

## Principle #10

# Loving One Another *the mark of authenticity*



## Principles of Discipleship

Christ's great command to His disciples in John 15, regarding how they were to treat each other in His absence, was simple and memorable: *"love one another"*. He used the word *agape*, which was more than friendship, more than brotherly kindness; *agape* was the self-sacrificing lifestyle which they had observed in Him over their last three years together. Then Jesus, in His high-priestly prayer of John 17, prayed that this kind of love, resulting in unity, would be a witness to the authenticity of Christianity - *"that the world may know that Thou didst send Me"*. Quite a challenge!

However, the word "love" is still so big, so all-encompassing. How does it work itself out, practically? That is where another Greek word comes in: *"allelon"*. (It's pronounced like "all-alone", but it means just the opposite!) It's the New Testament word for *"one another"*, and it occurs 58 times in the Epistles. If "love" is the skeleton, then the "one another" concepts are the flesh. They are the specific ways in which we live out the general command to love another.

### JOHN 15

<sup>12</sup> My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

<sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. <sup>14</sup> You are my friends if you do what I command. <sup>15</sup> I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. <sup>16</sup> You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit--fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. <sup>17</sup> This is my command: Love each other.

### Main Passages: John 15 and Romans 12

1. In John 15, Jesus outlines 3 relationships that every believer has. What are they?

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2. The second of these 3 relationships is found in the passage to the left. How does it relate to the Great Commandments cited by Jesus? (Mark 12:29-31)

3. What is Jesus' definition of the difference between servants and friends?

4. Verse 12 - "As I have loved you" - how does this qualify Jesus' command?

5. Why do you think this command was so important to Jesus as He was about to leave His disciples?

## ROMANS 12

<sup>12:9</sup> Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. <sup>10</sup> Be devoted to **one another** in brotherly love. Honor **one another** above yourselves. <sup>11</sup> Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. <sup>12</sup> Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. <sup>13</sup> Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

<sup>12:14</sup> Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. <sup>15</sup> Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. <sup>16</sup> Live in harmony with **one another**. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

**Using a concordance, look up all the occurrences of "one another" or "each other" in the New Testament, starting with Romans 12, through 2 John.** (Some of them can be weeded out, like 1 Cor 11:33, Galatians 5:15, and Titus 3:3; although we can profit by the negative "one anothers" also, seeing what we should not be doing.) List these below:

**Now, pick out 3-5 of these words for further study.**

Use whatever tools you want, (concordance, Bible dictionary, Vine's or Richards' New Testament Word Studies, etc.) and come up with a definition for that concept, along with an example of how it applies. (How has God used you to minister to someone in one of these ways? Who comes to your mind when you think of some of these concepts? How does all this relate to discipleship?)

**W**e are to love all true Christian brothers in a way that the world may observe. This means showing love to our brothers in the midst of our differences - great or small; loving our brothers when it costs us something, loving them even in times of tremendous emotional tension, loving them in a way the world can see."

-Francis Schaeffer,  
The Mark of the  
Christian

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⇒ How has God used you to minister to someone in one of these ways?

⇒ Who comes to your mind when you think of some of these concepts?

⇒ How does all this relate to discipleship?

from Encouragement: The Key to Caring  
by Larry Crabb



The bright side of the picture is that words can not only sting, but soothe. Far more important, they can even reroute a life from a bad direction to a good one. These are the words – words of life and encouragement – with which I am concerned.

The apostle Paul instructs us in Ephesians 4:29 to “... let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear.”

One illustration demonstrates how a few well-timed words suited perfectly to the need of a particular moment yielded enduring results in my life.

As a youngster I developed a thoroughly annoying and humiliating problem of stuttering. Any person afflicted with this puzzling menace can tell you that certain letters and sounds are especially hard to say. Two troublesome letters for me were *L* and *P*. My name is Larry and I attended Plymouth-Whitemarsh junior and senior high schools in Pennsylvania.

In the ninth grade, I was elected president of our junior high student body. During an assembly of the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades – several hundred students – I was beckoned by the principal to join him on stage for the induction ceremony.

Standing nervously in front of the squirming, bored crowd, I was told to repeat after the principal the words, “I, Larry Crabb of Plymouth-Whitemarsh Junior High School, do hereby promise ...” That’s how the principal said it. My version was a bit different: “I, L-L-arry Crabb of P-P-P-Plymouth-Whitemarsh Junior High School, do hereby p-p-p-promise ...”

The principal was sympathetically perplexed, my favorite English teacher wanted to cry, a few students laughed out loud, most were awkwardly amused, some felt bad for me – and I died a thousand deaths. I decided right then that public speaking was not for me.

A short time later, our church celebrated the Lord’s supper in a Sunday morning worship service. It was customary in our congregation to encourage young men to enter into the privilege of worship by standing and praying aloud. That particular Sunday I sensed the pressure of the saints (not, I fear, the leading of the Spirit), and I responded by unsteadily leaving my chair, for the first time, with the intention of praying.

Filled less with worship than with nervousness, I found my theology becoming confused to the point of

heresy. I remember thanking the Father for hanging on the cross and praising Christ for triumphantly bringing the Spirit from the grave. Stuttering throughout, I finally thought of the word *Amen* (perhaps the first evidence of the Spirit’s leading), and said it, and sat down. I recall staring at the floor, too embarrassed to look around, and solemnly vowing never again to pray or speak aloud in front of a group. Two strikes were enough.

When the service was over, I darted toward the door, not wishing to encounter an elder who might feel obliged to correct my twisted theology. But I was not quick enough. An older Christian man named Jim Dunbar intercepted me, put his arm on my shoulder, and cleared his throat to speak.

I remember thinking to myself, “Here it comes. Oh well, just endure it and then get to the car.” I then listened to this godly man speak words that I can repeat verbatim today, more than twenty years later.

“Larry”, he said, “There’s one thing I want you to know. Whatever you do for the Lord, I’m behind you one thousand percent.” Then he walked away.

Even as I write these words, my eyes fill with tears. I have yet to tell that story to an audience without at least mildly choking. Those words were life words. They had power. They reached deep into my being.

Since the day those words were spoken, God has led me into a ministry in which I regularly address and pray before crowds of all sizes. I do it without stuttering. I love it. Not only death, but also life lies in the power of the tongue.

God intends that we be people who use words to encourage one another. A well-timed word has the power to urge a runner to finish the race, to rekindle hope when despair has set in, to spark a bit of warmth in a otherwise cold life, to trigger healthful self-evaluation in someone who doesn’t think much about his shortcoming, to renew confidence when problems have the upper hand.

## SCRIPTURE

*Which verses significantly impacted you and why?*



## ARTICLE

*What did you personally glean from this article?*



## PRINCIPLE

*Summarize the truth you've learned in a concise statement:*



## LIFE APPLICATION

*1. Choose one of these “one another” concepts and apply it towards someone this next week.*

*2. Name two examples of people who have lived out a “one-another” concept towards you in the past year.*

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