

NO GREATER LOVE

Life Connecting Teams ~ February 2025
New Covenant Church of Philadelphia

Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. John 15:13 NKJV

OBJECTIVE: To gain a clearer understanding of the depth and breadth of the love of God for us.

INTRODUCTION: There is no greater love than the love the Father has for us. To send His one and only Son to sacrifice His life on our behalf is the greatest love story of all time. **John 3:16** reminds us, He came for the whole world. Jesus died, willingly and sacrificially, once for all. In **1 Corinthians 13:4-8**, we are offered a true picture of godly love. (See below in discussion area)

LESSON: Jesus loves us selflessly, having chosen to die for us knowing fully we would not always love Him in return. The word of God tells us of the unwavering love of God in **Lamentations 3: 22-23 ESV**, "*The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.*" Everything He does and allows is meant to draw us closer to Him. His love is a product of who He is, Yahweh, Abba, who spoke the world into existence and knit each of us in our mother's womb.

The following scriptures speak to us about this great love that the Father has for us. Please take time to identify and discuss the themes that you see running through each of them, and how we should apply them to our lives as a demonstration of how we ought to love.

- **1 Corinthians 13:4-8 NIV** "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails."
- **Romans 5:7-8:** Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God proves His love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
- **1 John 3:16:** By this we know what love is: Jesus laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.
- **Philippians 2:7-8** ... but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross.
- **1 John 4:9-10:** This is how God's love was revealed among us: God sent His one and only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. And love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

We spend a lot of time worrying about self-worth even though God proclaims we are worthy; read Psalm 139: 1-6. This type of love calls us to lay down our lives, as Jesus did His. Not necessarily on a cross, but as we exchange our personal agendas for His will in our lives and our selfish desires for His Kingdom purposes, we honor and demonstrate that love. What should our response be to such a love? We must allow and understand the pruning in our lives, the removal of all that distracts us from a singular focus on Him, alone. The gift of grace, salvation, and forgiveness rules in lives surrendered to Christ. It isn't easy. There's no ticket to an easy life on this earth. But Jesus said, "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you and that your joy may be complete." (John 15:9-11 NKJV)

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Living Lives that Demonstrate “Greater Love”

The fruit of the Spirit is evidence of a godly life (Galatians 5:22-23). Love is listed first. To be selfless in a world consumed with self-care, self-love, and self-confidence, Christ calls us to run a race in the opposite direction. He calls us to be God-focused, to love God and others, embrace His provision and allow Him to sustain us. Laying down our lives for others is to live a Christ-centered life, and foster Christ-centered relationships. To listen to one another, learn about, remember and encourage one another. When we see each other through the eyes of Jesus, we are able to love them as we are called to. We may be hesitant to extend ourselves in the way that scripture describes, but, laying down our lives is refusing to worry about what tomorrow will bring because we understand only God knows and is already there. It is trusting Him to prepare, lead, and provide for us as we work for His Kingdom in love.

Discuss the following: Do We love the people God has placed in our lives? Do we make excuses for why we avoid sharing the gospel with those in our lives? Do we intentionally ask God to send new people into our lives and new opportunities to share the gospel? Are we investing in people without an agenda, allowing them to see the difference Christ makes in our hearts? When we prioritize Christ's love in our lives, it begins to flow through us and into our relationships. By tuning into His voice above all others, we are free to embrace the people God has brought into our lives. Jesus placed love above all else in His friendships, and He challenges us to do the same. Jesus gave us a blueprint to “greater love.” It has very little to do with us and everything to do with who He is. We are called to submit to His authority in our lives, and obediently follow the truth of God’s Word

Philippians 3:8-9 NLT: Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ.

Remember in Prayer

- Our founding Pastor Bishop Grannum and his family; Pastor Bob Oliver and Lady Denise Oliver and their family. Our Pastoral staff: Pastor Wangui Mwangi; Pastor Omar Barlow and his wife Jeneen; Pastor Andrew Grannum and his wife Chevas and their families.
- NCC staff and volunteers; All heads and leaders of ministries at NCC
- For more growth and participation in our Life Connecting Ministry
- The Prayer Station Ministry and all who participate in going out to share the gospel and pray for others; For an increase in NCC members who participate.
- The sick and shut-in; those who have experienced the passing of a loved one.
- For our children and youth that they will be supported in growing in their personal faith in Jesus Christ.
- Generosity in donating to the Capital Campaign

Resource: <https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/spiritual-life/how-to-understand-and-internalize-gods-deep-love-for-us.html>