

1. In the gospel of John, Jesus, in the last supper meal, Jesus commands his disciples: **“A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”**

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command.

John, in his 1st letter makes the same point, that Jesus has revealed what love looks like through his ‘atoning sacrifice’; for us and for all peoples of the world. **2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.**

This is how we know we are in him: 6 Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.

If Lordship Love is modelling the love we show others on the love we have received from God in Jesus, what challenges does this place before you? Consider it in terms of

- Attitudes towards others
- Behaviour that results in our attitudes being expressed.

2. Paul stated in Philippians 2 **In humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself**

nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

- Consider this passage and notes which verses raise challenge and questions as you consider the relationships in your life, in a general way.

3. Family Relationships

Looking at Ephesians 5, the key is verse 21 **Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.**

- Consider your family members and note the relationships you have with each person.
- What might mutual submission out of reverence for Christ look like, in each relationship?
- How do you reflect grace in each?
- In what ways do you give the benefit of the doubt?
- In times of conflict, is there forgiveness?
- How good are you at attempting to understand where the other family member is coming from?
- When you know you have disrespected someone, how easy is it for you to repent and express repentance?
- Do I take my families love for me for granted, working on an expectation that I don't have to put in the effort with them, because they will love me whatever I say or do?
- Do I forgive it, when members of my family disrespect me, don't put in the effort with me?

4. Neighbourhood Relationships

Name the connections you have in your neighbourhood. This could be neighbours in your street, or at work, or in other spheres in your life.

- How are these people, like you, and how are they different?
- Consider those who you feel uncomfortable with, or different from. What are the things about them that make you feel uncomfortable?
- How might you break down any barriers that are present?
- In what ways can you take the time to understand them better?
- How would assuming good from those who are different, rather than enmity, change these relationships?
- Who do I consider neighbour, and who do I consider outsider; enemy or sorts.
- Who are the people in my life I am uncomfortable with, because they are different, or because they believe different things to me?
- What does Lordship love in my neighbourhood, and with people who look, think or have values that are different to me, look like?

5. Church Relationships

In the early church writings this is a summary of their life: **'At no other time in the history of Christianity did love so characterize the entire church as it did in the first three centuries. And Roman society took note.'**

Tertullian reported that the Romans would exclaim, **"See how they love one another!"**

Justin Martyr sketched Christian love this way: **"We who used to value the acquisition of wealth and possessions more than anything else now bring**

what we have into a common fund and share it with anyone who needs it. We used to hate and destroy one another and refused to associate with people of another race or country. Now, because of Christ, we live together with such people and pray for our enemies."

Clement, describing the person who has come to know God, wrote,

"He impoverishes himself out of love, so that he is certain he may never overlook a brother in need, especially if he knows he can bear poverty better than his brother. He likewise considers the pain of another as his own pain. And if he suffers any hardship because of having given out of his own poverty, he does not complain."

When a devastating plague swept across the ancient world in the third century, Christians were the only ones who cared for the sick, which they did at the risk of contracting the plague themselves. Meanwhile, pagans were throwing infected members of their own families into the streets even before they died, in order to protect themselves from the disease.

This was what **Lordship Love Looked Like** in Church relationships from 30-300AD.

We have a similar attitude in the Christian's in Palu, after the devastation of the Earthquake, after quakes, and Tsunami. These brothers and sisters had food and water, but they provided for those around them in need. This is what Lordship Love looks like, in crisis.

We don't face such things at present in Glen Waverley, in Melbourne, Australia. In our situations, as the church GWAC:

- In church relationships, who are the people I spend time with after worship?
- What effort have I made to connect with others in the congregation I mostly attend?
- What effort have I made to attend one of the other congregations, to get to know the people who worship in a different way better?
- What is my relationship to those who are part of the body, but not part of my inner circle?
- What assumptions do I make of those who go to other congregations at GWAC?
- What assumptions do I make of those who worship in other denominations around us?
- What can I do to make the connections to other believers world-wide, especially those going through adversity?

6. I guess there is certainly room for improvement, as we look at the sacrificial love shown by Jesus, and the way the early church lived it out, and Christians in great adversity, seem to reveal. It is not surprising then, that as John continues to reflect on this command to believers; to love one another, in his letters to the churches; that he has the recognition that we will fail in this, but our failure is not the last word. **2:1 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father— Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.**

- In considering your relationships more closely, and the struggle to Love with Christ's Lordship in mind, what areas do you need to bring before Jesus in repentance?
- Take time to pray for one another