

## A. John 15:12-17 – Love one another

1. John 15:12 – “ *This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you .*” After teaching extensively on abiding in the vine (Christ), the Lord gave the idealistic command to love one another just as He loves us. Humanly speaking this is **impossible**. Romans 5:12, 8:4; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7
  - a. To love as Christ loved is only possible for the person who abides in Christ and in whom Christ also abides. Christ’s command is that we unselfishly seek what is best for each other, just as Christ seeks what is **best** for us. Romans 5:6-8, Galatians 5:22a, Philippians 2:3-8
  - b. To unselfishly love others is called the **law** of Christ. Galatians 6:2 gives an active explanation of this command: “ *Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ .*”
  - c. In John 14:15 we saw that Jesus told the disciples if they loved Him, they would keep His commandments. In Romans 13:8-9 the apostle Paul wrote that God’s commands are “**summed up** in this saying, ‘*You shall love your neighbor as yourself*’.”
  - d. Galatians 5:14 repeats this same principle when it says that *the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, ‘you shall love your neighbor as yourself’* . Matthew 7:12, 1 Corinthians 9:19-23; Galatians 5:13-14; 1 John 2:7-11, 5:3
  - e. If we do not love our brothers and sisters in Christ, then we are walking in **darkness**. If we do not love others, we are not loving God who made them. If we love Christ, we will guard His command to love others. 1 John 2:7-11
2. John 15:13 – “ *Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends .*” The highest form of **love** is sacrificing yourself for others. This expresses the essence of the gospel. John 3:16, Romans 5:6-8, Hebrews 2:9-12
  - a. True love is seen in Christ when He came into this dark world and **died** in our place while we were still utterly lost and helpless sinners. The simple truth is, most of us would never think of dying even for a worthy person, much less for a sinner. Ephesians 2:1-9
  - b. Our God, on the other hand, showed us unbounded love by sending His only Son to die on our behalf, an act that is entirely alien to our nature. Jesus gave Himself for us when we were totally undeserving evil sinners and that, my friend, becomes the factual **definition** of true love.
  - c. That is the kind of love Christ had for us and that is the kind of love we **exhibit** when we keep His words and abide in active fellowship with Him. Romans 8:4
3. John 15:14a – “*You are My friends if you do what I command you.*” 1 John 2:4 says that the one who says, “*I have come to know Him,*” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. We cannot have friendship with God when we walk in darkness. Matthew 12:50, 1 John 1:5-7, 2:3-6
4. John 15:14b – “*You are My friends if you do what I command you.*” This *if* statement is a 3<sup>rd</sup> class condition in the Greek meaning that maybe you will do what He commands or maybe you will not. It is up to each individual believer to decide whether he or she will do what God commands and walk in dependent friendship with Christ or not.
  - a. Those who have a consistent friendship with Christ, based on abiding in Him, have lives marked by fruitfulness, **joy**, and obedience. Galatians 5:16, 22-23; Ephesians 5:8-9
  - b. Those who choose **not** to abide in friendship with Christ will experience a barren, sorrowful, and defiant life. Romans 8:6-8
  - c. Clearly, our friendship with Christ is closely **linked** to our submission to His commands. 1 John 1:6
5. John 15:15 – “ *No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.*” Christ proceeded to explain the kind of relationship we have with Him. Our relationship with Him is not slave to master but rather a **friend** to friend bond.
  - a. Earlier Jesus spoke of loving Him and loving one another. Now He spoke of friendship. Jesus had **washed** their feet, eaten with them, and walked and talked with them as friends. He had corrected, instructed, encouraged and sacrificed for His disciples; they were truly His friends.
  - b. Jesus was **happy** to share with the disciples *all things* that the Father had communicated to Him. A friend gets to sit at the table, but a slave stands off to the side watching and serving. A slave is not in on conversations, but Christ had brought them into His confidence. Psalm 25:14, Proverbs 18:24b
  - c. Now in the present Church Age, Christ communicates with believers through His inspired written word and by means of His Holy Spirit. He wants us to know Him. He wants to guide and teach us. And He wants us to

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be involved in His **plans**. Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 2:16, Colossians 1:9-11

6. John 15:16 – Here in this verse Jesus used five verbs (go, bear, remain, ask, give), each one in the subjunctive mood. This grammar choice expressed a desired and optimistic outcome rather than an absolutely guaranteed outcome. This communicates that we have been **chosen** with the desired goal of bearing fruit in our service to God. Ephesians 2:10
  - a. John 15:16a – “*You did not choose Me, but I chose you...*” This choosing had nothing to do with an election to salvation. Jesus was telling His disciples that He had personally selected them from among the masses in Israel to be His **disciples**. Often a student chose a teacher, but here the ultimate teacher of teachers hand-picked these students.
  - b. John 15:16b – “*... and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain ...*” Jesus said that He handpicked and commissioned them to go out into the world and produce fruit that would not spoil. They had seen a divine **model** of love in action. He had taught them through correction, instruction and encouragement.
  - c. John 15:16b – “*...so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you .*” Jesus made a promise. This was not a blank check for selfish use, but as they went out to serve and bear lasting fruit, if they had a need, they were to boldly make their **request** known to the Father in Christ’s name and the Father would readily answer.
7. John 15:17 – “*This I command you, that you love one another.*” The command to love is a primary theme of the chapter. In John 15:12 Jesus said, “*this is My commandment, that you love one another.*” This kind of love is not natural to us. We are naturally **selfish**. Therefore, we must *abide in Christ since apart from [Him we] can do nothing*. John 15:4-5
  - a. Why would we be commanded to love one another? Because in life there are many things that will put your love to the test. There will be disagreements, disappointments, conflicts, sin, and the like. Without a **command** like this to love each other, we’d likely not even care to pursue forgiveness and unity. John 13:34-35
  - b. Even the very night Jesus gave this twice-repeated command, those He loved most had been exasperatingly stubborn, asking irrational questions and making brash statements (Peter). Judas had left the group to betray Him. Jesus was not talking about some cheap human **emotion**. He was talking about the agape love, a love that stems from God.