

Each One Teach One Discipleship Lessons

Part Three:

FAITH THAT LIFTS UP

Learning to Share Your Faith in God

LESSON TEN:

The CONTAGIOUS DISCIPLE

At the end of *Lesson Nine*, we asked if you would like to have such a "contagious" faith that everyone you touched would "catch" the desire to become a disciple of Jesus. In this lesson, we will consider what it would take to be that kind of evangelist and disciple-maker.



Lunch Box Evangelism ...

In a *PEANUTS* cartoon in the newspaper, Charlie Brown's little sister Sally had her own idea how to "touch" people to convert them. Speaking to her friend Linus, she said...

SALLY: *I would have made a good evangelist. You know that kid who sits behind me at school? I convinced him my religion is better than his religion.*

LINUS: *How'd you do that?*

SALLY: *I hit him with my lunch box!*

We can chuckle at Sally's "Lunch Box Evangelism" approach, but how many Christian groups make their "converts" by hitting them over the head with the Bible or punching them with prophecies?!

The Lord **does** use a wide variety of methods through a wide variety of people to spread the Good News. Some people **do** have their first exposure to seeds of the Gospel through a fascination with a prophecy seminar. Notorious "sinners" may actually respond at first to the Gospel when "hit over the head" with hell-fire threats of a tent evangelist.

But neither prophecy nor fear of hell fire can be used to bring disciples to maturity in Christ. They may not even be among the best ways to **introduce** people to the Lord.

So how **do** you begin to become a "contagious" disciple? Are there "tools" you need? Are there special "methods" you need to learn? Should you start by going to the Christian Book Store to get a Concordance, an evangelism hand-book and a color-coded pocket-sized New Testament and Psalms to whip out when the opportunity presents itself to "witness" for Jesus?

While all those physical "tools" may be helpful, they will NOT make you a contagious Christian. Neither will they identify you as a disciple of Jesus. What will?

[John 13:34-35]

"A new command I give you: _____. As I have _____, so you must _____. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you _____."

Many Christian organizations emphasize the value of "signs and wonders" to spread the Gospel. Others emphasize to potential converts that they alone have the special "knowledge" of the scriptures they need. But what does the Bible say?

[I Cor 13:1-3]

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not _____, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not _____, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not _____, I gain nothing.

***** If you are going to go out and win others to Christ, you **do** need to be familiar with your Bible. You **do** need to be able to clearly communicate the plan of salvation to others. It may help to study evangelism hand-books to learn effective presentation methods. It may be helpful to have various Bible translations and concordances. But all of those tools and methods will be worthless if you don't have the ultimate discipling tool- Godly **love**.

The Godly **love** of the Bible is not a "warm, fuzzy feeling." It is not an "emotion" you have to work up. It is a **choice of action**, a **commitment**, and a **way of life**. Feelings and emotions may follow, but they are not the essence of this love.

In the rest of this lesson, we will consider some passages that help clarify what this kind of love is like. Examine yourself in the light of what you read. By the standard presented here, are you **really** a disciple of Jesus, and do you **really** have what it takes to be a contagious disciple?

If you go out trying to be an evangelist WITHOUT this love, your preaching will only be like a "clanging cymbal." You just may get "converts." But they will be infected with "religion," not the Life of Jesus.

***** We first learn about **true** love by seeing how God expressed it:

[John 3:16]

"For God so loved the _____ that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

***** That's well and good for God, but surely He can't expect that kind of selfless love from us. After all, "we're only human"! Or can He?

[John 15:12-13]

My command is this: Love each other _____. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for _____.

[I John 3:16]

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our _____.

***** Well, perhaps we can love our *friends* that way. But how about our *enemies*?

[Matthew 5:43-46]

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your _____, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?"

***** How can God expect us to love our enemies?! Didn't He hate sinners?

[Romans 5:8]

But God demonstrates his own _____ for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

***** It should be obvious by now that this **love** isn't just idle words or cozy feelings.

[I John 3:18]

Dear children, let us not love with _____ or tongue but with _____ and in truth.

[I John 4:20]

If anyone says, "I love God," yet _____, he is a liar. For anyone who does not _____, whom he has seen, cannot _____ God, whom he has not seen.

[I John 5:2]

This is how we know that we love the children of God: by _____ God and _____ his _____.

***** If you are still not sure **exactly** what this love consists of, below is a pretty good summary of some of its qualities. Is this describing the way of life you are earnestly seeking through the power of the Holy Spirit? Can you see glimmers of this way of life in yourself, growing day by day? If not, you may not need a bigger concordance or a new Bible to be more effective in discipling for the Lord. You may need to seek the Lord in prayer how you can begin to change to be conformed to His image, for this is a description of Him. **God is love.**

[I Cor 13:4-13]

Love is _____, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not _____, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily _____, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears... And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

***** Few people in the world exhibit **this** kind of love. If you do, everyone you touch will feel it. They will bask in it. They will want to know where you got it. And they may ask how they can get it. You will be a "living epistle" (a living *letter*) that preaches the Gospel first by your own life, a living "witness" to what God can do. **Then** you can get out your Bibles and concordances!

REVIEW:

1. God *loved* the whole world **so much** he sent His son to die for all.
2. A true *disciple* of Jesus will *love* with **that kind** of Godly *love*.
3. This *love* is toward God, toward brothers--**even** toward **enemies**.
4. This *love* is not just an **emotion**, but a choice of a **way of life**.
5. This *love* will show itself by **obedience** to God's **commands**.
6. You need this *love* to go out and make **more disciples**.

MEMORY VERSES:

LESSON TEN MEMORY VERSE:

John 13:35

**By this all men will know that you are my disciples,
if you love one another.**

LESSON NINE MEMORY VERSE

John 8:31B-32

... Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

QUESTIONS:

1. Describe one difference between Godly love and worldly "love."

2. What does the Bible call someone who says he loves God but hates his brother? Why?

3. Give your own description of some qualities of Godly love.

4. Keeping the commandments is an expression of love toward God, as it shows obedience and respect to Him. But how can keeping the commandments also be an expression of love toward people?

5. How is an unloving attitude a hindrance to sharing the Gospel?

6. Write John 13:35 from memory:

By this _____

7. Fill in the blanks in these scripture quotes from past lessons:

For it is by _____ that you are saved, through faith...

For we are God's _____ created in Christ Jesus...

The testing of your _____ works patience....

Without me [Jesus] you can do _____ ...

If you hold to my teaching, you are really my _____...