



LESSON 4: KNOWN BY THEIR LOVE

WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO LEARN: As Christ-followers, they are to be defined by their love for others.

WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO DO WITH WHAT THEY’VE LEARNED: To define what it means to demonstrate Christ’s love for others and to identify a few practical ways they can act in a loving way toward others.

Scripture Focus: John 13:31-35

Supporting Scripture: John 15:12-13; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

OVERVIEW: It has been said that when people realize they are coming to the end of life, there is a sense of urgency in what they want to say to family members and friends. In the passages for today’s lesson Jesus is reaching the end of His time for ministry and teaching on earth. Jesus knew He would soon be arrested and face death at Calvary. You can almost feel the sense of urgency in the words of Jesus in the last part of the Book of John. Jesus showed love when He washed the feet of His disciples. Then He reminded them, not once but twice, of His new commandment to love others. The command to love others still holds true today and your students need to see the importance of continuing in the steps of Jesus and His original followers by not only loving others, but being known for loving others.

TEACHER PREP VIDEO

The Jesus And Loving Others Teacher Prep Videos are short videos designed to help you grasp the main points of the lessons as you prepare to teach.

To access your “Jesus And Loving Others Lesson 4 Teacher Prep Video,” click on the URL below.

- <https://youthministry360.com/jesus-and-loving-others-teacher-prep>

BIBLE BACKGROUND

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you’ll be studying. The Details give you background info for each book, The Setting informs you what’s happening in and around the passage, and The Main Point gives you an overview of how the passage will be used in the lesson.

- **What do we mean by “context”?** In every ym360 Bible study lesson, you’ll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By “context” we mean at the very least helping students know who wrote the book, when it was written, and why it was written.
- **What’s The Big Deal?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don’t get a “big picture” understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God’s plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the Bible Background to help summarize the context.

THE DETAILS

- **Author:** The Gospel of John was written by John, son of Zebedee, a fisherman who left his trade to follow Jesus. John also penned the book of Revelation as well as the three letters in the New Testament that bear his name.
- **Time frame:** The Gospel of John was probably written between 85 and 95 AD. John most likely wrote his gospel in Ephesus before he was exiled to Patmos.
- **Purpose:** John’s stated purpose for writing this book can be found in John 20:30-31, the last two verses in his gospel: “Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” John’s goal seems to have been to clearly communicate a full theology of Jesus as the Messiah, the promised Son of God.

THE SETTING

John 13 and 15 both come in the midst of what the ESV Study Bible calls, “the farewell discourse.” This is a great term describing exactly what Jesus is doing in chapters 13-20. Jesus is at the end of His earthly ministry and is preparing His disciples to carry the message of salvation throughout the entire world.

The passages in John 13 and John 15 come after Jesus washes the feet of His disciples and then predicts that He will be betrayed. Jesus and the disciples were preparing to walk from the city of Jerusalem to the Mount of Olives where Christ would eventually be arrested. Jesus was teaching them as they were going, or at least preparing to go. John 15:12-13 comes immediately after Jesus’ teachings on the vine and the branches.

THE MAIN POINT

The main point of this lesson is to help teenagers see that loving others is not just some good moral thing to do but rather part of God’s plan to help the world come to know Him. Anyone can do nice things for other people but when we show love for others in the name of Jesus, that is a powerful and life changing action.

Over the last three weeks you have led your students to discover that loving others is at the very heart of what defines a Christian. Today you will close this series of lessons by encouraging your students to let love be so much a part of their nature that they will actually be known for their love not only for God but for people as well.

LESSON PLAN

The Lesson Plan contains three elements: An introductory activity called The Lead-In; the Bible study section called The Main Event; an application-focused segment called The Last Word.

THE LEAD-IN

- **Goal:** To help students begin to think about the concept of being known for a specific trait or skill.
- **Set-Up:** Before your meeting, come up with a list of maybe 8 or 10 celebrities, famous business or political leaders, athletes, musicians, etc. Find people your students would know and be interested in. If you want to have a little fun, include people from your church, or community. (For an added bonus, do a Google Image search of these people and arrange to display their images.)

FIRST, tell your students there are some people who are very well known for either what they do now or what they did at one time in history. Explain that you are going to see if they can identify some famous people by identifying what they are known for. Go through the list you have compiled, showing any images you might have found, and asking students who each person was and what he or she is primarily known for. Engage in discussion, especially if there is any disagreement among students as to what people are known for (Example: Bill Gates may be known for founding Microsoft, or maybe for his philanthropic work.)

