

When Habits Work (John 13:34-35)

Putting On A Habit sermon series

By Pastor David Hillis, 09.30.18

BIG IDEA: The clearest way to gauge a person's deepening relationship with God is the extent that they go to love others.

Love for others starts with love for God. (2 Corinthians 5:13a, 14a)

- As we love God and pursue God more deeply and wholeheartedly, we will begin to sense and know His heart and the desires He has for our lives.
- Our walk with God compels us to love others in radical ways.

Love is a deep-seated emotion that God has given humans the capacity to receive and give. (John 13:1-5, 15:12-13a; Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 5:43-45a, 46-47; 1 John 3:18-20)

- Love is something we DO, it's not just a feeling or a theological frame of mind.
- Let's go beyond loving people on our own capacity, let's love people to the extent that Christ demonstrated love to us.
- We can't fully love people - especially those that hurt us - unless we are actively experiencing and receiving the endless supply of love that God lavishes on us.
- When we love those around us, we show what a real, genuine, growing relationship with God looks like.

MY NEXT STEP: If loving others is God's gauge for evaluating my walk with Him, what does it say to me about myself? Do I give of myself, my love only to those who tend to reciprocate? If love is a decision, what does love require of me?

QUESTIONS FOR MY TIME WITH GOD:

1. Spend some time with John 13:34-35, our main passage today. Why did Jesus choose love as the principal gauge for how closely we are following Him, and not something else? Take a moment to think through the people God used you to really demonstrate love to this past month. Who can you come up with? Are you surprised by how short or long your list is? How many of those demonstrations of love were not easy? Inconvenient? With people you didn't really know? Pray for God to stir a deeper desire to draw close to Him, and in turn give you the capacity to more selflessly love others.
2. Spend some time with Jesus' words in Matthew 5:43-48 this week. What comes to mind and you think on this passage? Who do you find it hardest for you to love? Why...why them? How does it reveal itself in the ways you treat (or don't treat) them? What does love require of you in those relationships? How can you respond to Christ's love for you by actively loving them this week?
3. In your devotional time this week, read through the book of 1 John, perhaps a chapter a day. Pay particular attention to the places it speaks of love and what love requires. Talk with God after each reading about how He wants to stretch you specifically to be more loving, and learn to live more into a life of love.
4. Next week, we will start a series on what it means to love your neighbor. What questions do you have about this topic? What struggles do you have? How has God worked (or how is He working) in your life in this area? Take a moment to send Pastor Dave your thoughts at david@gracetucson.org.