whatever you can to accomplish God's work in the most effective way possible.

Matthew 22:36-40

Jesus identified loving God with the entirety of your being and loving your neighbor as yourself as the greatest commands in the Old Testament Law (Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18). I believe this is still true in Jesus's new law today. To "love" according to this command is to sacrificially focus on the best interests and needs of another above yourself, regardless of who it is (as God has demonstrated for you, John 3:16; Romans 5:6-11). This self-sacrificing love for God and others must be at the core of all disciple-making efforts!

2 Corinthians 5:14-15

The sacrificial love Christ demonstrated should control/compel you. You should recognize the cost He paid for your salvation and determine that your life should now be devoted to Him in zealous service (Titus 2:11-14; Romans 12:1-2). This kind of love for God will sacrifice your time, energy, money, freedoms/liberties, possessions, safety, and everything that makes up your life (including life itself) to use in accomplishing His work (John 14:15; 1 John 5:3) – including in the work of making disciples! This will pay

huge dividends in finding opportunities to make disciples and in how far you are willing to go to help someone be a disciple of Christ.

Romans 9:1-3

Notice Paul's love for people (unbelieving Jews) who were spiritually lost. The book of Acts and Paul's writings often detail how devoted Paul was to helping them come to the saving faith of Jesus Christ, even at great personal cost (e.g., Acts 20:17-24; 21:10-14). His example illustrates how sacrificial love is unable to sit idly by while others are lost and headed for eternal separation from God (Acts 17:16-17). Developing this kind of love for God and others will lead you to be tremendously aware of the spiritual needs of others and sacrificial in your efforts to do whatever you can to point others to the salvation in Jesus Christ!

2 Corinthians 12:14-15

As the apostle Paul dealt with false accusations among the Corinthian church he worked with, he demonstrated his great care for them, regardless of how they treated him. Notice how he would sacrifice for them by spending and being spent. First, he was willing to spend his own resources on them. Second, he was willing to allow them to consume him. This was unconditional love focused on their spiritual needs and his desire for them to mature in Christ, even when it was not appreciated or reciprocated! In the same way, love for others will drive you to spend for and be spent by those you are trying to help follow the Lord (e.g., money, time, energy, possessions, health, etc.) – even through sacrifices, pain, tears, sleeplessness, etc.! For it is much like trying to spiritually parent children and lead them in ways that are right, even when they don't always understand, care to listen, or reciprocate care (1 Thessalonians 2:1-12)!

1 Corinthians 13:1-7

Without possessing and demonstrating sacrificial love, it does not matter what you do or how you live, you will not please God! So, in disciple-making work, it doesn't matter what skills you may possess, how knowledgeable you are of God's word, what methods you may employ, or how devoted you are in your faith; none of these will cover the absence of true Christ-like, sacrificial love! First, love is patient. It endures hardships, wrongs, and challenges in ways that focus on the good of others. Second, love is kind. It is generous, charitable, considerate, and helpful to others. Third, love does not envy. It stays away from rivalry and jealousy toward others. Fourth, love is not boastful. It does not brag, show off, or need selfish attention from others. Fifth, love is not arrogant. It does not have an inflated idea of one's own importance or hold self over others. Sixth, love is not rude. It does not act or talk in a manner that is unbecoming of a Christian. Seventh, love is

not self-seeking. It does not selfishly put personal interests and desires above others or make others serve you. Eighth, love is not irritable. It is not easily drawn into emotion that lashes out in an angry and unbecoming way. Ninth, love does not keep a record of wrongs. It does not dwell on the wrongs others have committed to become bitter or resentful, or refuse to extend forgiveness or help. Tenth, love finds no joy in unrighteousness. It is not happy whenever someone sins against God in any way. Eleventh, love rejoices in the truth. It wants and finds joy when others live according to the truth God has revealed. Twelfth, love bears all things. It bears with and protects others by being committed to doing what is in the best interest of the other person. Thirteenth, love believes all things. It (although not blind to truth) always seeks to trust others, is not cynical or quick to find fault in others for no reason at all, causes us to believe the best possible things about others, and causes us to assign the best possible motives on the actions of others rather than quickly assuming the worst. Fourteenth, love hopes all things. It holds out hope for the best, that things will get better. Fifteenth, love endures all things. It does not give up even when evils and challenges are experienced or committed.

Ephesians 4:15; 2 Timothy 1:13

As those who are spiritually mature work to help others become and grow as disciples of Christ, it is critical to speak the truth (John 8:31-32; Romans 1:16). However, it is also important that the truth be spoken with love. This implies that it is possible to speak the truth without love flavoring every word. This can actually result in the truth being used to harm people and push them away from Christ rather than set them free and draw them to Christ. Therefore, you must make sure that your truth-filled words are flavored with the love of Christ (Colossians 4:2-6)!

Conclusion

Your work of making disciples will not be pleasing to God without sacrificial love for God and others. Although you may prepare yourself with Bible knowledge, religious devotion, moral purity, strategies and methods, etc., your work will be in vain without love! When you have developed Christ-like love toward God and others, it will lead you to doing all the things you should do that please God in the work of leading others to be followers of Jesus Christ. Therefore, you should consider the nature of true Christ-like love and evaluate where your love needs to grow to aid in your work of disciple-making!

Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series

Written by Eric Krieg

Watch video @ WWW.GODSAIDSO.COM/DGW623