

## “Love Power” (John 13:31–38)

I am an avid reader, and I really enjoy buying books. In fact, book buying may be my greatest addiction. I’m especially prone to buying books online. I frequently buy cheap used books on Amazon marketplace. When I am done reading these books, I sell them back to earn money to maintain my addiction. However, this past week, instead of buying any books, I did a little research on book titles. Here’s what I discovered: Amazon.com lists 507,878 book titles about heaven, 547,195 about sex, 766,921 about God, and 884,737 about money. Isn’t this astounding? Even more staggering is the fact that one topic beats out all of these—love. There are 922,816 that contain love in their title.<sup>1</sup>

Love is a popular word in our society. Our world is desperately seeking true love. There are all kinds of dating services, escort services, personal classifieds, bars, clubs, and social organizations. There are illicit websites and chat rooms where you can pursue love without leaving your own home. All of these opportunities promise “true love” or “real love.” But this is an example of the classic country song by Johnny Lee, “Looking for love in all the wrong places...looking for love in too many faces.” I’ll stop there. The point is: Our world craves love, but they can’t find fulfilling and lasting love.

Love is also a frequent word in the Bible. The Bible uses the root word “love” over 500 times<sup>2</sup> from Genesis through Revelation. Interestingly, for our purposes, the word love is used only twelve times in John 1–12, but in John 13–21 it is used forty–five times!<sup>3</sup> Hence, in the last twenty–four hours of his life, Jesus uses the word love repeatedly. The closer He travels toward the cross, the more love is on His heart and mind. In John 13:31–38,<sup>4</sup> Jesus suggests that the key to impacting the world is for Christians to love each other. So why is the church having so little impact on society? We’re not giving the world what it so desperately craves—love. Yet, the church ought to be Jesus’ solution to the lack of true love in this world. We ought to be able to say, “*Look for love in the right place.*”

Our passage begins in John 13:31–32 with an important footnote and Jesus’ ultimate prediction of love. The footnote is simply: “**Therefore when he [Judas] had gone out**” (13:31a). One can almost hear Jesus heave a sigh of relief when Judas closes the door behind him. Once Judas departs, Jesus hunkers down with His believing disciples and articulates the cross and the importance of love. Jesus declares, “**Now is the Son of Man<sup>5</sup> glorified, and God is glorified in Him; if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately**” (13:31b–32). What is the key word in 13:31b–32? It doesn’t take a Greek scholar to discern this. Five times in two verses Jesus uses a form of the verb “glorify” (*doxazo*). Notice as well the past tense verb “glorified.” The cross is as good as done in Jesus’ mind. For Him death is not a mournful tragedy, but a magnificent triumph. It is glorious not gruesome.<sup>6</sup> At this very moment which seems to spell defeat, dishonor, and disaster for Him, the Son of Man is in reality glorified!<sup>7</sup> Later in the Upper Room discourse, Jesus explains that He glorified His Father by finishing the work the Father gave Him to do (17:4). This is also how we glorify the Father. What has God called you to today? How does He want you to sacrificially express your love to others? Will you finish the work He has given you?

Jesus explains in 13:33 that His purposes for the disciples are not complete. He says, “**Little children,<sup>8</sup> I am with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’**” Many people long to go to heaven to escape their present trials and tribulations. Others talk about how they just want to get away from the evils of our world. While I understand this type of thinking, Jesus explains to His disciples, whom He dearly loves, that they cannot come with Him to heaven just yet because their work on earth is not done. It is a wonderful thing to anxiously anticipate Jesus return. This is a critical element of the Christian life. Paul promises the crown of righteousness for all who love Jesus appearing (2 Tim 4:8). Yet, we also need to relish the privilege of fulfilling God’s call upon our lives while we still have breath. His purposes for you are not complete.

