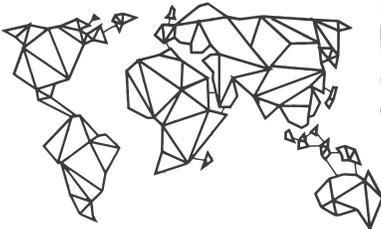


<sup>1</sup> Dann Spader, *Walking as Jesus Walked: Making Disciples the Way Jesus Did* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2011), 143.

Notes:

## GREAT COMMISSION LEADERSHIP

### HOMEWORK PACKET TWENTY- EIGHT



## LEADING WITH LOVE

*To walk as Jesus walked, in intentional relationships, demands that our interactions with others be saturated with God's love. Anything less than this misses the whole point of walking as Jesus walked.<sup>1</sup>*

**Dann Spader**

## BEFORE GOING ANY FURTHER, IS CHRIST ON THE THRONE?

If not, make sure He is!

## MEMORY VERSE

*Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.  
Honor one another above yourselves.*

**Romans 12:10 [NIV]**

## LIVING A LIFE MARKED BY LOVE

Jesus commands His followers to love each other just as He loves us (Jn. 15:12). He also described loving God as the greatest commandment followed by loving others as ourselves (Mk. 12:29-31). The word most used for love in the New Testament is the Greek word, *agape*, which referred to unconditional, sacrificial, and selfless love. Jesus' disciple John wrote more about love than any other Biblical writer and was committed to encouraging those he led to love each other (1 Jn.3:11). His focus on this fundamental issue arose from his own relationship with Christ. John was referred to as the "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (Jn.1 3:23, 19:26, 20:2, 21:7 and 21:20) and the gospels portray an intimate picture of the relationship he had with Christ. John himself noticed that, "We love because He first loved us" (1 Jn. 4:19), and was acutely aware of the reality that loving God naturally results in loving others (1Jn. 3:14-16). Loving God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength (Mk. 12:30) always results in loving our neighbors as ourselves as well (Mk. 12:31). Leaders can become so focused on progress and accomplishment that they forget this necessary dynamic of ministry. Paul reminds us, in 1 Cor. 13:1-8, that the greatest accomplishments, without love, are meaningless. Leaders should always be resolutely focused on loving God, loving those they lead

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and cultivating an atmosphere of love in their ministries. John, “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” was a premier example of this!

## GENUINE LOVE FOR GOD

While the question, “Do you *really* love God?” might seem silly to ask, we really must give it more consideration. Our lives, as Christ-followers, should be marked by a love for one another (John 13:34-35), so if we have trouble loving others we should evaluate whether we truly love God (1 Jn. 4:20-21). Loving God is the only place from which authentic ministry can happen. So how do we know that we *really* love God?

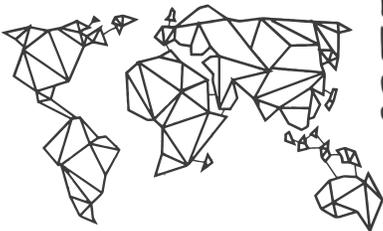
Consider the greatest commandment according to Jesus, “You shall love the Lord your God with *all* your heart and with *all* your soul, and with *all* your mind” (Matt. 22:37, emphasis added). Do you long for anything other than the Lord, more than the Lord? Do you search for satisfaction in anything other than Jesus? Do you long to know more about Jesus—to study Him, His Word, His character/nature, etc.? This greatest commandment reveals the nature of our love for God, and Paul gives us the greatest encouragement to our problem: “Wretched man that I am! Who will save me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!...” (Rom. 7:24-25a).

Remember John 15, as well. In order to grow in our love of God, we must spend time with Jesus. As we spend time with Him, His Spirit in us shapes and reshapes the desires of our heart to love Him more. As we abide in Him, He helps us know Him more. It is only out of our time growing with Jesus that He provides the love we need to love others the way He desires. Let us grow in our love of the Lord by intentionally spending time with Him in prayer and in His Word—it is only here that we might also have His love overflow from our hearts to those around us!

