



# COLLABORATIVE DISCIPLESHIP

## 2 Cultivate

### How to Love by Faith

## 1 Connect

**Summary** God, through His Holy Spirit, enables us to love others, even those who are difficult to love.

#### Our love for others will demonstrate God's love for the world.

In John 13:34–35 we are commanded to love others as God has loved us: *“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*

**Read** Matthew 22:34–40.

*“Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: ‘Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?’ Jesus replied: ‘‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”*

**Read** Matthew 5:43–44.

*“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”*

#### Discuss

What are the two greatest commandments? How are we to respond to our enemies?

Why do we find it so difficult at times to love other people?

#### Our sinful nature actively or passively resists God.

Our natural human tendency is to dislike, hate or despise others, especially our enemies, those who have hurt us, or those who we find difficult to love.

**Read** Romans 8:6–8.

*“The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.”*

#### Discuss

How would you describe the contrast you see in this passage?

Describe a time when you felt it was impossible to demonstrate love to another.

#### We can love others by faith in the Spirit's power.

There is a way to love even our enemies. It happens as we learn to rely on God's love, which has been freely given through the Holy Spirit, who lives in every follower of Jesus.

*Describe a time in your life where someone demonstrated love to you in a way that was surprising.*

## 3 Care

*Since we last met, what happened as a result of expressing Christ's love to others?*

*Take a moment right now to reflect and pray.*

*Ask God if there is someone He wants you to love by faith.*

*What is one thing you can do this week to demonstrate God's love to this person, even if it is difficult?*

**Read** Romans 5:5.

*“And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.”*

**Read** Galatians 5:22–23.

*“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”*

**Discuss**

What is the source of unconditional love for the believer in Christ?

Can you think of an example of unconditional love for an enemy? What was the effect?

**God does His work as we pray and live by faith.**

**Read** 1 John 5:14–15.

*“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.”*

**Discuss**

How do you know that loving others is according to God’s will and design?

Do you believe that God can answer your prayer, enabling you to love even a person you find hard to love?

**Read** Hebrews 11:6.

*“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”*

**Read** 1 Peter 5:6–7.

*“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”*

**Discuss**

How might you take a step of faith to demonstrate love to someone, even if it is difficult?

Is it possible to demonstrate love through your actions even when you don’t feel like it?

How can prayer make a difference as you demonstrate love through your actions?

**Pray** In light of what we’ve discussed, how can we pray for each other right now?