

Small Group Bible Study Questions

- A) It's an ironic concept, I believe, that the world will believe in the authenticity of Jesus Christ by the love which Christians have for one another. What does the world think about Christians based on this measure of authenticity? If you were to ask a stranger about Jesus Christ based on His followers, what answer would you imagine you would receive?
- B) It is obvious, from John 13:34-35, that Jesus wanted to have a community of followers which were sensitive to the needs and observations of the "lost." However, many churches today have been "duped" into thinking that the way to reach lost people is to create "seeker sensitive" or "seeker centered" church programs and use non-church lingo in publications and preaching. In fact, what can this kind of approach create?
- C) What is the best way for our church to reach lost people?
- D) What are some creative and innovative ways you could reach the people in your community in light of John 13:34-35? For example, inviting a "lost" couple and a "found" couple over for dinner. Expose people to the love between Christian friends! What other examples can you think of?
- E) It would be easy to look at Long Beach Alliance Church and beat it up for "not being loving enough." I think any church could say that about itself. Rather than this pessimistic, foul and negative perspective... How is Long Beach Alliance Church doing well at loving one another? How can we increase our strengths in these areas? What would need to happen in your own life for your love of others at LBAC to become observable by lost people? Is there anything blocking your love of others at LBAC? Take time to pray for our church and for each other in relation to John 13:34-35.

What's Love Got To Do With It?

Long Beach Alliance Church • November 13th, 2005 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**BY THIS ALL MEN WILL
KNOW THAT YOU ARE MY
DISCIPLES, IF YOU HAVE
LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER.
~JOHN 13:35 (NASB)**

1) The Theme Of Love In John's Gospel

- A) Prior to John 13, John's gospel only mentions love eight times (John 3:16, 3:19, 5:42, 8:42, 11:3, 11:5, 11:36, 12:43).
- Of those, four (3:19, 5:42, 8:42, 12:43) are negative references to the absence of love in a person's life.
 - Three additional references (11:3, 5, 36) refer to the personal love between Christ, Lazarus, Mary and Martha.
 - Only one reference (3:16) has to do with God's love.
- B) It is notable that the single verse on love before the Upper Room narrative begins in John 13, is God's love toward humankind (John 3:16). This is where love begins, with God.

- C) Love originates from God and is expressed in the Son, Jesus Christ (John 3:16). We are called to constantly abide in Christ (we respond by believing -- John 15:4, 6:29, 20:31).
- D) Between John 13-17, where Jesus is speaking with His closest followers, love is mentioned 30 times! Of these 30 references, only 2 are mildly negative (14:24, 15:19).
- E) This "sudden" emphasis on love has to do with the shift from a public ministry (which involved a majority of non-believers in John 1-12) to a private ministry (which involved a majority of believers in John 13-21).
- F) The beginning verse of Christ's more private ministry even serves as an announcement that the remainder of Christ's ministry will be an expression of Christ's love "to the end" (John 13:1).

2) Love Highlight #1 ~ The New Commandment

- A) We are called to love God (Deuteronomy 6:5, Matthew 22:37) and we are called to love others (Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 22:39).
- B) Christ gave us a new commandment, to love one another as Jesus Christ had loved the disciples (John 13:34, 15:12). This was to be a special, unique, selective, exclusive love which existed between those (one to another) who believe in Jesus Christ for eternal life (John 17:3).

- C) The New Testament church is the best place to determine how this new commandment was developed. The special love of the new commandment was demonstrated through:
 - i. Generosity with those who were needy regardless of personal wealth. Even the poor helped the poor (Acts 2:44-45, 4:32-37; 2nd Corinthians 8:1-9).
 - ii. Sharing meals in one another's homes, hospitality (Acts 2:46, 16:31-34; Romans 12:13; Hebrews 13:2).
 - iii. Unity in worship (Acts 2:46; 1st Corinthians 1:10) and great desire for service (Acts 6:1-7; 2nd Corinthians 9).
- D) The radical impact of the new commandment is its authenticating influence on evangelism (John 13:35; Acts 2:47; 1st John 4:7-14). The result? If you want to reach out to the world, you've got to reach in to 'one another' first!

3) Love Highlight #2 ~ Attitude Of Service To Others

- A) Jesus' example of servanthood (foot washing from John 13:4-18) should re-define our attitudes. Without an attitude of humility it is impossible to express love toward God!
- B) When we choose pride over humility, being served rather than serving, self-concern rather than generosity, preservation rather than sacrifice -- we have elevated ourselves as superior to Jesus Christ (13:16).
- C) Jesus' example is to have an attitude which chooses to give up our rights (humility), in order to express our relationship of love with Him (John 14:23-24). Jesus did this and we ought to do the same (cf. Philippians 2:3-4).