→ **How do you need to grow in your love of God (Mk. 12:30)?**

## GENUINE LOVE FOR PEOPLE

If you want to do ministry you really need to love and like people (in the power of the Holy Spirit). That doesn’t mean you need to be an extravert—be who God made you to be. Learn to love people genuinely regardless of your social preferences. Learn to like those you lead and



<sup>2</sup> C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*  
(New York, NY: HarperCollins,  
2001), 46.

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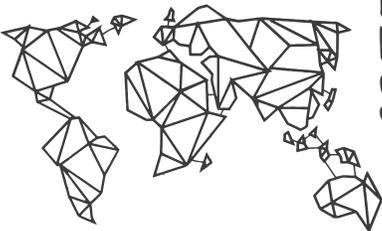
serve, and learn to like spending time with them. You'll need to do this in order to cultivate authentic agape love relationships in your ministry. You must cultivate authentic relationships because relationships determine your capacity for influence! Once again, remember, the statements, "You must earn the right to be heard," and, "They don't care how much you know till they know how much you care," are lies when it comes to evangelism, but absolutely correct when it comes to discipleship and leadership. People will not follow you until they really believe you like them, love them, and have their best interest in mind. Don't worry if you're not there, ask God to give you His heart for those He's called you to reach. Then, step out in faith, loving them with His power.

C.S. Lewis writes:

*There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilization—these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit—immortal horrors or everlasting splendors. This does not mean that we are to be perpetually solemn. We must play. But our merriment must be of that kind (and it is, in fact, the merriest kind) which exists between people who have, from the outset, taken each other seriously—no flippancy, no superiority, no presumption. And our charity must be real and costly love, with deep feeling for the sins in spite of which we love the sinner—no mere tolerance or indulgence which parodies love as flippancy parodies merriment. Next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbor is the holiest object presented to your senses.<sup>2</sup>*

Theologians have long described this with the term, *imago Dei*, or "image of God." Every person you encounter is made in God's image and we must love them as He does.

- **Read Gen. 1:26. How should the truth in this passage affect the way you see every person around you and how will that help you love them like Christ does?**
  
- **How can you better genuinely love those you lead and serve (Mk. 12:31)?**



Notes:

→ Read 1 Cor. 13:1-3. How does that apply to doing ministry?

## GRACE

Grace—God’s goodness to you even when you don’t deserve it—is the foundation for multiplication. The most famous verse on spiritual multiplication (2 Tim. 2:2) is preceded by 2 Tim. 2:1, which says, “...be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” Critical, judgmental ministries will not make an impact for Christ. Grace must lay the foundation for spiritual multiplication. That requires that you walk in grace and show grace to others as well. That includes blessing, loving, encouraging, and being kind to those that don’t deserve it.

→ **What do you think it means to walk in God’s grace?**

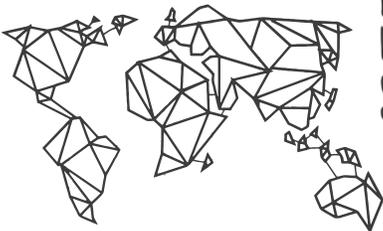
→ **How are you at walking in God’s grace personally?**

→ **How can you “be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus,” showing that to those in your ministry?**

## AGAPE LOVE

Agape love must define our ministry. 1 Cor. 13:4-8a defines this selfless, unconditional love, stating:

*Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice*



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*in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails..."*

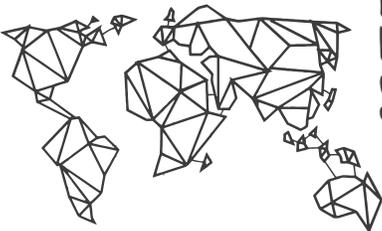
One way that we can get a good idea of where we are in regard to loving selflessly is to substitute our names for love in the verse. We can also do the same with our ministries, as well. If we're not truly loving others we won't have the faintest chance of influencing them for Christ. We must learn to love each other sincerely, deeply, and from the heart (1 Peter 1:22).

