



Day 2

Love

Silence (2 minutes) Take some time to be quiet, to calm down, and to listen. What has God been teaching you? What are the next steps He wants you to take? How is your spirit doing?

Scripture *A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another.* John 13:34-35

Discussion Jesus gave this command during the Last Supper after he had washed the disciples feet, including Judas, who was already on his way to betray Him. This new command can be understood in three parts: 1) To love one another. 2) To love as Jesus loved them. 3) It is by this love that non-believers will know they follow Jesus. These three parts are a useful guide in outlining how we as Christians are to embody God's love today. In the first part we are commanded to love one another, meaning our Christian brothers and sisters. The best way to begin is prayer: continually asking for opportunities to show Christ's love to the Body of Christ. Jesus taught us to be persistent in prayer, to keep asking, seeking, and knocking. *"If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him!"* (Mat. 7:11) The Lord may then reveal to us people who need encouragement, a meal, or a ride. The Lord may reveal to us brothers and sisters in Christ who are very different from us, people we aren't interested in, who aren't fun to be with, who might irritate or bore us, people we may have had a conflict with in the past; even people we avoid. This is where the second part becomes so crucial: we must love our Christian brothers and sisters just as Christ has loved us! Growing in Christ-like love means we are to be gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in love (Psalm 103:8) just as God is. As we grow in this love for one another, something incredible happens: the world around us will start to notice that there is something different about us. This is the third part of Christ's command: that our love be a living witness to our faith in Jesus Christ. This doesn't mean that we seek ways to demonstrate our righteousness before others, rather, that our love for the Church and all of its members is so strong that those who are not believers can't help but say "there's something different about you!"

Application Consider how your life demonstrates the love of Christ for your brothers and sisters in Christ. Are there any areas or people that God is bringing to mind? Jesus' command is about more than just general warm feelings for the Body of Christ, it's about demonstrating that love in real, tangible ways. Think of one tangible way to demonstrate this love today, and commit to it!

Prayer Jesus, thank You for Your love for the Church. Thank You that You chose to become human and to die for us, so that we could be reconciled with and adopted by our Father. Thank You for Your example of love. Please change me so I am more loving of my brothers and sisters in Christ. You know me; You know my thoughts, motives, and actions. Please show me who and how to love. Thank You that You will do this. I submit myself to You. Amen.

Silence (2 minutes) Talk to God about what you are learning. What are your fears? Where are your hangups? Pray for direction.

Scripture memory for the week: *"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."* Mark 12:29-31

