

“LOVING ONE ANOTHER - PART 1”

(John 13:34-35 ; 15:12-13)

Week 20

Central Teaching/Learning Aim: To help the learner commit to loving fellow SGM members unconditionally living out Christ's command.

A. Share – The following information:

The Associated Press reported on May 4, 2004 about 2 college students in Augusta Georgia who are carrying 10-pound wooden crosses around campus. Larry Napier and Wouter Ceysens committed to carrying the crosses 2 years ago at Augusta State University.

“I was afraid of what people would think of me. I was afraid of being made fun of or looked down upon.” Mr. Napier said.

“I couldn't be a Christian and be afraid. That's just not Christianity,” said Mr. Ceysens.

Ask – Do you agree or disagree that carrying a 4-foot cross around everywhere you go is an effective way to share the message of Christ?

Read – (John 13:34-35 ; 15:12-13)

Ask – Members to listen for an alternative way to display the love of Christ.

State – Psychologists say two of our greatest needs are to love and to be loved.

Today – We are going to discuss how we are to love one another in our SGM community.

B. Optional Method – Share the following story:

When Steve Henning of Huntley, Illinois, was two years old, he contracted spinal meningitis. It was the winter of 1943, and because of World War II, doctors had a shortage of penicillin and could not provide Steve the treatment he needed. Sadly, he lost his hearing.

For 57 years, Steve could not hear music, laughter, or human speech. Even though he lived a full life, he still longed to hear the voices of those he loved. In the winter of 2001, he learned of a surgical procedure that would allow sound waves to bypass the non-functioning part of his ear and travel directly to the auditory nerve. On January 30th he was operated on. Because the implanted device could not be activated until the swelling in the ear decreased, doctors and Steve didn't know if the operation was successful for six weeks.

The day of reckoning came on a blustery spring day. Steve nervously wondered if the procedure had been in vain. As the audiologist programmed the cochlear implant, he invited Steve's wife to say something. Pat Henning leaned toward her husband and gently said, "I love you." Able to hear for the first time in six decades, Steve's face broke into a smile. The first words he heard were of love.

Source: The Daily Herald (9-29-01)

Everyone wants to hear those words “I love you”. In a Bible Fellowship love should be expressed among believers.

Next – Share the following true story:

When I was a youth minister at Columbus Avenue Baptist Church in Waco, TX, I had a youth worker named Mr. Turner. Mr. Turner was in his 70's and had taught 7th grade boys for 40 years. He was not a very good teacher. His class was always rowdy and disruptive. I had to go into the room regularly to calm the boys down. Mr. Turner had not kept up with the youth culture and frankly he dressed rather nerdy. He was an easy target.

But I began to notice that college graduates and young adult men would come around looking for Mr. Turner. When they were in town they would seek him out to say “hi” and to check on him. Mr. Turner may not have had up-to-date

teaching techniques but he genuinely loved and cared for 7th grade boys for years. His class was a class of love where every boy was accepted. Mr. Turner contacted his boys every week, they knew he cared.

This is what Bible Fellowship should be about. It should be a place of love and acceptance.

Carter Shotwell, 5/4/04

State – Psychologists say two of our greatest needs are to love and to be loved.

C. Optional Method – Movie Clip - “Just Married”

Start: 1:23:00

Stop: 1:24:30

Synopsis:

Just Married is a romantic comedy that explores the brief courtship and excruciatingly long honeymoon of Tom Leezak and Sarah McNeerney. After Tom, a blue-collar radio traffic reporter (Ashton Kutcher), meets Sarah (Brittany Murphy), the daughter of Southern California millionaires, an unlikely romance grows. From their first meeting (when Tom throws a football on the beach and hits Sarah in the head), the relationship of these college-age lovers is plagued by mishaps and accidents.

As the couple flies to Europe for an extended honeymoon, the struggles continue when they have a run-in with the flight attendant. Once there, they have a car accident en route to their hotel and are forced to sleep in the car overnight stuck in a snow bank. Finally, they are kicked out of the hotel when an accidental fire breaks out in their room. Because no other hotel has a vacancy, the couple is forced to stay in a filthy boarding house.

Tensions between the two escalate. In Florence, Sarah wants to visit churches and museums, while Tom is content to hang out in an American bar to watch the Dodgers on satellite TV. To make matters worse, Sarah's ex-boyfriend shows up in Florence on a business trip and attempts to spend time with her.

The couple returns from their honeymoon seething with anger and convinced they'd made a mistake getting married, both agreeing they want a divorce. Sarah's family hovers around their daughter in their gated mansion while Tom seeks solace from Kyle, his old roommate.

Convinced he doesn't have what it takes to measure up to Sarah's wealthy family's expectations (or hers), Tom asks Kyle to drive him to his dad's house.