→ **How have you seen Jesus change your heart for others recently?**

## ACCEPTANCE

Everyone is looking for acceptance, and many, unfortunately, find it somewhere other than where it must be first—the Body of Christ. Acceptance must permeate all we do. Rom. 14:1 tells us, "Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters" (NIV). Similarly, Rom. 15:7 says, "accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God." Christ accepts you as you are—brokenness and all—patiently developing you over time. Likewise, it is important that we welcome people as they are—brokenness and all—trusting that Jesus will work on their heart to shape them. Demonstrate your acceptance by personally inviting people to spend time with you, or to events you are hosting or taking part in. It conveys that you welcome their company and want them around. (Ministries don't thrive when people quit inviting others, so invite people constantly.) Show them you want them around, make them feel accepted.

→ **Have you made standards of performance, looks, behavior, or even popularity more important than loving those God has called you to lead? How can that negatively impact reaching those around you with the gospel.**



Notes:

- Read James 2:1. How can you show God's love equally to all those in your ministry?

## AUTHENTIC FRIENDSHIPS

Authentic friendships must define us and our ministries. Christians walking in the power of the Holy Spirit exhibit the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). People overflowing with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control make the best friends! Christians that genuinely love each other and others will be quick to develop both authentic friendships and welcoming communities that will draw people from all-around. Of course, we don't want to become so inward focused with these friendships that forget to reach the world around us. The early Church was the prime example of this (remember Acts 2:42-47). Conversely, Paul writes in Galatians 5:15, "...if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another." Those whose relationships are filled with argument, dislike/hatred, and the like, must watch-out—and run from—these, because pursuing them only leads to an awful end. Even something seeming as innocent as sarcasm (which literally means, "to cut the flesh") can be detrimental to healthy authentic friendships.

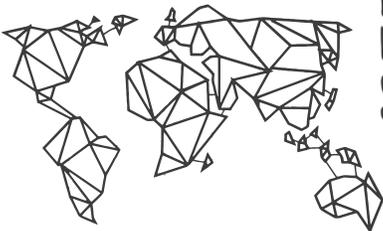
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how authentic are the friendships within the context of your life and ministry (1-not at all, 10-overwhelmingly)?

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

- What are some steps you can take personally and corporately help improve the authenticity of the friendships rated above?

## FELLOWSHIP

Fellowship is one of the least understood, but most needed, components of a vibrant ministry. Fellowship is not just having fun and socializing. Biblical fellowship is defined, in Heb. 10:24-25, as spending time together, especially as a group of believers, encouraging each



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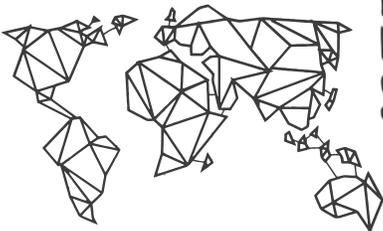
other and challenging each other to love God and each other, obeying all that He has called us to. This is true fellowship—and it seems to be rare in the church today, trading true fellowship for a worthless counterfeit. As we, as a community of believers, individually abide in Jesus, true fellowship is a natural overflow of His work in us. Sin and hypocrisy are fellowship killers, while integrity and genuine love result in godly fellowship (1 Jn. 1:5-10). A ministry that exhibits grace, love, and acceptance will also have authentic friendships, vibrant community and God-glorifying fellowship.

- **What does your view of fellowship look like? Does it match more closely to typically been more of the “socializing” perspective or the Heb. 10:24-25 variety?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- **What does it mean to “spur one another on toward love and good deeds”? How can you do this more in your ministry?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- **Have you ever been a part of a genuine, loving, accepting, friendly fellowship of believers? How did it affect you?**

## LOVING GOD AND LOVING OTHERS

Ephesians 5:1-2 says, “be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.” Ministry is all about genuinely loving God and others (remember Mk. 12:30-31). It is a privilege to invest your life in others, loving and serving them as Christ did for you (Mk. 10:45). Matthew records in his gospel (Mt. 20:25-28, NIV) Jesus defining leadership this very way, saying:

*You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever*



<sup>3</sup> Andrew Murray, *Humility and Absolute Surrender* (Provo, UT: Renaissance Classics, 2012), 148.