One of the clear-cut purposes that God has for Christians is found in 13:34–35. Jesus declares, “**A new commandment I give to you,<sup>9</sup> that you love<sup>10</sup> one another,<sup>11</sup> even as I have loved you, that you also love one another**” (13:34). Jesus issues a command for you and me to love one another. Of course, the primary question that must be answered in this verse is: Why does Jesus call the commandment to love one another “a new commandment?”<sup>12</sup> Love itself is not a new commandment; it is an old commandment found in Lev 19:8 and Deut 6:5.<sup>13</sup> The Greek word translated “new” (*kainos*) speaks of what is new in the sense of unused or fresh, rather than something recent or different.<sup>14</sup> It is not so much that the commandment hasn’t been given before as that it has a different quality about it, a quality of freshness that differentiates it from any other. To put it simply, this new commandment has a *new object* and a *new measure*.<sup>15</sup> The object is now “one another.” In the Old Testament the command was “love your neighbor as yourself” (Lev 19:18). The Jews had watered down the Mosaic teaching so they could love whom they wanted and hate whom they wanted. But Christ changes the object from “neighbor” to “one another.” This leads to the question: Why does Jesus command disciples to love other disciples? Why not exhort disciples to love the world?<sup>16</sup> For Jesus, it is a matter of priorities.<sup>17</sup> Jesus is first concerned about believers that have a unique and special relationship with Him.<sup>18</sup> God loves His kids more than He loves children of the world.<sup>19</sup> Jesus also realizes that we can’t truly love the world until we first love fellow believers. Finally, as we shall see in John 13:35, Jesus knows that when believers love one another as God intends the world will sit up and take notice. This can result in many being drawn to Christ.

The commandment is new because of its *object*, but also because of its *measure*. The measure of this love is, “as I have loved you.”<sup>20</sup> Earlier in chapter 13, Jesus gave His disciples a new standard of love. He did this by washing their feet (13:4–17). In doing so, He humbled Himself and served His disciples in an intentional and tangible way. Jesus is calling us to love others as He did.<sup>21</sup> This sacrificial love also reaches out to Judas as he’s about to betray Christ. Jesus wants you and me to sacrificially love other believers to death if necessary. It is a vastly greater love that gives up one’s own life for another, that sacrifices self-interest to promote the interests of another (15:13). The sacrificial work of Christ on the cross is the “new” standard for the Christian’s love for fellow-believers. In 13:34–35, the word Jesus uses for love is the Greek verb *agapao* and its noun form *agape*. Of the four words for love in the Greek language, this one is the capstone.<sup>22</sup> Essentially, it means to seek the highest good of another. *Agape* love sacrifices for others. It is an act of the will. It is a decision, a commitment. Love is not about your needs or my needs; it’s about God’s will. When Jesus says “as I have loved you,” He sets Himself up as the standard by which His disciples are to forever measure their love for one another. He is telling them, “I left the splendors and comforts of heaven because I loved you. I called you to be Mine, knowing full well your faults. I taught you, even when you were stubborn and closed-minded. I corrected you when you stepped out of line. I washed your feet on the way to my death. When you denied me and betrayed me, I loved you with an everlasting love. All this was for your highest good. My interest was not in myself, but in you.”<sup>23</sup> Like Jesus, we can say: *Look for love in the right place.*

It is interesting to note the obvious—the command to love other believers is called a “commandment.”<sup>24</sup> This is not an elective class. We understand the difference between required and elective classes. Jesus is making it clear that love is a required 101 class; it is not an elective. Without specifically commanding His disciples to love one another,<sup>25</sup> there existed the very real possibility that this essential activity would be neglected. It seems that we are much better at and much more apt to deal with love as a noun or an abstract concept than as a verb. We prefer talking about love to demonstrating it. When it comes to love, “When all is said and done, there is far more said than done.” Yet Jesus wants you to love with this kind of supernatural *agape* love.<sup>26</sup> This means you can love your spouse regardless of how he or she treats you. You may say, “I don’t like my wife.” Well, you don’t have to. There’s a difference between like and love. You are not commanded to like your spouse; you are commanded to love your spouse. There may be some people in our church you can’t stand. That’s okay. However, Jesus is *commanding* us to love one another.

In 13:35, Jesus declares that when we love each other we will become a magnet to the world. He says, **“By this all men [people]<sup>27</sup> will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”<sup>28</sup>** Jesus is giving the world the right to examine our credibility. The world can see if we’re for real. If you and I love one another everyone will know that we are Jesus’ disciples. The word translated “know” (*ginosko*)<sup>29</sup> does not refer to a theoretical knowledge but to a knowledge gained by first-hand, rub-of-the-shoulders observation.<sup>30</sup> How can you reveal to the world that you are Jesus’ disciple?<sup>31</sup> By demonstrating love for fellow believers! When people see this kind of uncommon love exemplified in the Church they are naturally curious. They begin to wonder if the gospel could be true. They begin to believe that Christ DOES bring transformation. On the flip side, when we fail to show love we invalidate the message. People don’t believe there is real transformation in Christ. We make the idea of Christian community very unappealing. People ask, “Why would I want more stress and conflict in my life?” I don’t need Christ or His church!

