

Introduction: Jesus said the world would recognize us as His disciple by our _____. “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35, ESV)

This means there will be something distinctive about Christian love.

- We should be distinctive in who we love.
- We are to love God _____ - “Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.” (Matthew 10:37, ESV)
- We are to love our _____ - “And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us.” (1 John 3:23, ESV)
- We are to love our _____ - “You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.” (Leviticus 19:18, ESV) (Luke 10:27ff)
- We are to love our _____

We should be distinctive in _____ we love. Four kinds of love- one uniquely Christian

- Philia, friendship
- Eros, sexual love
- Storge, the love that binds families together;
- Agape- the word has more variety of meanings that we typically learn (2 Timothy 4:10). The word was almost unknown before Christ. It is a love that gives it means a love that gives itself for the good of the recipient. It means love that springs from the nature of the donor rather than from the real or fancied worthiness of the recipient. We can desire and work for their highest good. We can regard them as those for whom Christ came and died and who are therefore intensely valuable to him.

We should be unique in the _____ we follow when we love.

Two rules of Scriptural interpretation (hermeneutics) are critical to fully appreciate this passage

- Let _____ - Other more clear passages can illuminate less clear passages
- Context is _____. This passage is not saying never resist evil. He gives four very specific examples of what he means in this passage. Also, cultural context here- what did this mean to the people who heard it the first time.
 - Context will demand we read this passage with the mindset of a _____.
 - Context will inform us that these commands are for _____, not for countries not churches. Governments have a responsibility to resist evil and churches have a responsibility to address false teaching, resist the devil and expose evil in our lives (Ephesians).

Jesus is not talking about global pacifism or the abolition of police forces or the rights and wrongs of war. He is not talking about the responsibilities of states at all. Paul does that in Romans 13:1-7. No, he is prohibiting for members of the kingdom the attitude that says, ‘The so-and-so has cheated me. Wait till I get even with him!’ Natural—but wrong. Michael Green

Key thought: Follower of Jesus should follow Christ in dealing with those who _____.

- I. We are not to _____.
 - A. Eye for an eye was a command that the punishment should fit the crime, not a call to retaliate.
 1. Lamech- “Lamech said to his wives: “Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; you wives of Lamech, listen to what I say: I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me. If Cain’s revenge is sevenfold, then Lamech’s is seventy-sevenfold.”” (Genesis 4:23-24, ESV)
 - B. Jesus gives four vivid cameos drawn from familiar life situations that would have been familiar.
 1. To be slapped in the face was to be insulted. In the first, a man strikes another on the cheek—not only a painful blow, but a gross insult (cf. 2 Cor 11:20). If a right-handed person strikes someone’s right cheek, presumably it is a slap by the back of the hand, probably considered more insulting than a slap by the open palm. Frank Gaebeline

Yes, but an anvil is one thing, a doormat is another. Jesus’ illustrations and personal example

depict not the weakling who offers no resistance. He himself challenged the high priest when questioned by him in court.⁴ They depict rather the strong man whose control of himself and love for others are so powerful that he rejects absolutely every conceivable form of retaliation. John Stott

2. Under the law the outer cloak was inalienable possession. "If ever you take your neighbor's cloak in pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down," (Exodus 22:26, ESV) If sued for you a tunic (garment worn against the skin) gladly part with what they may legally keep. Some think that robbery is in view,
 3. If you are legally compelled to go one mile go a second. The verb translated *forces* (*angareusei*), Persian in origin, was used by Josephus with reference to 'the compulsory transportation of military baggage'. It could be applied today to any form of service in which we find ourselves conscripts rather than volunteers.
 4. You are to be generous to those who approach you. (Job 31:16–20) (1 Timothy 6:17–19)
 - a) Does not mean you can ever say "no". "Whoever puts up security for a stranger will surely suffer harm, but he who hates striking hands in pledge is secure." (Proverbs 11:15, ESV) "To return evil for good is devilish; to return good for good is human; to return good for evil is divine" (Plummer).
- C. Our response to mistreatment should cause amazement. That is precisely the point. Members of the kingdom should cause utter amazement by the way they respond to being grossly insulted (that is the meaning of being struck on the cheek, even today in the Middle East) or unjustly used. There should be such a generosity of spirit about us that we give and give and give just as God has given to us. As so often in this Sermon, we are hearing only Part 2 of the deal: Part 1 is God's generosity in ever making us members of his kingdom; Part 2 is the way we reflect that generosity in our lifestyle. Michael Green

- II. We are to _____ to our enemies.
- A. Because there is **no** Biblical command to hate your enemies. It was inferred from OT examples of warfare (nation against nation) Dead Sea Scrolls- that they may love all the sons of light... and hate all the sons of darkness.
 - B. Because God loved His enemies by doing good to them.
 1. OT commands and examples "If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall bring it back to him. If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying down under its burden, you shall refrain from leaving him with it; you shall rescue it with him." (Exodus 23:4–5, ESV) "Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and let not your heart be glad when he stumbles," (Proverbs 24:17, ESV) "Do not say, "I will do to him as he has done to me; I will pay the man back for what he has done."" (Proverbs 24:29, ESV)
 2. NT command and examples- "Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Romans 12:17–21, ESV)
 - C. Because God will take _____ on His enemies. (2 Thessalonians 1:6–10, ESV)
 - D. Because our response to our enemies is a part of being salt and light. It is part of our witness.
 - E. Because you cannot hate those you regularly pray for.

Conclusion: This is what it means to be _____. "Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy." (Leviticus 19:2, ESV)

God is our example.
God should set our agenda
God is our standard
God's glory is our motivation