



Synergism for a
Lifestyle of
Change

*By this everyone
will know you are
my disciples if you
have love for one
another. John
13:35*



STEWARDS FOR NEW LIFE



Careful For Each Other
Lisa R. Harris

I read John 13 and remember these words of Jesus were shared very particularly and specifically with eleven disciples (Judas Iscariot was absent) and perhaps anyone else who may have been gathered in that home. This is not a statement made to a nameless crowd but a statement made among the disciples who were very familiar with each other day in and day out. You have probably heard it said that sometimes it is easier to care for a stranger than it is to express care for those we know intimately. Healthy relationships with God and with each other require nurture and intentionality.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, it is important to remember that our relationships with one another are opportunities to help one another to know God better. In all our existing and potential relationships we should strive to imitate and reflect God's image and relationship with us. And in so doing, we are likely to draw the attention of unbelievers in a way that compels them to know the God we serve. God has given us one another to care for one another with the love, grace, truth, forgiveness, generosity and joy with which God cares for us.



FACTS OF LIFE

In the dialogue between Jesus and Peter in John 21:15-17, two types of love are expressed – agape and phileo. The first two times Jesus asks Peter, “Do you love me?” Jesus uses agape. But the third time Jesus uses phileo. Peter however uses phileo in all of his responses. Agape means doing and caring for someone as much as you care for yourself. This is a **godly** love and can be expressed even if you do not necessarily like someone or do not know them. Phileo means to treat affectionately or kindly.

FOR MORE

INFORMATION

Read Connecting by Larry Crabb, Word Publishing 1997

Strength to Love by Martin Luther King, Jr. Fortress Press 1986

Discipleship Journal: Learning to Love: Showing God's Heart to Family, Friends...and Enemies, Issue 79, Jan/Feb 1994. (Back issues can be ordered from www.navpress.com)

STEWARDSHIP

IN ACTION

Which practices are present in your relationship with God?

- Daily prayer that includes praise, confession, thanksgiving, intercession for others and self
- Scripture reading (for 20 minutes a day, most people can read through the entire Bible in 1 year)
- Regular attendance in worship

How many of the following traits are present in the important relationships in your life? Prayerfully consider ways to add all of these qualities to your relationships

- There is unconditional love
- Honesty is present
- Nurture and growth of the relationship assumes appropriate attention
- There is a striving to understand and be understood
- There is no abuse: physical, verbal or emotional (ignoring)
- Conflict and differences are managed without despair or threats
- There is mutual commitment



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