It is important to notice that there is an “if” (*ei*) involved in 13:35. Believers can violate the love command. Failure to love does not mean I am not a Christian,<sup>32</sup> but it means the world has the right to make the judgment that I am not a Christian.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, if we expect unbelievers to know that we are Christ’s disciples, we must show the mark.<sup>34</sup> The early church displayed the mark. Tertullian, a church father who wrote a century after the gospel of John was written said that unbelievers saw Christians loving one another and commented, “Behold, how they love one another.”<sup>35</sup> Even today, nothing so astonishes a fractured world as a community in which radical, faithful, genuine love is shared among its members. There are many places you can go and find communities of shared interest. There are many places you can go to find people just like yourself, who live for sports or music or gardening or politics.<sup>36</sup> But true *agape* love is hard to find. Ultimately, it can only be found in the church. *Look for love in the right place.*

So how can we grow in our love for one another? Here are some practical suggestions.

- ***Speak well of the church.*** Strive to always speak well of your church without using “but language.” “I really like my church, *but* my pastor isn’t very friendly.” “I appreciate the worship at my church, *but* I don’t like a lot of the songs the worship team picks.” “I like the children’s ministries, *but* the adult ministries don’t meet my needs.” The simple conjunction “but” cancels out everything positive you’ve said. This is also relevant when discussing other churches in your county. Don’t say, “I really appreciate the church on the west side of town, *but* they are too charismatic.” “I like the pastor of the church on the east side, *but* the rest of the other staff pastors are jerks.” If you don’t have anything positive to say, don’t say anything at all. The truth is: Every church has its own unique strengths. You and I can always find positive things to say about any evangelical church. So today, commit to only speaking well of the church.
- ***Learn to express your love to believers.*** Speak loving and encouraging words to another believer. Look a fellow believer in the eyes and say, “I love you.” Say to a brother or sister, “I care about you,” or “I believe in you.” Reach out and touch someone through appropriate physical touch. Instead of just a handshake, high-five, or chest bump; touch someone’s shoulder, give a half-hug or a full hug. Do a loving action toward someone who has hurt or offended you. This will help free you from the bondage of bitterness. This is the Jesus factor, choosing to bless instead of blister someone who has wounded you.<sup>37</sup>
- ***Strive to serve other believers.*** Would you pray that God would burden your heart to serve a brother or sister in your life? What does this person need? Could he or she use free babysitting? Does this person need a piece of furniture that you could provide? Perhaps this person needs a skill-set that you can meet (e.g., home repair, automotive care). Today, will you offer to meet this person’s needs? Will you be Christ’s face, hands, and feet?

Chapter 13 concludes with three verses that seem a bit misplaced. In fact, many commentators include these verses with chapter 14. Yet, I see these verses fitting rather nicely with 13:31–35. John’s concern is that you and I don’t assume that we can pull off *agape* in our own strength. Naturally, John brings up another episode with Peter. Look at 13:36a: **“Simon Peter said to Him [Jesus], ‘Lord, where are You going?’”** I want you to notice that Jesus spoke some of the most profound words about Christians loving each other, and Peter did not hear a word of it. He asks a question that skips over that whole subject entirely (13:34–35), and he goes back to what Jesus had said about going away for a while (13:31–33). That was what got his attention, and he heard nothing else. You’ve got to love Peter! He’s so much like you and me. **“Jesus answered, ‘Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow later’”** (13:36b). In other words, “don’t call me, I’ll call you.” Jesus acknowledges that Peter will eventually go the route of suffering. Church history tells us that Peter was crucified upside down. Regardless, Jesus makes it clear that Peter’s time has not yet come. But Peter responds to Jesus with some audacious words: **“Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You”** (13:37). Peter assures Jesus, “I’m your main man. When everyone else leaves you, I’ll be by your side. I’m not a flaky disciple. You can count on me, Jesus.”

Now before we come down too hard on Peter, we need to remember Peter was an example of faith. He was often a spiritual stud.

- He was one of the “inner three” with James and John.
- He was the one who said, “Depart from me for I am a sinful man” after the miraculous catch of fish.
- It was Peter who answered the Lord’s question: “Who do you say I am?” with “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.”
- It was of Peter’s confession that the Lord said, “On this rock I will build my church.”
- It was Peter who stood up to defend Jesus in the Garden.
- It was Peter who followed Jesus (with John) into the court after His arrest.
- It was Peter who ran with John to the empty tomb.
- It was Peter who jumped in the water after the resurrection to swim to shore to see Jesus.