Notes:

wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

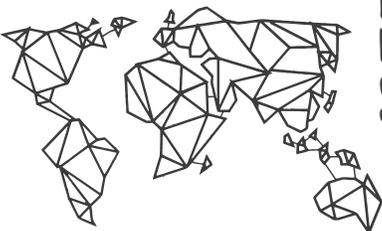
This is what leadership boils down to: loving God and loving others, and serving God by serving others (Mt. 25:40).

→ **What motives drive your ministry; recognition and accomplishment or selfless love, serving God and others?**

→ **Do you really love those you lead? How do you show it and how will you more?**

Pray and ask God to help you love Him and others the way He wants you to. This can be hard, but it is the foundation for ministry and context in which the Great Commission can be fulfilled. Without it, all your ministry is meaningless (remember 1 Cor. 13:1-3). Murray encourages you, “Christ can give you a fountain of love so that you cannot help loving the most wretched and the most ungrateful, or those who have worried you.”<sup>3</sup>

*Remember, your weaknesses, inabilities, failures and past present no challenge to God’s will for your life. Your willingness does. Be willing to be and do what God made you for. You don’t have what it takes but God’s Spirit in you does so be the leader He made you to be and turn this world upside down for Him!*

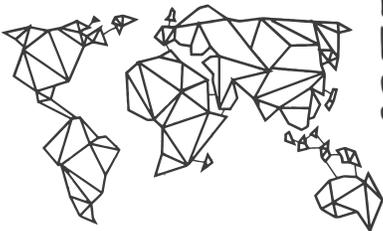


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## **ACT NOW**

### LOVING GOD AND LOVING PEOPLE

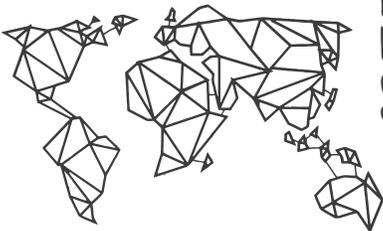
- What step can you take today to love God more?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What step can you take today to love others more?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Name an area of your life that you aren't walking in grace. How will walking in grace in that area affect how you show others grace, love, and acceptance?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Name a person you need to show grace (undeserved kindness and goodness) to today. What will you do to show them grace?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Name a person you need to show selfless, unconditional love. How will you show them this love in the name of Christ?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Name a person that you need to accept as they are (in the same way that Jesus accepted us as we are). How will you do that?





Notes:

- How can you be a better authentic friend to your friends?
  
- How can you help cultivate a genuine sense of loving community in your ministry?
  
- How can you “spur” others in your ministry “on toward love and good deeds” this week?
  
- How can you be a better servant to those you serve?
  
- How can serving the Lord with joy and a gladness benefit you in ministry? How will this affect how you lovingly serve others?



<sup>4</sup> G. T. Doran, *There's a S.M.A.R.T. Way to Write Management's Goals and Objectives* (Management Review, Volume 70, Issue 11, 1981), 35-36.

Notes:

## PERSONAL GROWTH

→ Write out this lesson's memory verse (also, write it out several more times this week):

→ List a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant & within a Time-frame) goal<sup>4</sup> for this lesson and action plans for achieving it.

SMART Goal:

Action plan:

Action plan:

Action plan:

→ How are you staying close to Jesus, walking by faith and in integrity, trusting Him and the power of His Spirit in life and ministry rather than yourself, and how can you more?

→ Jesus insisted that serving Him and serving others was the highest attribute of leadership (Mt. 20:25-28). How are you growing as a servant leader?

→ How will this lesson help you better accomplish the Great Commission and multiply Christ-like multipliers?

→ List any last thoughts and then put everything you learned in this lesson in God's hands, trusting Him to build these things into your life.

