

American Decency Association

PO Box 202, Fremont MI 49412 231-924-4050 www.americandecency.org
Encouraging Christians to guard their heart February 2025

Love's Standard by Steve Huston



“This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.” John 15:12

The Bible tells us that God is love (I Jn. 4:8, 16) and that Jesus was the expression of God's love for us (Jn. 3:16). In John 15:2 Jesus gives us both a command – “Love one another” – and sets the standard of love by which that command is to be fulfilled – “AS I have loved you.”

Can you imagine what went through the disciples' minds as they were given the standard of love that they were to carry out? Rough men full of humanity, quibbling over who will get seats of honor, struggling with pride and ambition, yet, with all their foibles, loving Jesus and His

teaching, desiring to please Him, and striving to carry out His every command. “How can we love AS Jesus has loved us and as we've seen Him love others?”

If we are serious about fulfilling this command from our Lord, at first it will seem very daunting. Full of humanity and knowing our own selfishness and weaknesses, we also ask, “How can I love others AS Jesus loved? Those are ‘big shoes’ to fill.” Our minds may race through the gospels searching for ways in which we can say, “THIS is an example of Jesus' love. Wow, what would that action look like in my life? How can I show love to others – just AS Jesus loved?”

Then the disciples (and we) hear Jesus share how that standard is to be lived out – it's a sacrificial love for others. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

Can we recognize that

Jesus IS love, that love is not just something He did, but it IS His character, His essence, and all that He did stemmed from and was because He IS love? It's more than just laying down one's life. It is that, but, until then, it's being a “living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” That is, we sacrificially lay down what makes up our life, for love's sake: Our ambitions and dreams; willing to be misunderstood, rejected, thought poorly of; it may cost us our jobs, reputations, homes, churches, friends, etc. All for the sake of loving AS Jesus loved, because He first loved us.

With that in mind, our minds again race through the gospels and the examples we found at first have increased and now we see love everywhere: Jesus loved enough to rebuke Peter, warn the Pharisees and Sadducees with strong language, and exhort those He came into contact with, regardless of what their responses might be. Jesus loved

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through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:16-18).

enough to teach others about the Kingdom of God and speak truth when it was unpopular. Jesus not only had compassion but He loved enough to meet the needs of those He had compassion on, even though He Himself may have been tired and weary. Jesus loved enough to pray early, often, and long. Jesus loved enough to cleanse the temple, often be misunderstood, or put Himself at odds with religious leaders. In all this, Jesus was laying down His life for His friends until, finally and literally, He gave up His temporal life so that others might live eternally. Jesus was willing to be forsaken by God so that you and I would never need to be forsaken. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world

This is sacrificial love; it was portrayed by Jesus both temporally and spiritually. This is the love that we, as followers of Christ, are called to. Will we love as Christ loved?

What “shakes the resolve which we have formed to resist the torrent of intolerance and ungodliness?” What keeps us from loving the church enough to compassionately “reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine”? John Fletcher answers: “*We fear being accused of lack of charity, if we declare as strongly as the Scripture does, that ‘if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his.’ We are afraid of being charged with preaching a new doctrine, if we declare boldly with St. James that ‘he who is the friend of the world is the enemy of god,’ or with St. Paul that ‘she who liveth in pleasure is dead while she li-*

veteth.” There’s hardly a father or mother who wouldn’t take a bullet for their child or drown in an attempt to save him/her, but do we love that child enough to have intentional and hard conversations with them over spiritual things? Do we love enough to deny ourselves rest or cut back on times of entertainment to sincerely pray often for that child and lead our family in prayer and devotions? Do we love enough to warn others of a hell to shun and a heaven to gain, regardless of how we may be perceived or rejected? Do we love enough to question a church that has “gone off the rails” of holy living or has watered down the gospel? Do we love enough to speak truth and possibly be misunderstood? Are we willing to lay down our lives – fulfilling the sacrificial standard of love set before us by Jesus – obeying our Lord’s command to love one another AS He has loved us?



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