

John 13

ENGAGE FELLOWSHIP

“So I give you now a new commandment: Love each other just as much as I have loved you. For when you demonstrate the same love I have for you by loving one another, everyone will know that you’re my true followers.” (John 13:34-35)

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With these words, Jesus is both reminding the disciples of His past demonstrations of love and concern for them, as well as foreshadowing His forthcoming display of perfect love at Calvary. Through His sacrifice, and through His continual caring involvement in our lives, Jesus has loved us as well. The more we recognize and receive His love, the more we are able to embrace our true identity as His beloved.

Consider what Scripture reveals about God’s love for us:

- God demonstrated His love for us by sending Jesus to die for us while we were still sinners (Romans 5:8).
- Nothing can separate us from God’s love (Romans 8:38-39).
- He has poured out His love upon us through the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5).
- The love of Christ for us is infinitely great and surpasses knowledge (Ephesians 3:18-19).
- Because of His great love for us, God made us alive with Christ (Ephesians 2:4-5).

We are not simply people who believe Scripture’s great doctrines about Christ, nor are we merely people who practice good behavior. Hopefully, we do believe right doctrine and practice right behavior, but **we must be careful not to think that our identity lies in either of these things. Our true identity is that we are ones who have been loved by Jesus. We are His beloved.**

Jesus left behind exact instructions with the disciples as to the how the world was to know about Him. His intent was that the love that the disciples declared they had for Him would be demonstrated in practical and observable love for one another. In other words, the world would believe in the love of God because his people truly loved one another.

One of the best ways to show the love of God to one another is through affirmation. *Affirmation is the recognition in another’s life of God’s grace. When we affirm one another, we are validating the work of the Holy Spirit in someone.*

- “I’ve noticed how patient you have been lately and I see how God has worked in your life.”
- “I’ve really seen God’s love in you recently, especially in the way you treat your kids.”
- “I know times have been tough, but I have witnessed how graciously you’ve walked through the heartache you’ve experienced.”

This is not a pep talk but recognition of what God has done by affirming with words that validate.

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ENCOUNTER JESUS

“You’ve called me your teacher and lord, and you’re right, for that’s who I am. So if I’m your teacher and lord and have just washed your dirty feet, then you should follow the example that I’ve set for you and wash one another’s dirty feet. Now do for each other what I have just done for you.” (John 13:13-15)

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"One and done.” That is the phrase people use when something is done once and never repeated. It’s over and done with, complete, move on...nothing to see here.

But here is the good news, Jesus is still washing feet. He is still the great and mighty Lord of all who washes the feet—and hearts, and souls – of whosoever will come (Mark 8:34). And right now you have a divine appointment with the scarred hands of the Messiah. In His Kingdom, He rules by serving.

I know. It is hard to come. A bit embarrassing to keep dragging mud behind you. Come anyway. His ministry, His greatest joy, will not be completed until you see Him face to face. Maturity is the distance between sin and repentance. The shorter the distance, the greater the maturity. Waste no time. He stands ready to serve.

Pray like this: *“Lord, I know I am in great need of Your cleansing grace right now. Look at me, Lord...I’m a mess. Thank You that You never refuse repentance. You never refuse those who come in humility. I confess (name the sin and failure) and ask You to cleanse me. Thank you, Lord that you continue to wash dirty feet!”*

The task is not complete though with repentance. Jesus said, “You also ought to wash another’s feet.” Who do you know that needs the tender compassion and acceptance that Jesus has shown you? Muddy feet are usually left to others to care for, but not today. Today the Lord appoints you to be His hands and His heart.

So go and do the same! **Ask Him now:** *“Holy Spirit, who would you send me to that I might champion Jesus as our only hope of life and life abundant?”*

John 13 **EXPERIENCE SCRIPTURE**

"Now Jesus was fully aware that the Father had placed all things under his control, for he had come from God and was about to go back to be with him." (John 13:3)

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Is this any less true today? Is Jesus any less aware? Is He any less in control? Is He not interceding for you before the Father right now?

"He always lives to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25).

The ministry of Jesus is complete and absolute. His life spent on earth proved the character and forged the Redeemer's everlasting ministry as the One who now lives to bring our petitions, prayers, and praise before the Father's throne. It's true. He really does hold the whole world in His hand.

Imagine Heaven. The very atmosphere a sweet aroma of praise that raises like the cloud that Isaiah saw in his vision. But before the throne, One who looks like the Son of God! Standing. Beseeching. His voice rising and falling with faith, hope and love for His church. And from the mouth of the One risen from the dead, your name is spoken. You. Jesus is interceding for you.

Paul said in Philippians 4:6 to "make your request known to God."

Is there a wayward child your heart breaks for? Is there a soul that you cry out for? Is there a purpose in life you are asking for? See the Lord, high and lifted up, His scarred hands spread before the Father and His voice filling the celestial air with faith. He carries your petitions before the throne.

It is time to pray with new faith, friend. Let your request go to the One who intercedes before the Father.

- Make your request known, "Jesus, I bring my need, petition, prayer, and request before you now."
- Begin to thank Him as He takes your petition and presents it before the throne.
- Close your eyes and imagine the scene in Heaven as your Lord delivers your petition before the Father God.

There is only one response adequate and that is praise to the One who lives to make intercession, for you. Let His Kingdom come here on this earth just like it is in Heaven.

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