

God's GOAL in me

God's Goal In Me John 13:34-35

Before Jesus gave His disciples this new commandment, Jesus had taught His disciples the greatest commandments in the law on love.

Matthew 22:35-40

35 Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying,

36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?"

37 Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'

38 This is the first and great commandment.

39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

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Most churches consider these two commandments to be the core of correct Christian lifestyle.

But Jesus gave His disciples a new commandment that gave them very specific direction and application about love in their relationship to one another.

John 13:34-35

34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

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Jesus waited until 24 hours before His crucifixion and his very last instructions to His disciples to give them this new commandment.

- He waited until He had washed their feet at the last supper.
- He waited until after he had introduced communion and the new covenant in His blood.
- He waited until after He had identified the one who would betray Him.
- He waited until Judas Iscariot had left to betray him.

After Judas left, in His very last private discourse to His 11 remaining disciples, Jesus gave them this new commandment three times.

1. John 13:34
2. John 15:12
3. John 15:17

- He saved this new commandment because He wanted them to remember it.
- He saved this new commandment because it was the most important commandment, He gave them.
- He saved this new commandment because it would be the most difficult commandment for them to obey.

To love one another as He had loved them would require that they sacrifice everything for one another the way He sacrificed everything for them.

For over three years...

- He had sacrificed His time to share His life with them.
- He had sacrificed relationships to have relationship with them.
- He had sacrificed financially and materially to minister to them.

For over three years He sacrificed everything for their well-being.

They could recall times when they did not understand or agree with what He chose to do or how He led them. But they could not recall one time that He put himself before their wellbeing.

Now He tells them to love one another the way He had loved them.

Perhaps some of them would have expected Him to give them such a command if they ever married.

But they never expected Him to give them this commandment for one another.

Then He tags this new commandment with, obeying this commandment will determine whether all will know that you are my disciples. In other words, if you don't obey this commandment, you will not have any credibility as my followers. You can obey all the other commands I have given you, but this is the one that will prove that you are my disciples.

His disciples would not only obey this commandment, but they would pass this commandment on to the church.

1 John 4:7-11

7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

9 In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.

10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

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1 John 3:23

23 And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.

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Paul was not one of the disciples when Jesus gave them this command. But He would say to the church.

Galatians 6:2

2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

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Romans 12:10

10 Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another...

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Those in the gentile church did not have the privilege of being with Jesus and seeing how He loved His disciples. Most of them would never even meet one of those disciples. Paul used a picture of love that they could relate to; brotherly love.

- Brotherly love is the deep affection of a family for one another that comes from deep bonds that no one outside the family shares.
- Brotherly love is the loyalty that you see in a family when they rally to one another's defense or to support one another.
- Brotherly love is the pride you see in a family when one of their members is successful.
- Brotherly love is the pain you see in a family when one of their members is hurting themselves and the family.
- Brotherly love is the transparency and honesty you see in a family when their brother or sister is on the wrong course.

Brotherly love is the sacrifice you see in a family for one another. Brotherly love is how Jesus loved His disciples.

If the gentiles had never experienced brotherly love with their own families, they had seen it in other families. They could understand from what they had seen how Paul was telling them to love one another.

Paul loved to use this picture for the gentile churches.

The early church followed the example set for them by the disciples of Jesus and they loved one another the way Jesus loved His disciples.

Acts 2:41-47

41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.

42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

43 Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

44 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common,

45 and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,

47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

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God blessed them, and they changed the world. God used the early church to begin the greatest spiritual awakening in the history of the world.

The way Jesus loved His disciples is the kind of love we are supposed to have for one another in the church.

Would you admit that it is very difficult to love one another in the church the way Jesus loved His disciples?

- He sacrificed His time to share His life with them.
- He sacrificed relationships to have relationship with them.
- He sacrificed financially and materially to serve them.

He had sacrificed His life for their wellbeing.

What must change in the church for us to fulfill this commandment?

- We must change the structure of the way we do church.

Structure is important. Ask any corporate CEO how important structure is to be efficient to his business. Ask any soldier how important structure is to success in combat. Ask any coach how important structure is to win a game. Structure is critical.

While living in the flesh, Jesus did not love everyone the way He loved His disciples. He did not sacrifice His time to share His life with everyone the way He did with His disciples. He did not sacrifice relationships to share life with everyone the way He did with His disciples. He did not sacrifice financially and materially for everyone the way He did for His disciples. He sacrificed himself for their well-being in ways that He did not do for everyone.

Jesus did church like this with 12 guys. That was His structure.

Luke 6:12-13

12 Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

13 And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles:

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The early church followed His example. After Pentecost when 3000 converted to Christ, they met as a congregation at the temple every day, but they also divided into small groups and met in homes, having fellowship, breaking bread together, and praying with and for one another.