The scene opens with Tom seated on the couch next to his father in the family room. His dad holds a bottle of beer and Tom drinks a Pepsi as they watch a baseball game on TV. His dad asks, "Gonna tell me what you're chewing on?" "I just don't know if love is enough anymore," Tom responds without looking at his dad. "What do you mean 'enough?'" his father questions. "I mean, even if Sarah and I do love each other, maybe we need more time to get to know each other." Tom's eyes nervously dart toward the ground.

Mr. Leezak looks at his son with compassion and replies, "So what you're saying here is a couple of bad days in Europe and it's over? It's time to grow up, Tommy. Some days your mother and me loved each other. Other days we had to work at it."

He reaches down to the coffee table and picks up a family photo album as he continues. "You never see the hard days in a photo album, but those are the ones that get you from one happy snapshot to the next. I'm sorry your honeymoon stunk, but that's what you got dealt. Now you gotta work through it. Sarah doesn't need a guy with a fat wallet to make her happy. I saw how you love this girl, how you two lit each other up. She doesn't need anymore security than that."

Grateful for his dad's advice, Tom glances toward his father and says, "Thanks."

The scene dissolves to Kyle and Tom in conversation. His old roommate asks, "Is it over?" To which Tom replies, "Not even close!"

Just Married (20th-Century Fox, 2003), written by Sam Harper, directed by Shawn Levy

State – A marriage relationship takes work. Listen to what Lance Armstrong, 5-time Tour de France winner said in his book “Every Second Counts” as he describes his regret for the breakup of his marriage. All I knew was that in trying to do everything, we’d forgotten to do the most important thing. We forgot to be married. People warn you that marriage is hard work, but you don’t listen. You talk about the pretty bridesmaids’ dresses, but you don’t talk about what happens next; about how difficult it will be to stay or to rebuild. What nobody tells you is that there will be more than just some hard days. There will be some hard weeks and perhaps even some hard years.

Lance Armstrong with Sally Jenkins, *Every Second Counts* (Doubleday, 2003), p. 221

State – Any relationship is hard work. SGM’s can blow up if relationships are not based on unconditional love.

Today – We will discuss how to love one another in our SGM.

BOOK Getting Into the Word

Utilize the questions in the *Discussion Guide* to examine the Scripture passage.

LOOK Getting the Word into Life

A. Distribute – The handout “The Bond of Love” and guide members to complete.

Note: This would make an excellent group activity.

TOOK Conclusion

A. Lead members in the celebration of communion. This would be a great way to emphasize the unity of your SGM as you focus on what Christ has done. See attached outline for communion.

B. Optional Method – Movie Clip - “Dave”

Start: 42:15

Stop: 43:15

Synopsis:

Dave (Kevin Klein) is the spitting image of the president and must pretend to be him when the president falls into a coma. Dave eats a late night snack with his Secret Service bodyguard. He asks if the Secret Service really pledge to take a bullet for the president. The bodyguard responds that he’s willing to take a bullet and sacrifice himself so that Dave can live.

Are you willing to lay down your life for your friends? Let’s demonstrate our love for one another in tangible ways this week.

C. Optional Method – Share the following true story:

Forty-two-year-old Scott Saunders waited on the driveway of his Hanover, Michigan, home for his 4-year-old daughter, Danielle, to get off her school bus. A pickup truck was stopped behind the bus. Saunders crossed the street to meet Danielle at the bus and then the two crossed the street together and stood in the Saunders’ driveway.

Suddenly he noticed that a car behind the bus was traveling too fast to stop safely before entering the crossing zone. The car swerved to avoid the pickup and went into the Saunders’ driveway. Heading directly for them both, Saunders grabbed Danielle by the arm and flung her away from himself and into their front yard.

He was then struck by the car. Saunders was pronounced dead at the scene. Danielle was treated for minor injuries at

a nearby hospital and soon released. The 16-year-old driver and a 15-year-old passenger were not injured.

Sheriff's Captain Tony Philipps said, "It was a heroic act by a father to save his child. He did everything he could, and in the process, he lost his own life."

"A Father's Love," Detroit Free Press (11-19-00)

Ask – How many of us would have done the same thing for our child or spouse? How many would have done this for a fellow SGM member? God sacrificed His Son for all of us; we should be willing to lay down our lives for one another. Let's demonstrate our love in tangible ways this week.

