

Love That Sets Us Apart

Sunday March 15, 2026

John 13:34–35 (NLT) So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other.³⁵ Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

Introduction: My wife recently showed me a short news reel about a woman who ordered coffee through a delivery app.

When she checked her porch camera, she noticed something that caught her attention. The man delivering her coffee was an elderly gentleman. He slowly worked his way up the porch steps, carefully placed the order by the door, and made his way back down the stairs.

She later discovered he was in his late seventies and had come out of retirement because his wife had lost her job. For more than a year they had been doing DoorDash deliveries together, his wife driving while he made the drop-offs.

She shared their story online, and strangers across the country began giving. In a short time, hundreds of thousands of dollars were raised to help them.

All because one person noticed and cared.

Moments like that remind us of something important. In a dark world, even a small light makes a difference.

Jesus knew His followers would live in a world filled with conflict, division, and selfishness. So He gave them something that would shine in that darkness.

- Not a uniform.
- Not a title.
- Not even a program.
- He gave them love.

And He said the world would recognize His followers by it.

The clearest evidence that we belong to Jesus is not our knowledge, not our activity, not our position, but the way we love one another.

Jesus' command to love was not entirely new. The Old Testament already instructed people to love their neighbor.

But Jesus made this command new in three ways: A new focal point, A new standard and A new outcome

Jesus first directs our attention to the people closest to us.

1. A New Focal Point “Love one another.”

Jesus narrowed the focus. In the Old Testament the command was to love your neighbor. But Jesus emphasized that His followers were to love each other.

If we cannot love those who follow Christ, how will we love those outside the church?

If love for one another is the focal point, the next question becomes:

What love looks like in everyday life?

Scripture does not leave us guessing. It shows us practical ways we can express Christ-like love toward one another.

Ephesians 4:2-3 (NLT) Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love.³ Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace.

Practical Expressions of Love

Love puts others before self

Humility means we stop putting ourselves above others and begin valuing them as much as we value ourselves.

Philippians 2:3-4 (NLT) Don’t be selfish; don’t try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. ⁴ Don’t look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. ⁵ You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.

Love responds differently when hurt

- It Doesn’t retaliate (refuses to return insult for insult, or gossip for gossip)
- Is Patient with the weaknesses of others. (gives people room to grow)
- Chooses forgiveness over resentment. (builds bridges, not walls)

Love protects unity

Love works to keep relationships strong instead of tearing them apart.

Jesus did not simply tell us to love; He also gave us the standard by which that love should be measured.

2. A New Standard “As I have loved you.”

The idea of loving others wasn't new. The Old Testament already said, "Love your neighbor."

What made Jesus' command new was how far it went and how it was lived out.

Jesus raised the standard. Now we love others as Christ loved us.

Mark 10:45 (NLT) "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Ephesians 5:2 (NLT) Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.

Jesus loved us by serving, sacrificing, forgiving, and ultimately giving His life for us.

His love becomes the model for our love.

And when believers begin to live this kind of love, something powerful happens.

3. A New Outcome "By this all will know that you are My disciples."

Love would become the distinguishing mark of the Christian.

In that day:

- Soldiers were known by their uniforms
- Jews were known by their religious practices
- Philosophers were known by their learning

But Jesus said His followers would be known by their love.

Acts 2 shows how the early church lived this out, they shared life together, cared for one another, and people noticed.

Conclusion: The world does not first see our theology. They see how we treat people. They see: How we treat each other. How we handle conflict. How we respond when someone fails. How we forgive.

The greatest testimony of the church is not our buildings, our programs, or our music. It is our love.

So, the question we must ask ourselves today is simple:

If someone watched our relationships, our patience, our forgiveness, the way we treat people who fail, would they see something that points them to Jesus?

Because when we as Christ followers truly walk in love, the world cannot ignore it. And when we walk in that kind of love, we reveal the heart of Christ to a watching world.