Acts 2:46-47

46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,

47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

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If we are going to love one another the way Jesus loved His disciples, we must change the structure of the way we do church.

- We must commit ourselves to love others using the meaning of the word love that Jesus used in this commandment.

We use the word love to describe our affections. We use the word making love to describe sex.

The word Jesus used in His command is derived from the Greek Word Agape.

Agape love is a moral commitment to do what is best based on God's Word for another person's wellbeing.

Do you honestly think that Jesus liked all 12 of His disciples and that was why He loved them the way He loved them? He did not love them because of His feelings. He loved them despite His feelings about them.

We know that Paul had clashes with people that were immature. He loved them despite His feelings.

If we don't have the right definition of love, we will always have a good excuse not to love them.

If we are going to love one another the way Jesus loved His disciples we must, we must commit ourselves to love others using the meaning of the word love that Jesus used in this commandment.

- We must depend on God's power.

Don't react to this command by saying, "I can't do that. There are too many weirdoes and goofballs and emotional misfits in the church." Since when are the commands of God supposed to be doable in our own strength?

"With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26).

Philippians 4:13

13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

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What Jesus asks us to do is impossible in our own strength. Jesus knew that. He said that. But Jesus promised His followers His strength; the same strength that performed miracles; the same strength that raised Jesus from the dead; the same strength that enabled Him to love you.

We are not all given the same spiritual gifts that Jesus had. We are all given the same Spirit and the same strength to love that Jesus had. (Acts 1:8)

Without this understanding of the gospel we will make excuses for not loving others like, "but that was Jesus! I am not Jesus?"

That is true. There is only one Jesus. But the gospel of Jesus Christ is that Jesus is in you. He will enable you to do what ever He commands you to do. He commands us to love one another as He loved His disciples.

If we are going to love one another the way Jesus loved His disciples, we must depend on God's power.

- We must believe all the promises of the gospel.

God's power is given to us when we pray in faith believing.

Matthew 21:22

22 And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

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Faith is based on the Word of God and the promises of God.

Romans 10:17

17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

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Jesus promised that if we received Him, His Spirit would dwell in us and we would be born again. He promised that this change in our inner man would enable us to experience His power.

Do you believe in this promise of the gospel?

I want to, but I have all these desires that are sinful and selfish. Yes, and you always have these desires in your flesh as long as you live in your current body.

In your flesh are all kinds of desires that tempt you not to love those that you are called to love.

- I like being free of all responsibility
- I like keeping people at arm's distance
- I like putting myself first
- I like talking about me
- I like getting things done quickly
- I like getting credit for what I do
- I like feeling that I am better than you
- I like ignoring your needs
- I like making excuses
- I like getting what I want
- I like thinking you are getting what you deserve
- I like giving up on you

The gospel of Jesus Christ is these desires that tempt me not to love are in my flesh. (Romans 7:18)

But these desires no longer define who I am.

2 Corinthians 5:17

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

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Even if I give in to one or more of these desires, they do not define me in God's eyes.

2 Corinthians 5:21

21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

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God sees Christ in me and He sees me in Christ. He is disappointed and even grieved when I yield to the flesh and its desires. But my failure does not change what He sees. He sees Christ and me as one.

He grieves over what my sin does to myself and to others. But His greatest grief is when I do not repent because of my unbelief in the gospel of Jesus Christ. I have fallen away from the grace of God.

For me to love others the way Jesus Christ loved His disciples, I must believe the promises of the gospel. We are made for this.

If I believe in the promises of the gospel, my experience is that God sees my faith and activates His power in me before I even ask.

If we are going to love others the way Jesus loved His disciples, we must believe in all the promises of the gospel.

Conclusion

God's goal in His church is for us to be like Jesus.

To be like Jesus...

- We must serve without any motive of personal reward (Philippians 2:1-5)
- We must forgive one another as God in Christ has forgiven us (Ephesians 4:29-32)
- We must love one another as Jesus loved His disciples (John 13:34-35)

You cannot love others the way Jesus loved His disciples until you receive Jesus. (Share gospel)

When it comes to brotherly love, there are a lot of families and churches that don't have it. There are gangs that practice brotherly love better than many families and the church. One of the reasons they don't have it is because they do not know Jesus. To love others the way Jesus loved His disciples, you must receive Jesus.

You cannot love others the way Jesus loved His disciples unless you are willing to change how you do church.

You cannot love others the way Jesus loved His disciples unless you commit to love others the way God loves you.

You cannot love others the way Jesus loved His disciples unless you depend on God's power.

You cannot love others the way Jesus loved His disciples unless you believe all the promises of the gospel.

What needs to change in you? Will you make these changes?