THEN, lead students in a brief discussion **asking questions similar to the following:**

- **What do you think it's like to be these people, being known by everyone for one aspect of your life?**
- **Is it hard to become known for a specific trait or skill? Or is it easy? Support your answer.**

NEXT, ask students to consider one more person. Write the word "You" on a dry-erase board, or somehow display it to your class. Ask if anyone can come up with something they are known for, such as being a good athlete, or achieving success in school, or belonging to some group or club. Tell them that even now they are starting to be known in some circles at school or around town because of what they do.

FINALLY, transition to the Main Event by **saying something like the following:**

- **Being known for something may or may not be a big deal to you. But Jesus said He wanted His followers to be known for something specific. What was it? Their love for others. We have talked a lot about loving others over the past four weeks and now we're going to discover why Jesus left His disciples with these marching orders. Let's take a closer look.**

THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** To help your students understand that as Christ-followers, they are to be defined by their love for others.
- **Set-Up:** None needed.

BEGIN the Bible study portion of the lesson by reminding the students that this is the final lesson in the series Jesus and Loving Others. Do a quick review of the previous lessons by pointing out the following to your students:

- **Lesson 1:** According to Jesus, loving others is second only to loving God. It's a crucial part of being the person God wants us to be.
- **Lesson 2:** It's easy to love people who love us back, but it takes a heart after Christ's to love those who don't like us.
- **Lesson 3:** Jesus desires for His people to actively show love to the poor and needy, those whom Jesus called "the least of these."

THEN, turn the attention of your group to the final lesson in the series by telling the students that you're going to be looking at passages from John chapters 13 and 15. Explain to the students that if you were going to plot the focal passages on a timeline it would look something like this:

- Jesus washes the feet of His disciples → The Last Supper → Jesus' predicts His betrayal → John 13:31-35 → Jesus predicts Peter's betrayal → Jesus teaches on the True Vine → John 15:12-13.

Remind them that the passages you will be teaching them today come at the end of Jesus' earthly ministry and almost right before His arrest and crucifixion.

BEGIN the Bible study by reading or having a student read John 13:31-32. Point out that Jesus spoke these words right after revealing that one of His disciples, Judas, would betray Him. It's the beginning of one of Jesus' most intimate and revealing conversations with His disciples about His approaching death. **Say something like:**

- **Jesus was saying that His ultimate glory would soon be revealed and that would take place at the cross and at the empty tomb. Jesus continues this picture in verse 32 when He says that God will be glorified in what would soon happen.**

NEXT, read or have a student read John 13:33-35. Lead students in a brief discussion asking questions similar to the following:

- **Summarize what Jesus was saying in verse 33.**

Answer: Jesus was referring to the fact that He would not be with them much longer. Jesus was preparing His disciples for a time when they would have to live out their faith without Him physically being with them.

- **Share a time when you had to take on a task for the first time without the help of a parent, coach, teacher, etc. (Allow students to share the task.) Were you given a lot of instructions right before tackling the task alone?**

Answers will vary. Relate this to what Jesus was doing in these passages, giving a lot of instructions to the disciples to help prepare them to further the kingdom of God without Him being with them.

- **Have you heard the phrase "love others" during one of our previous lessons?**

Answer: Yes. In lesson 1 we learned that Jesus taught His followers the Great Commandment, to love God, to love others, and to love self.

- **What is different about the wording in verse 34?**

Answer: Jesus mentions just loving others. Also Jesus adds that they should love in the way He showed love to them.

- **Can you think of some words or phrases that describe the way Jesus showed His love to others?**

Answer: Without partiality, genuine, with compassion, without ulterior motives, perfect, to point others to His Father, etc.

- **What is the connection between the examples of the way Jesus loved others and the command to the disciples to be known by their love?**

Answer: The kind of life changing love Jesus was talking about would only be achieved if they followed the ultimate example of love, and that was His life while on earth.

- **According to verse 35, what is one thing the disciples could do to create an atmosphere where they would be known for their love?**

Answer: Jesus told them to love each other.

Remind students that Jesus made it very clear that talking about love and preaching love were great, but the lasting impact on love would be felt when they just loved each other. Point out that it goes back to what Jesus said about the Great Commandment: our love for God will save us and change us, but our love for others could possibly change the world.

NEXT, move on to the next passage and explain that from the end of John 13 to the middle of chapter 15 Jesus has said some amazing things:

- He declared that He alone was the way to God in John 14:6.
- Jesus promised that after He was gone God the Father would send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, to guide them.
- He declared that He was the true vine, and if they abided in Him they would bear much fruit.

