

LEADERTREKS **SERMON SERIES****MARK OF A DISCIPLE**

Disciples of Christ show their love for God and others through actions.

SCRIPTURE

1 JOHN 3:16–18, 4:19–5:5

SERMON OVERVIEW

Today we are starting the first lesson in our Go and Do series. Love, as seen throughout the Bible, calls people to action. Therefore, we are to demonstrate our love for God and others with more than words but with actions. Our love, like Jesus', is shown through how we love others.

OPENING**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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GAME AND ICE BREAKER QUESTION

- We recommend **Perfect Match** or another screen game from **Deep Discipleship Games**.
- How do your family or close friends know that you love them?

MESSAGE

Use the following teaching points and suggested illustrations as a starting point to build your message.

READ 1 JOHN 3:16–18**POINT 1: Love leads to action**

Saying the words “I love you” is a good thing and everyone enjoys hearing that phrase from someone they care about. But demonstrations of love—love in action—is what gives true value to the words “I love you.” Without loving actions, our words of love are empty.

ILLUSTRATION: In America, our money is made mostly from cotton and linen. Those are not expensive materials. It's not what money is made from that makes it so valuable, it's what money represents, which is gold. America's supply of gold brings worth to its paper money.

Just as gold can make something like paper valuable, our actions of love are what makes our words of love valuable.

READ 1 JOHN 4:19

POINT 2: We love because God loves

In an earlier verse (1 John 4:16), John tells us that God is love. The reason we know what real love is, is because we know God. He is the example and very definition of love.

Not only is God love, he is the motivation to love. God's love for us causes a reaction within us to love him back. But this love doesn't stop with God. Because we have experienced love in its truest state (God's love for us), we are moved by that love to love others and share God's love with them.

READ 1 JOHN 4:20-21

POINT 3: Love for others is love for God

God loves the whole world (John 3:16). Because of his great love for people, one of the ways we show our love for God is by showing love for other people.

ILLUSTRATION: Tell a **personal story** about a time you started to care about something only because it was important to someone you care about. (Example: girlfriend's cat, roommate's favorite sports team, brother's motorcycle.)

When we love someone, we tend to care about the things they care about. Similar to the way I started to like [your example] because I cared about [person from example], we will start to love other people because of our love for God.

READ 1 JOHN 5:1-5

POINT 4: Obedience to God is love for God

Another way we demonstrate our love for God is by obediently following his guidance and Word. Keep in mind that God is not a power-hungry dictator; he is a loving Father. As our Creator and one who loves us more than we can understand, it is in our best interest to obey his leading. Following his lead shows that we trust and love God.

CLOSING REFLECTION

Use this prompt to wrap up your message and leave your students with a challenge to apply.

- How has God's love been beneficial to you?
- What is one way you can show God you love him this week?

GROUP DISCUSSION

Pick a few questions from below to discuss. Close with prayer.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How do you know that your family or close friends love you? What do they do besides say, “I love you?”
- How do you show your family or friends that you love them? Share a time where you communicated your love through your actions.
- Is it more meaningful to you to hear someone say, “I love you” or to see them show it? Why?
- Why is it often difficult for us to love each other?
- What do you think it looks like for you to love others like Jesus loved them?
- What do you think John meant when he said that we ought to lay down our lives for each other? How do you react to hearing that?
- In 1 John 5:3, John said that Jesus’ commandments aren’t burdensome. Would you agree with this? Why or why not?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- Jesus showed us how to love others. In light of this, how are you going to show those around you a kind of love that reflects God’s love?

PRAYER

Close by praying or invite someone to pray for your group.
Use this space to keep track of any prayer requests.

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