

Loving Questions

Way in

Try and identify some of the examples that we can see around us of acts of genuine love and kindness. Include simple and profound examples. What effect do these have on the recipient? What do they tell us about the person who has carried out the act?

Read **John 15:9-17**

1. Our relationship with God is only possible because of his extraordinary love for us. What do you think Jesus means when he says that he has loved us in the same way that the Father has loved him?

2. If you were talking with a Christian who found it hard to believe that God loved them. How could you start to explain this from this verse 9 and elsewhere in the Bible?

3. Again and again in this passage, Jesus explains that we must remain in him. Why is obeying Jesus' commands central to remaining in his love? What will this look like for you this week? Why do we often see obedience as a drudgery or restriction? How do you think obeying Jesus commands could be liberating and could bring deep joy?

4. A ruler demands obedience in his subjects and slaves are given their tasks. Why does Jesus say that we are his 'friends'? What have we learned of God's purposes in our world?

5. Being called God's friends could make us proud. What are the two tough challenges in verses 15-16 that will keep us humble and dependent on God's power at work in us? What will they mean for you this week? Pray for each other to know God's strength to obey these commands.

Quote for Reflection

"Following Jesus is not a religion. It is a personal relationship of love and loyalty to the one who has loved us more than we can begin to imagine. And the test of that love and loyalty remains the simple, profound, dangerous and difficult command: love one another."

(Tom Wright)

Concluding Prayer

"I thank you, Lord Jesus, for becoming a human being,
so I do not have to pretend or try to be God.
I thank you, Lord Jesus, for becoming finite and limited,
so I do not have to pretend that I am infinite and limitless.
I thank you, crucified God, for becoming mortal,
so I do not have to try to make myself immortal,
I thank you, Lord Jesus, for becoming inferior,
so I do not have to pretend that I am superior to anyone.
I thank you for being crucified outside the walls,
for being expelled and excluded like the sinners and outcasts,
so you can meet me where I feel that I am,
always outside the walls of worthiness."

Richard Rohr

All is found

Questions

Way in

Of all the people in the world, who is the one person that you don't currently know but would most *like* to know?

Of all the people in the world, who is the one person that you would most like to *be* like?

Read **Philippians 3:1-11**

1. What two things does Paul compare in verse 9? Which is better and why?

2. In order to "attain to the resurrection" what do we first have to know?

3. We are called to partner with Christ in His sufferings. What might this look like, and how does this bring us closer to Jesus?

4. For Paul, it seems as though the 'resurrection from the dead' (v11) is worth enduring all that life throws at him. What difference might the reality of life beyond the grave have on our day-to-day lives?

5. Your friend asks you one day, 'How well do you know Jesus?' What would you say? How do you measure this?

6. If you wanted to know Jesus better how could you go about it?

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