



SESSION #3

LUKE 6:27-36

LEADER GUIDE

BIG IDEA: CHRIST-FOLLOWERS
LOVE DIFFERENTLY

Group Time:

- What was a good moment from the week?
- Talk about a time you benefited from an act love.
- What are some thoughts or questions from the sermon?

Bible Time:

- **Leader Note:** While last week was a description of the kind of disciples that follow Jesus and receive God's blessing, this week is a command for the kinds of actions that disciples following Jesus need to do. The focus question of this week is: "How does following Christ change my actions towards others?" Jesus gives rather radical commands to his disciples explaining how they should interact with others.
- **Read:** 6:27-30—"But I tell you who hear me. Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back."
 - **Option:** Read *The Message* version: "If someone slaps you in the face, stand there and take it. If someone grabs your shirt, gift-wrap your best coat and make a present of it. If someone takes unfair advantage of you, use the occasion to practice the servant life. No more tit-for-tat stuff. Live generously."
- **Leader Note:** Four Commands of Love. These four commands are unparalleled in their radical nature. There are many references in the OT about loving others; for example, in Leviticus 19:18 it says, "love your neighbor as yourself." But in Judaism, as one commentator noted, "one's neighbor was someone with similar religious thinking, not one who was opposed and hostile" (Bock, 588). Jesus introduces and commands a love that the world has never seen before; it is a love above circumstances and situations; it is a love that is difficult and hard. The command is basically this: no matter how others treat you, treat them with love. In *The Message*, Eugene Peterson paraphrases it this way: "Let them bring out the best in you, not the worst." Our best means we are to love with our actions, "do good;" we are to love with our words, "bless;" and to we are to love with our prayers, "pray." If you'd like to study those who adopted this sort of approach, look at Jesus himself in Luke 23:34, and Stephen in Acts 7:58-60.



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- **Ask:** Describe the kind of love Jesus calls us to.
- **Ask:** What sorts of people does Jesus want us to love? What is our general reaction to people who hate, curse, and mistreat us?
- **Say:** This idea is so important to Jesus that he continues to give four illustrations of love. These four illustrations continue to describe the sort of love Jesus wants his disciples, as commentator notes, “Love is available, vulnerable, and subject to repeated abuse.” There can be the tendency to love within certain boundaries of our own safety, respect, and well-being. But Jesus wants us to love others without those boundaries. We are not supposed to fight back when someone strikes us. We are supposed to give others more when they take from us. We are supposed to give to “*everyone*.” And we are not supposed to demand things back. Jesus has more for us to do in the way we love.
- **Read:** 6:31-34—*“Do to others as you would have them do to you. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ lend to ‘sinners,’ expecting to be repaid in full.”*
- **Leader Note:** These three verses reveal the radical type of love that Jesus calls us to do. There are two types of love we find out: love that is based on how others treat us and love that is based on how Jesus calls us. Jesus calls us to a love different from the sinner’s love. A sinner’s love is love based on a person’s favorable response to us. There is conditional motivation. But that is not the love of Jesus. It is not enough to merely love those who love us, Jesus sets the bar higher. He wants us to love without motivating conditions from other people.
- **Ask:** How does Jesus raise the bar in these verses? Why is there no credit for loving those who love us? How do you see others in your world loving in this fashion? What sorts of people typically receive your love?
- **Read:** 6:35—*“But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.”*
- **Leader Note:** Luke gives two outcomes for living this way; divine reward and human recognition. When we respond to hostility with love and good deeds, and give generously



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without any future expectations, we will be rewarded and it will give others a chance to recognize our personal relationship with God. The reward is not salvation, or as one

commentator states, “so the reward is not the blessing of life, but the Father’s pleasure and affirmation at the disciple’s having been a faithful steward by in a way that goes beyond the sinner’s love” (Bock, 603). Our reward will be God’s praise of our lives. We will hear the words of Matthew 25:21: “*Well done, good and faithful servant!*” At the same time, the love we show to others will lead to a recognition that we are “*sons [and daughters] of the Most High.*” (See 1 John 3:1). It’s exactly what the older song by Jars of Clay speak about—“They will know we are Christians by our Love.” When we love and do good deeds for those who hate and mistreat us, other people will know that we have a relationship with God, because “*he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.*”

- **Ask:** What does God promise when we love this way? What’s hard about that promise?
- **Read:** 6:36—“*Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.*”
- **Leader Note:** The last reason to live this way is the divine reflection: we are to reflect the character of God. Our standard of mercy comes from God. We need to be merciful in the same manner as God our Father is merciful. (See Titus 3:3-7 for a description of God’s mercy).
- **Ask:** How has God the Father shown His mercy to us? How can we reflect His mercy to others? Which of the ways the Lord calls us to love in on your heart? How can we love this way? How will we do it?
- **Leader Note:** We are called to a higher standard of love than the world because our God is the highest standard of love. We are able to love in this way because of the character of our God. We are able to love in a different way from sinner’s because of His eternal promises of reward and justice. As one commentator proclaims, “It is the sermon’s eschatology [the study of the end] of hope and justice that lays the groundwork for the disciple’s love ethic” (Bock, 567). Essentially, We can love in this radical way now, because of our trust and faith in the future.

Group Time:

- **Closing:** Hand out index cards. Have each person write their name and one way they want to demonstrate their love. Then distribute these cards to others in the group so they can pray for them during the week. Then have people pray for the person on their index card.



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Encourage the group to pray silently or out loud. Finish praying the Lord's Prayer together out loud.