However, in this particular instance, Peter inadvertently expresses his impatience and self-reliance. As a result, Jesus follows up Peter’s claim with some sobering words: **“Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times”** (13:38). This is brutal! Jesus takes a spiritual 2x4 upside Peter’s head. His point is: Peter you can’t be faithful to me in your own strength. You can’t acknowledge me publicly or live what I have taught you unless you abide in Me.

This word is so relevant for you and me as well. After reading this sermon, you will most likely get into some “intense fellowship” (i.e., a fight) with your spouse. Instead of exhibiting *agape*, you will pour out your wrath. This evening, your children will push your buttons and you will likely become angry instead of exercising patience. This week, you may learn that someone in your church has been gossiping about you or even slandering you. Your temptation will be to respond in kind and give this individual a piece of your Christian mind. These are all natural fleshly impulses that we all feel. Yet God is calling us to live a supernatural life that is dependent upon His strength. John is informing you and me that we can’t live the Christian life on our own for even an hour. We are weak and susceptible to sin. The only way that we can exude *agape* love is by constantly abiding in Christ and being filled with the Holy Spirit. Today, will you make a commitment of your will that you will obey Jesus’ new commandment and display *agape*? If you do, you will be able to say to others: *“Look for love in the right place. You can look at my marriage, my family, and my church. My passion is to glorify Jesus by showcasing the love that He has instilled in me. Look for love right here, right now...in me.”*

Our family goes to the Lacey Timberland Library on a regular basis. As we approach the library from our home, there is a Quality Inn & Suites located on the corner of College and Martin. This hotel has a large sign with the words, “Free Hot Breakfast.” Now I must tell you, I am a huge breakfast lover. Whenever I go to a restaurant where breakfast is offered 24-7, I choose breakfast, regardless of the time of day. Well, every time our family drives by this Quality Inn, I want to drop in and say, “Yes, I would like a ‘free hot breakfast.’” Unfortunately, I recently learned that I would have to pay between \$70–110 a night to enjoy their hot breakfast.

This past week as our family drove past the Quality Inn I said, “Let’s pull in and get a ‘free hot breakfast.’” (I confess, I use the same old, stale jokes on my family over and over. I’m the kind of dad that teenagers would call “lame.”) As I spoke these words for the umpteenth time, it dawned on me that the church should have a proverbial sign that reads “Free *Agape*.” The difference is—there should be no charge for our services. You don’t have to put money into the offering. You don’t have to promise to serve. You don’t have to be particularly lovable. You just have to be a person created in God’s image with dignity, value, and worth. If the church is to make a difference in its culture, we need to love one another and then extend love to a world that desperately needs Christ. Then, and only then, can we honestly say: *Look for love in the right place.*

## **The Importance of Christian Love**

John 15:12 “This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.”

John 15:17 “This I command you, that you love one another.”

Romans 12:10 “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor.”

Romans 13:8 “Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.”

1 Corinthians 16:14 “Let all that you do be done in love.”

Galatians 5:14 “For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’”

Ephesians 5:2 “and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.”

1 Thessalonians 4:9 “Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another.”

Hebrews 10:24 “and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds.”

Hebrews 13:1 “Let love of the brethren continue.”

James 2:8 “If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF,’ you are doing well.”

1 Peter 1:22 “Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart.”

1 Peter 4:8 “Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.”

1 John 3:11 For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another;

1 John 3:23 “This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.”

1 John 4:21 “And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.”

2 John 1:5 “Now I ask you, lady, not as though I were writing to you a new commandment, but the one which we have had from the beginning, that we love one another.”

All Scripture quotations, unless indicated, are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1975, 1977, and 1995 by The Lockman Foundation, and are used by permission.

