

“BEING A CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST!”

The Bible tells us:

- 1) **God’s dominant characteristic is L_____ . The dominant characteristic of His spiritual children should be L_____ . The dominant characteristic of a church of Jesus Christ should be L_____ and related virtues!**

I John 4:7-12 (all scriptures NIV): “Dear friends, let us **love one another**, for **love comes from God ... God is love ...** Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another ... if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us ... **God is love.** Whoever lives in love, lives in God, and God in him ... *we love because He first loved us ...* **whoever loves God must also love his brother”.**

Matthew 22:34-40: “... which is the greatest commandment in the Law? Jesus replied: “**Love the Lord your God** with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: **Love your neighbor as yourself.** All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments”.

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

Other Related Scriptures: I Corinthians 13:1-3; Ephesians 5:1-2; John 15:12-17

- 2) **By studying the B_____, we can learn what true L_____ is all about!**

Read I Corinthians 13: 4-8

THE STORY (PARABLE) OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN (Luke 10:25-37)

Cast of Characters:

Robbers

Jewish Man going from Jerusalem to Jericho, who was robbed and badly beaten by robbers.

3 Men who had opportunity to help this Jewish man:

- 1) **Jewish Priest** – a professional religious leader
- 2) **Jewish Levite** – a lay religious leader/associate
- 3) **Samaritan** – Samaritans were considered enemies of the Jews; Samaritans and Jews hated each other. Samaritans were considered inferior because they were of mixed Jewish and Gentile descent; there were also religious and political differences.

Luke 10:25: On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

26: “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

27: He answered: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’, and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’

28: “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

29: But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

30: In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead.

31: A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.

32: So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

33: But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him.

34: He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him.

35: The next day he took out two silver coins, and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

36: Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

37: The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

What can we learn about Biblical love from this story?

We should demonstrate love to _____ (Matthew 22:34-40; Luke 6:27-36)

Characteristics of Biblical love:

C _____

C _____

U _____

S _____

A _____

Meets N _____

Christian Living and Loving from Colossians 3:12-17

Therefore, as *God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved*, clothe yourselves with compassion,

kindness,

humility,

gentleness

and patience.

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another.

Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

*And over all these virtues put on **love**, which binds them all together in perfect **unity**.*

- 3) **The church of Jesus Christ should also be known for its U _____, including unity of position in Christ, unity of purpose and unity of values.**

John 17:20-23 “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that **all of them may be one**, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to **complete unity** to let the *world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me*”.

Our position in Christ: God’s dearly loved spiritual children (Colossians 3:12).

Our purposes in Christ: Glorify God, by loving God and loving others and by making disciples (I Corinthians 10:31; Matthew 22:34-40, 28:18-20).

Our common Core Values:

Six Individual values: a Commitment to Loving God; a Commitment to Loving People; a Commitment to Personal Transformation (becoming more like Jesus); a Commitment to Humble Servant-hood; a Commitment to Integrity; and a commitment to Partnership.

Six corporate values: a Commitment to Biblical Authority and Truth; a Commitment to Reaching People for Jesus; a Commitment to Discipleship and Ministry; a Commitment to Prayer and Worship; a Commitment to Biblical Community; and a Commitment to Grace.

- 4) **A church of Jesus Christ should have three-fold focus: U_____ focus (God), I_____ focus (Believers) and E_____ focus (Unbelievers).**

Refer to Acts 2:42-47

- 5) **Christ came to heal the s_____, and His church should be a “spiritual hospital” for all who come (inclusive), not a “spiritual country club” for the privileged few (exclusive).**

- a) **Jesus said “... it is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners” (Mark 2:13-17; Matthew 9:9-13; Luke 5:27-32).**
- b) **Jesus was and is the friend of sinners (Luke 15:1-2; Mat 9:9-13; Mark 2:15-17; Luke 5:27-32). All of heaven rejoices when ONE sinner repents and is saved ... and so should we! (Luke 15:10).**
- c) **“We should do everything we can short of sinning to reach people for Jesus” (quote from Haddon Robinson, past President of Denver Seminary)! We should remove unnecessary obstacles when reaching out to non-Christians (I Corinthians 9:19-23, 10:31-11:1, 14:23-24).**

6) God gives us r_____ and s_____ to help us be successful in being a church of Jesus Christ.

a) Partnership with Jesus

Matthew 28: 18-20 “**All authority** in Heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations ... surely **I am with you always**, to the very end of the age”.

Philippians 4:13 “**I can do all things through Christ** who strengthens me”.

b) Help from the Holy Spirit

Acts 1:8 “But you will receive **power** when the **Holy Spirit** comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”.

c) Power of Love

Refer to prior scriptures on love.

d) Power of Prayer (refer to Matthew 7:7-12; Luke 11:1-15)

e) Power of the Word

God's word is "living and active" and will achieve it's purposes (Hebrews 4:12-13; Isaiah 55:10-11). God's word can equip us for good works (II Timothy 3:16-17). Learning AND applying the word results in great spiritual growth, fruitfulness and blessing (Mark 4:3-20; Luke 8:15, 19-21, 11:28).

APPLICATION: STEPPING UP FOR JESUS!!

- 1) **What would Jesus have me do as an individual to "step up" for Him to help strengthen His church?**

Prayer life? Bible study and application? Service & ministry? Financial giving? Reaching out to people who need Jesus (see Prayer List form)? Other?

- 2) **What can we do as a church body to "step up" for Jesus?**

Love more deeply? Be more welcoming and inclusive? Be more unified around our common purposes and values? Remove unnecessary obstacles to outsiders?