DISCUSSION GUIDE (Teacher's Copy)

1. What are the implications of Jesus command in (John 13:34)?
(We are to be willing to lay down our lives for our friends)

2. What are examples of "laying down our lives" for SGM members?

3. How did the early Christians "lay down their lives" for one another in (Acts 2:44-45)?

4. What is the main reason we are to love one another as stated in (v. 35)?
(So that all men will know that we are Disciples of Christ)

5. Compare/contrast how the world and Christians would/should react in the following situations.

Situation	The World	Christians
Gossip	(Gossip in return)	(Confrontation in love)
Favoritism	(Taking sides)	(Unconditional acceptance)
Immorality	(Division)	(Forgiveness)
Unethical Activity	(Selfishness/Revenge)	(An opportunity to repay)

6. How do you think the lost world perceives the Christian community as a whole?

7. How is the Golden Rule, if practiced, so powerful?
(It takes the selfishness out of relationships as we think of other peoples needs first)

8. What are examples of how love is expressed in an SGM?

9. How would you rate your SGM as an environment of love?

How could it improve?

The Bond of Love

Live life together (Proverbs 17:17)

How has the love of friends sustained you in times of trouble?

How has the love of friends rejoiced with you in times of victory?

How can you avoid being a fair-weather friend?

Obey Christ's command (John 15:12-17)

What is Christ's command pure and simple?

Do you love if ? or when ? or do you just love?

How can you "lay your life down" for a friend?

Value friendship (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)

What value are your friends?

When have they been there for you?

Encourage and forgive (Ephesians 4:32)

How can you encourage a friend?

How can you forgive even if you have been hurt?

Is there anyone you need to forgive?

The Lord's Supper

While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom," (Matt. 26:26-29).

We Live in Constant Danger of Forgetting...Don't Forget

- I. The Lord's Table is a table of Remembrance.
 - A. (I Corinthians 11:24) And when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this is REMEMBRANCE of me."
 - B. String around your finger, a pressed rose, a ticket stub...Memorial
- II. The Lord's Table is a table of Communion.
 - A. (I Corinthians 10:16-17) Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a PARTICIPATION in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a PARTICIPATION in the body of Christ? Because there is ONE loaf, we, who are many, are ONE body, for we all PARTAKE of the ONE loaf.
 - B. Varsity Letter, Ribbon, Emblem on shared experience...Fellowship.
- III. The Lord's Table is a table of Thanksgiving.
 - A. (I Corinthians 11:24) and when he had given THANKS, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."
 - B. Thank you Note to God...Eucharist.
- IV. The Lord's Table is a table of Promise.
 - A. (I Corinthians 11:25) In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new COVENANT in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."
 - B. Initiation Rite, Wedding Band as a sign of promise...Covenant.
- V. The Lord's Table is a table of Proclamation.
 - A. (I Corinthians 11:26) For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you PROCLAIM the Lord's death until He comes.
 - B. Wordless Book, Christmas candy cane tells the Gospel...Sermon
- VI. The Lord's Table is a table of Anticipation.
 - A. (I Corinthians 11:26) For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death UNTIL HE COMES.
 - B. Engagement Ring, Banquet invitation...Encouragement.

Conclusion

- A. **Lead** – members in a closing song of remembrance or thanksgiving. (Examples: "Give thanks with a grateful heart...", "He paid a debt, He did not owe...", "There is a Redeemer", "He is Lord", "Amazing Grace.") Then close in prayer.

THE Word For The Week

"Loving One Another (Hindrances)- Part 2"

(Rom. 14:13 ; 1 Cor. 6:7 ; Gal. 5:15 ; Gal. 5:26 ; James 4:11 ; John 5:44)

Week 20

Monday – Read (Rom. 14:1-13)

- Ø Why is it tempting to judge others according to our own standards?
- Ø What kinds of obstacles or stumbling blocks are easiest for us to put in the way of Christian brothers or sisters?
- Ø Why is it difficult to suppress your own point of view in order to help those who are weaker in the faith?
- Ø Who, that may be weaker in their faith, can you encourage? How?

Tuesday – Read (1 Cor. 6:1-7)

- Ø Is personal gratification at the expense of a fellow believer acceptable?
- Ø Why do lawsuits among believers cast a shadow over the church?
- Ø When is a temporal loss preferable to a spiritual loss?
- Ø How is the last half of verse 7 a contradiction to the world's philosophy of looking out for "number one"? How will you live differently today?

Wednesday – Read (Gal. 5:13-15 ; 24-26)

- Ø How does animosity toward one another jeopardize our freedom in Christ?
- Ø The description in verse 15 is far from living together in loving unity. What is lost in the "destruction"?
- Ø Verse 25 tells us to walk in the Spirit. Verse 26 describes a walk in the _____.
- Ø With whom are you at odds with today? What could you do to restore this relationship?

Thursday – Read (James 4:11-12)

- Ø How is this use of the tongue, which James warned about, an indictment against us?
- Ø What should be our motivation for not speaking derogatory words about each other?
- Ø What law is James referring to in verse 11? And what does it command us to do? (2:8)
- Ø How often do you act as judge and jury in your relationships? Confess this to God.

