

Taking a Closer Look

What does the Bible say?

We saw in our last study that Jesus' ultimate objective is a world full of disciples who are like him. Jesus understood that if this goal was to be achieved, a strong model of his life would have to be perpetuated as the work moved forward. In the same way that our Army must prioritize development of a strong government in Iraq (over simply defeating insurgents) Christ's followers must first ensure the strength of their own members. We'll be looking at Jesus' *New Commandment* to his followers. In it, he prescribes **how** they are to proceed and on **whom** they are to focus in their labors.

The New Commandment

Read John 13:34-35 and answer the following questions.

- To whom did Jesus give this command? Who was his audience?
- How were they to fulfill the commandment? Who were they to love?

"As I have loved you..."

- To love as Christ loved his twelve disciples requires a life-long study of the gospels. In what ways did Jesus love the twelve he trained? List specific scriptures that back up your answer.

What further insights do the verses below give for carrying out Jesus-style love?

Philippians 2:5-8 –

Mark 3:14 –

John 17:6-8 –

John 13:13-15 –

"You must love one another..."

- Who is Jesus referring to when he states "one another"?
- Read Matthew 10:5-15. On whom did Jesus instruct his men to concentrate?
- Read 2 Corinthians 2:12-13. How did Paul prioritize who he was going to spend time with? Why do you think Paul made this choice?

Thinking it Through

What does the Bible mean?

Compare Genesis 1.26-28 with John 17.18-23.

- How was the man Jesus a spiritual fulfillment of God's original intention for all mankind?
- What purpose(s) did Jesus express for investing so exclusively into these eleven men?
- What role did unity or "one another(ing)" play in the fulfillment of Jesus' mission?
- What end-state did Jesus describe in John 17.23? How does this compare with John 13.35?

Making it Count

How do I live what I've learned?

Think of it: *God himself modeled his earth-winning approach before us so that we could imitate it (John 13.15)! That is, when you look at Jesus' ministry on earth, you're watching God perform on our level. No one could have done it better; anything else is second-rate! Christianity has passed over God's winning model just under its nose: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.*

- How well do you know the life Jesus? How aggressively are you studying his life and ministry?
- Whom do you know that is most actively engaging the model of Christ to his or her ministry? How closely are you shadowing, or learning, the ministry of Christ from him or her?
- What costs might you face in order to concentrate on your few spiritual replacements?
- What might be the cost of not following the model of Christ twenty years from now?