

A Simple Christmas: Love All
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Introduction

In your lives you must think and act like Christ Jesus. Christ himself was like God in everything. But he did not think that being equal with God was something to be used for his own benefit. But he gave up his place with God and made himself nothing. He was born as a man and became like a servant. And when he was living as a man, he humbled himself and was fully obedient to God, even when that caused his death—death on a cross. (Philippians 2:5-8 NCV)

Love all. What does that mean? Are we supposed to dole out warm hugs and tender sentiments to every single person we meet? Even the ones who force us to cry out to Jesus for patience a little too often!? Perhaps love is more than just a feeling that creeps into our chest cavity. Even if our hearts sometimes feel 10 sizes too small, we can still experience love in all its glory by treating it as a verb and not some flickering emotion that wafts in and out of us based on our circumstances. This week we will talk about how we can love all in the most meaningful way by looking at how we can be love to the people in our family, community and world.

Digging Deeper

A simple Christmas is experienced when you love all in your...

Family.

- Are the majority of your family events joyful or chaotic? If you can claim joyful, then God bless you. Keep up the good work! But if chaos, discomfort or aggravation start to permeate your space, what can you do to preserve the relationships in your midst? How can you bring the love (or at least create no further damage!)? We can all give a priceless gift by simply being kind even when we might feel justified in acting otherwise. Jesus can do all things, and through Him we most certainly can survive (and thrive) in the most challenging of family gatherings. Try biting your tongue as well as your turkey this year and see if it doesn't improve the mood. And even if yours is the only one made better, we can call that a win!
- What are some fun, family traditions you have that help bring your people's hearts back to the real reason we celebrate Christmas? If you don't have any, try starting one this year that might carry on for generations to come!

Community.

- "When you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!" (Matthew 25:40 NLT) When we serve others in Jesus' name we bring glory to our Father in heaven. Does the vastness of the need in our community overwhelm you? There are so many people who are hungry and struggling to get by in our little corner of the world. What can we do about all of them? While it is true we probably can't help everyone, we can help one. We can make a meal, clothe a child or lend an ear to a lonely soul. We can be love to the hurting and hopeless in our community. What is something you and your people can do this holiday season (and beyond!) to make an impact in someone's life? Affecting change can be an overwhelming venture, but you have to start somewhere. It's like the old joke goes: "How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time."

World.

- Read Ephesians 2:10. God prepared us to do good works in this place and to somehow leave it better than we found it. Remember, love is more than a feeling, it is an action verb. So we have to ask ourselves, “What am I doing that serves the best interests of people, not just in my family or local community, but around the world?” What task is God calling you to complete? Have you prayerfully considered how He might use you to shine a light in a different corner of His great, big world?

Conclusion

Let us all prayerfully consider how we can experience a simple Christmas by loving all in our family, community and world. Then go and serve people like Christ did, with humility, obedience and sacrifice. Because love is a verb and wasted love is surely the saddest tear in God’s collection.