

# Bible Studies for Life: March 27

*A Life of Love • John 15:9-17*

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May 21, 2011, is a day I will never forget. I better not, because it's my anniversary. On this day, months of planning finally culminated as Jordan and I exchanged our vows before God and many witnesses at the altar of First Church, Mendenhall.

This May will make 11 years together, and I love her more today than I did then. I still haven't gotten over the fact that she loves me, and still wants to be my wife.

In similar fashion, I encountered the love of Christ when I was 13 years old. He broke through my self-righteousness, showed me my need for a Savior, redeemed me, adopted me, justified me, and saved me. What a great love!

Today we need to remember that God's love is not meant to stop with us but to be *spread through us*. We must live lives marked by love. As we remember from previous lessons, love is the very thing that identifies us with Jesus, so we must get this right!

How can we live lives of love? First, we must experience the love of Christ. As Jesus' betrayal grew even closer, He

reminded His disciples in verse nine, “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you,” and that they were now to “abide” in His love.

Think of what love the Father has for Jesus, the Son. It is eternal, unbreakable, and perfect. Jesus demonstrated that very love to the disciples, and now they were to remain in His love. They were not to move past it or graduate to deeper doctrines; they were to remain and abide in the love of Christ.

This poses a question we must all answer: Have you experienced the love of Christ firsthand? Do you have a relationship with Christ? You cannot show the love of Christ to others if you have not experienced His love firsthand.

Secondly, we must obey Christ by demonstrating sacrificial love. Love for Christ that is not demonstrated by obedience to Christ is not love at all. There is direct correlation between our obedience and love for Jesus. The two cannot be separated.

We see this in verses 10-11. Jesus rebuked those who paid Him lip service but did not walk in obedience by saying “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord’ and not do what I tell you” (Luke 6:46 ESV).

Jesus then explains in verse 12 that the greatest way that we can obey Him is by loving one another just as He has loved us. Verse 13 is a reminder to us that love is not just an emotion – it is an action that leads us to sacrifice and that is exactly what Jesus did for us.

As we read these words from Jesus, let’s ask ourselves, “Does my love for Jesus lead me to love others sacrificially?” Many times we may say that we love others, but we aren’t willing to sacrifice for them. We cannot love others more than Christ loves them, but we can reflect His love by obeying Christ and making personal sacrifices on their behalf.

How might the Lord lead you to love sacrificially this week? Maybe He would have you volunteer in the church nursery. Perhaps He would have you park in an inconvenient parking spot so others could be park closer to the sanctuary.

Perhaps He will lead you to sing songs in corporate worship that don't meet your preferences but help other generations become more aware of the goodness of God. May the Lord lead us to obey Him, by loving sacrificially.

Finally, we must remind ourselves frequently of His love for us. Jesus reminds the disciples that they did not choose Him but rather the opposite was true; He chose them and He appointed them to bear fruit.

There was nothing in the disciples to make them worthy of being chosen by God. Instead, they were chosen because they were loved greatly by God. The same is true of us. We are not worthy of God's love, yet He chose to love us and appointed us to bear fruit.

We must remind ourselves daily of the love God has for us, because we are prone to forget it. As we remind ourselves of the Good News of the Gospel, may we live lives marked by love.

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