Then read or have a student read John 15:12-13. Tell the students that again Jesus tells His disciples to love each other as He loved them. **Ask:**

- **Did anyone notice a new type of love Jesus mentioned in verse 13? What was it?**

Answer: Jesus said the greatest love was laying down one's life for others.

- **What was Jesus was referring to?**

Answer: He was referring to His own life, which would soon be sacrificed for all people at the cross.

Help your students grasp this important connection. **Say something like:**

- **Jesus' ultimate act of love on the cross would finally connect us to God in a permanent way. This connection to God would open up a way for us to love Him as never before. Our love for God and the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives is what gives us the capacity to love others. The pure love of God living in and through us is one of the greatest ways to lead people to see their need for a relationship with God.**

FINALLY, transition into the Last Word by **saying something similar to the following:**

- **Can you now understand why Jesus' commandment to love others was and is so important? Love is what our faith in Christ is all about and showing that love to others is what makes the Gospel and Christianity different from all other beliefs in the world. Since love is that important, being known for our love is both the distinguishing mark of our faith and the means by which the Gospel is spread throughout the world. Now let's look at some particular characteristics of love in the day-to-day life of a believer.**

Make sure no one has any questions then move to wrap up the lesson with the Last Word.

THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** To define what it means to demonstrate Christ's love for others and to identify a few practical ways they can act in a loving way toward others.
- **Set-Up:** Provide scratch paper or encourage students to take notes on a notes app on their phones or tablets.

FIRST, explain to students that if they're to be known for their love it might be helpful to discover some of the characteristics of godly love. Tell them that in Paul's first letter to the church in Corinth, there's a chapter that outlines quite a list of attributes of love that is Christ-centered. Ask students to listen as you read the verses, writing down some of the descriptive words and phrases that stand out to them. Then, read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

For your benefit, here's a list of each word or phrase along with a brief description of each one. Use this list to engage your students in a discussion about what real love should look like.

- Love is **patient**. (Some versions say endures, or “puts up with good and bad times”)
- Love is **kind**. (Does good things, is gentle, treats people with respect)
- Love is **not jealous**. (Is content, does not hate others because of things, is happy when good things happen to others)
- Love is **not boastful**. (Boasting about self can diminish others instead of encouraging them)
- Love is **not proud**. (Does not look down on others, is not a snob)
- Love is **not rude**. (Includes both saying and doing rude things)
- Love is **not selfish**. (This word has in it the idea of always putting the sake of the Gospel first instead of our own interests and motives)
- Love is not **irritable**. (Or provoked to do evil things to others or be tempted to sin)
- Love **does not keep a record of wrongs**. (Follows the example of Christ to live forgiveness each day)
- Love does **not rejoice in injustice but in rather in truth**. (Think of being moved when seeing inequality in the world, those who are mistreated, the poor used for slave labor)
- Love **never gives up**. (Again some versions use bears all things here, never gives up showing grace and mercy to others)
- Love **never loses faith**. (Especially in God. Believes in God's view of others, not willing to listen to negative reports of others)
- Love is **always hopeful**. (Living out the hope of Christ, showing love in hopes of people finding Christ)
- Love **endures in all situations**. (Whatever may happen to us we endure in hope that the love of Christ will be known through because of the way we handle the circumstances of life)

NEXT, give the students some time to sort through all the love attributes listed above and ask the following questions:

- **Which attributes do you think you have a pretty good handle on?**
- **Which ones do you struggle with?**
- **What does it take to get more comfortable with living out more of the attributes in your life?**

THEN, instruct students to choose one attribute they struggle with and come up with an action plan to let that type of love be more characteristic of the way they live their lives. Help them identify realistic ways they can implement this attribute.

FINALLY, close by reminding students that Jesus commanded us to be known for our love. That happens when we become more like Jesus and less like the world. Explain that the love attributes list is just a way to help us to a little self-check to look for ways to be more loving toward others. Also help them see the power to live a life of loving others can only come through a relationship with God through Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Close the lesson with a prayer of commitment for your students to not only love others in Jesus' name but to be known by their love.

- Don't forget to distribute the devotions to your students this week. If you're printing them, have them available for students as you wrap up class. If you're texting a link, posting them on Social Media, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU...

Do you have questions about a lesson?

Something that worked particularly well you want to share?

Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at feedback@youthministry360.com.