Friday – Read (John 5:31-44)

- Ø What enables people to believe in Jesus? What hinders them?
- Ø From whom do you seek acceptance and praise?
- Ø What exactly is the "praise" or "glory" or "honor" that comes only from God?
- Ø Are you seeking it? Do you know someone who is? **Pray**

EXEGETICAL What it meant to Theophilus back THEN

REAL LIFE “Loving One Another” (John 13:34-35 ; 15:12-13)

(**Exegetical** . . . What it meant to the John’s readers back THEN)
THE CONDITION UPON WHICH ALL [PEOPLES IN THE WORLD]
WOULD RECOGNIZE THAT JESUS’ DISCIPLES WERE HIS
[AS OPPOSED TO ANOTHER’S] DISCIPLES . . . WAS IF THEY –
ACCORDING TO HIS NEW COMMAND TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER
JUST AS HE HAD LOVED THEM TO THE EXTENT OF LAYING DOWN
HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS – LOVED ONE ANOTHER.

- I. The CONDITION upon which all (peoples in the world) would Recognize that Jesus’ disciples were His (as opposed to another’s) disciples was if they, according to His new command to Love one another just as He had Loved them, Had love among one another, (John 13:34-35).
 - A. The Content of the new command Jesus Gave His disciples [at the Last Supper on the night of His betrayal] was that they Love one another, (34a).
 - B. The Manner in which Jesus’ disciples were to Love one another was just as He had Loved them, (34b).

NOTE: Jesus had set the standard of love (see 13:1) by coming into the world in the first place and, now at the end of His earthly mission, by giving His life (the full extent) on the cross.
 - C. The Repeated command of Jesus to His disciples was that they also (as He had Loved them) Love one another, (34c).
 - D. The Result of Jesus’ disciples Loving one another as He had Loved them would be that all would Recognize that they were His disciples, (35a).

NOTE: The primary issue here was one of identity. Jesus’ disciples would be easily recognizable in whatever culture they moved. All peoples would witness to the unique love that bonded together the community of Jesus’ followers. And out of that witness the disciples would share God’s love with the world (see John 3:16; 17:18). Christ’s people would be identified by their Christ-like expressions of love within the community.
 - E. The Condition upon which all would Recognize Jesus’ disciples was if they Had love among one another, (35b).
- II. The Content of Jesus’ observation to His disciples concerning the greatest [demonstration of] love anyone could Have, in accordance to His command that they Love one another as He had Loved them, was that he would Lay Down his life for his friends, (13).
 - A. The Content of Jesus’ command to his disciples was that they Love one another, (12a).
 - B. The Manner in which Jesus’ disciples were to Love one another was just as He had Loved them, (12b).

NOTE: John 15:12b repeated 13:34b word for word: “commandment . . . that you love one another just as I have loved you.” John emphasized his message that commitment to Jesus would be characterized by agape love in community.
 - C. The Content of Jesus’ observation to His disciples concerning the greatest [demonstration of] love anyone could Have was that he would Lay Down his life for his friends, (13).

NOTE: Jesus made explicit the meaning of “as I have loved you.” The manner in which Jesus loved (agape) was by giving everything . . . even His life on behalf of those He loved (philos).

(**Theological** . . . What it means for believers ALWAYS)
MUTUAL LOVE WITHIN THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY
REVEALS THE IDENTITY OF CHRIST’S FOLLOWERS.

- I. Christ’s Innovative Command to His Followers is “Love One Another,” (13:34a; 15:12a).
- II. The Practice of Christian Love Imitates Christ’s Love for His Followers/ Friends,

(13:34b; 15:12b).

- III. The Measure of Christ's Love for His Followers/Friends Consists of Laying Down Everything for Another, (15:13).
- IV. The Result of Christians Loving One Another will be The World's Recognition that they are Christ's followers, (13:35).

(Pedagogical . . . What it means for us NOW)
LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

- I. Our World Needs to Know how/where to Find God's Love.
[People are searching for God in many wrong places. People are searching for God through many false guides.]
- II. Jesus' Innovative Command to His Followers was, "Love One Another as I have Loved You," (John 13:34; 15:12-13).
- III. When Christians Love One Another, the World Recognizes Guides who can Lead them to God, (13:35).
[When you love like Jesus loved you reveal His character. When others see Christ-like love in you, they will know you know God.
Those who know God can introduce others to Him (see John 17:18ff)]
- IV. Love One Another.
 - A. Love.
[Agape love is not sensual passion (eros) or mere friendship (philos), but faithful commitment to another's highest good.]
 - B. Love One Another.
[The Old Testament commanded Israel to love God and love their neighbor. Jesus added another dimension to Christian love: that of one follower for another follower.]
 - C. Love like Jesus Loves You.
[The true standard of love is Jesus' love.]
 - D. Love to the extent of Giving Yourself Up.
[The measure of Jesus' love was that He gave up glory and life for you.]