**Scripture References**

John 13:31–38

John 15:12–13

John 8:31–32

Leviticus 19:18

1 Corinthians 13:4–8a

Philippians 2:3–8

1 John 2:7–10; 3:16–17; 4:7–11

**Study Questions**

1. How did Jesus view His death (13:31–32)? How do I view my death? How is Christ's perspective on life and death different from mine? What can I do to ensure that I view my eventual death as a means of glorifying God? Read 1 Corinthians 10:31 and Colossians 3:17. What do I have to look forward to as I prepare for passing into Jesus' presence? Read 2 Corinthians 5:6–8 and Philippians 1:21–23.
2. How is it ironic (providential) that Jesus gave His new commandment in the midst of knowing what Judas and Peter were about to do (13:34–35; cf. 15:12–13)? How must Jesus have felt? When others disappoint me or hurt me, how can I respond with love and grace?
3. Why is actively loving other Christians such an effective way to evangelize non-Christians (13:35)? How has Jesus loved me? How can I love someone this week with this same love? Who will I intentionally love this week? In what practical ways will I show this person my love?
4. How can I express my love for my church family? What does this look like? What can I do to avoid discouragement from other Christians? Who can encourage me to persevere in my love for my brothers and sisters in Christ?
5. What can I learn from Peter's mistakes (13:36–38)? When have I struggled with spiritual pride? What happened as a result? How can I cultivate absolute dependency and humility upon Jesus? What has occurred when I have fully submitted myself to Christ?

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> See [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), accessed 26 September 2009. These figures are growing on a daily basis so by the time you read this sermon these figures will be much larger.

<sup>2</sup> E.g., love (348), loves (70), loved (95), and loving (4). This is based on the NASB Update.

<sup>3</sup> Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Encountering John: The Gospel in Historical, Literary, and Theological Perspective*. Encountering Biblical Studies (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 149.

<sup>4</sup> Many scholars see John 13:31–38 as the first unit of the Upper Room discourse, but it is more likely that it is a summation of the introduction. See Gerald Borchert, *John 12–21*. New American Commentary (Nashville: B & H, 2002), 96.

<sup>5</sup> John uses the title “Son of Man” in John 1:51; 3:13; 5:27; 6:27, 53, 62; 8:28; 9:35; 12:23, 34. The OT background is from Ezek 2:1 and Dan 7:13.

<sup>6</sup> Charles R. Swindoll, *Following Christ . . . The Man of God: A Study of John 6–14* (Fullerton, CA: Insight for Living, 1985), 78.

<sup>7</sup> William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Gospel According to John: New Testament Commentary*, vol. 1-2 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1953–2001), 2:251.

<sup>8</sup> This is the only place where *teknia* (“little children”) is used in John’s gospel, but John used it seven times in 1 John mirroring Jesus’ compassionate spirit (2:1, 12, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21; cf. Gal 4:19).

<sup>9</sup> There is a *hina* (“in order that”) clause in John 13:34 that is clarified by the dash in the NET rendering: “I give you a new commandment—to love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.”

<sup>10</sup> See John’s uses of *agapao* (“love”) in John 13–17 (13:1 [twice], 23, 34 [thrice]; 14:15, 21 [four times], 23, 24, 28, 31; 15:9 [twice], 12 [twice], 17; 17:23 [twice], 24, 26

<sup>11</sup> See John’s uses of *allelon* (“one another”) pertaining to love in John 13–17 (13:14, 34 [twice], 35; 15:12, 17).

<sup>12</sup> The phrase *entolen kainen* (“new commandment”) is in the emphatic position. This “new commandment” is also explained in John 15:12–17.

<sup>13</sup> “The idea that love is a “commandment” is interesting. In the OT, the Ten Commandments have a setting in the covenant between God and Israel at Sinai; they were the stipulations that Israel had to observe if the nation were to be God’s chosen people. In speaking of love as the *new commandment* for those whom Jesus had chosen as his own (John 13:1, 15:16) and as a mark by which they could be distinguished from others (13:35), John shows that he is thinking of this scene in covenant terminology.” See NET study notes. It is also worth noting that the new commandment is part of a new covenant that Jesus would ratify with His blood (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25). In that covenant God promised to enable His people to love by transforming their hearts and minds (Jer 31:29–34; Ezek 36:24–26). It is only by God’s transforming grace that we can love one another as Jesus has loved us.

<sup>14</sup> Gk. *kainos* often denotes what is qualitatively new as compared to what has existed until now. This is one of two places in John’s gospel where *kainos* is used. It is also used in John 19:41 of the “new” tomb in which He was laid. There is another Greek word for “new” (*neos*) that means “recent.”

<sup>15</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *John: That You May Believe*. Preaching the Word (Wheaton, Crossway, 1999), Electronic ed.

<sup>16</sup> Carson puts it well: “At the risk of confounding logic, it is not so much that Christians are to love the world less, as that they are to love one another more. Better put, their love for each other ought to be a reflection of their new status and experience as the children of God.” D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*. Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 485.

