

Charles R. Swindoll wrote, *“Love has been called the most effective motivational force in all the world. When love is at work in us, it is remarkable how giving and forgiving, understanding and tolerant we can be.”*

The phrase “one another” is used often in the New Testament alongside commands for Christians on how they are to live out their faith in relationships. It’s used more than 47 times to give instructions to the church. These instructions include humility, unity, truthfulness, corporate prayer, hospitality, and most importantly, love.

Something New

Ever since sin entered the world in Genesis 3, there has been brokenness in relationships. Sin is evidenced in pride, selfishness, and all kinds of conflict. Sadly, we see these same characteristics of sin in the church today, causing much pain. This should not surprise us, but we should never accept it; it is not the way Jesus intends for his church to exist.

In John 13, we read about the final encouragement and instructions Jesus gave the disciples at the last Passover supper with them. Jesus was preparing his disciples for what lay ahead, and in verse 34, Jesus said, *“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.”*

The word *new* does not mean “new in time,” it means “new in experience, fresh.” It is the opposite of “worn out.” Love would take on a new meaning and power because of the death of Christ on the cross (see John 15:13). With the coming of the Holy Spirit, love would have a new power in their lives. The presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives is not an added feature; rather, it is a totally new way of living and seeing the world. The commandment Jesus gave was only doable because of the coming Holy Spirit.

This is a supernatural love that we can have as believers for one another in the church because of the Holy Spirit’s presence in our lives. Sadly, churches get so used to the word love that it can be dismissed as people gloss over the necessity of love in our community.

“A community built by God through the gospel of Jesus Christ that is evidently supernatural.”
Mark Dever.

The Gospel Revealed

The unity and commitment within the community of the church is only explainable by the redeeming work of Jesus and the presence of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. This kind of community is a Gospel revealing community; when we love as Christ commanded, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the truth and the power of the Gospel is evident to the community around us. It is a supernatural experience.

God is glorified when His church operates in unity, humility, and love, intentionally seeking the care and well-being of one another. This is the kind of community we must always pray for. The fact that we have the One Another commands in the Bible reveals that God wants us to work towards this, to make every effort to give Him our yes for community. God wants His Church to exert effort to care for one another. As we will see, this is not an optional part of our Christian

walk. The “one another’s” are not just for church leaders but for all who call themselves Christian.

John 13:35, *“By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”* There will be a conspicuous difference in the church that is committed to bringing glory to God through our love for one another. It is love that is the true evidence that we belong to Jesus Christ.

D.A. Carson writes, *“This display of unity is so compelling, so un-worldly, that their witness as to who Jesus is becomes explainable only if Jesus truly is the revealer whom the Father has sent.”*

John 13 begins and ends with Love, verse 1 reads, *“Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.”*

The church leader Tertullian quoted the pagans as saying of the Christians, *“See how they love one another?”*

The Church Today

Sadly, the church today is known for scandals, legal battles, prideful leaders, and angry theological arguments about secondary issues. We have missed the mark; the church needs to repent and come back to simplicity and the power of loving one another. We display the evidence of that love when we do what Jesus did, we lay down our lives in preference for others (see 1 John 3:16).

There are many ways in which we can do this. Here are some simple examples:

- Serve as a volunteer at one of our monthly luncheons.
- Volunteer in the Kids’ Church, once a month.
- Volunteer with the youth group.
- Visit those in the hospital or take a meal to a family who is suffering from sickness.
- Take a new guest out to lunch after the service.
- Simply get to know one another and build relationships.

Again, the love that we are aiming at is not naturally caring for one another because we like each other; that is good, but we are aiming at a supernatural love that, in spite of our differences and backgrounds, we display uncommon unity and care for one another that is unusual in the eyes of the world.

Are you loving others as Jesus loved you?