<sup>17</sup> Gal 6:10: “So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.”

<sup>18</sup> 1 Tim 4:10: “For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.”

<sup>19</sup> Of course, the Godhead does love the world as well (see John 3:16).

<sup>20</sup> Comfort and Hawley write, “The newness of Jesus’ commandment rests upon the reality that because our hearts have been changed by experiencing the love of Jesus, we should reach out in reciprocal fashion by all those touched by the same love.” See Philip W. Comfort and Wendell C. Hawley, *Opening the Gospel of John* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1994), 227.

<sup>21</sup> 1 John 3:16–17; 4:7–11: We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world’s goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? . . . Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the

---

propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” Burge writes, “That the disciples are to love one another is nothing new (Lev. 19:18). That they are to love each other with the sort of love modeled by Jesus is something dramatic. Love characterizes Jesus’ relationship with God (14:31), and love characterizes God’s relationship with Jesus (3:35; 15:9 – 10). Jesus’ love is manifested in his obedience to the Father’s will (“the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me,” 14:31). Therefore disciples are to reflect the sort of love known to Jesus — a love expressed through committed obedience.” Gary M. Burge, John. *NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 376.

<sup>22</sup> The NT only uses three of the four words for love (*eros*, *phile*, and *agape*). It is worth noting that *phile/agape phileo/agapao* can be used interchangeably, but in certain contexts, it does seem that *agape* and *agapao* do have intensified meanings.

<sup>23</sup> Swindoll, *Following Christ . . . The Man of God*, 79–80.

<sup>24</sup> The theme of commandment recurs frequently in Jesus’ final discourse and in the Johannine Epistles.

<sup>25</sup> There is no imperative in the Greek text; rather John uses indicatives and subjunctives. However, Jesus assumes that His disciples will take up this “new commandment” and love one another.

<sup>26</sup> Wilkins writes, “Love is an unconditional commitment to an imperfect person, a commitment I give myself to in order to bring the relationship to God’s intended purpose. Michael J. Wilkins, *In His Image: Reflecting Christ in Everyday Life* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1997), 170. Love has lost its significance because we have emptied it of its biblical definition, which is not primarily an emotion but an act of the will by which we seek the highest good for others.”

<sup>27</sup> The phrase “all men” (NASB, NIV) is more accurately rendered “all people” (ESV, HSB) or “everyone” (NET, NRSV). Although the gender of the pronoun *touto* is masculine, it is collective and includes people of both genders.

<sup>28</sup> See 1 John 3:23; 4:7–8, 11–12; 19–21.

<sup>29</sup> Gk. *ginosko*, cf. John 13:7, 12, 28, 35; 14:7 [thrice], 9, 17 [twice], 20, 31; 15:18; 16:3, 19; 17:3, 7, 8, 23, 25 [thrice]; 1 John 2:3 [twice], 4, 5, 13, 14 [twice], 18, 29; 3:1 [twice], 6, 16, 19, 20, 24; 4:2, 6 [twice], 7, 13, 16; 5:2, 20; 2 John 1:1; Rev 2:23, 24; 3:3, 9.

<sup>30</sup> Swindoll, *Following Christ . . . The Man of God*, 80.

<sup>31</sup> In John’s gospel, a disciple is identified in three ways: A disciple continues in Christ’s words (8:31); expresses love toward other believers (13:34–35); and produces spiritual fruit (15:7–8).

<sup>32</sup> It is also important to know what Jesus does not say by this. He does not say that failure to love means we are not His disciples. He also does not say that mutual love convinces Him and the Father of our status as disciples. Finally He does not say that mutual love makes us disciples. See Garry Derickson & Earl Radmacher, *The Disciplemaker: What Matters Most to Jesus* (Salem, OR: Charis, 2001), 83.

<sup>33</sup> Ron Kincaid, *A Celebration of Disciple-Making* (USA: Victor, 1990), 88.

<sup>34</sup> Schaeffer writes, “The point is that it is possible to be a Christian without showing the mark, but if we expect non-Christians to know that we are Christians, we must show the mark.” Francis Schaeffer, *The Mark of the Christian* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1970), 8.

<sup>35</sup> Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*. New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 485.

<sup>36</sup> Burge, *John*, 387.

<sup>37</sup> Jay Dennis, *The Jesus Habits* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2005), 75.