

## **TRAINING Disciples to Train**

### **Session 12: Love One Another (6a)**

Offered by Ron Lively, M.Div., M.A. – BiblicalMentoring.org (Studies)

**Step 1:** Opening prayer

**Step 2:** Each person quotes the memory verse: VERSE: **1 John 1:9**  
**9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness".**

**Step 3:** *Read and discuss all or part of the Bible Chapter – 1 John 1*

**Step 4:** Questions for Personal Applications and/or Group Discussions:

1. Why is "love for one another the Christian's badge of discipleship"?
2. The author writes that the Christians have the most distinctive identification of all – love for other disciples.
3. Phillips says there are two things we must understand and experience if we are to show our love for others openly.
4. Forgiving yourself and others starts with accepting God's complete forgiveness. Why is that necessary?
5. Do you realize that a failure to forgive others when God has forgiven you implies you question God's forgiveness?

**Step 5:** *Read and discuss the Content from the book:*

**Chapter 6a per the author – Keith Phillips:**

#### **Love One Another**

*The third distinctive of a disciple is that he loves other Christians. Jesus said, "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). Love for one another is our badge of discipleship.*

*Some time ago I heard a deafening noise in the lobby of my hotel. I could not imagine what was going on until I saw a very distinctive red fez. Then I noticed that almost every man's head was adorned similarly. The Shriners were in town! No one had to tell me. Their hats made them easy to recognize.*

*Many groups are identified by their insignia or common dress: policemen wear uniforms, Rotarians wear pins, basketball players wear jerseys. But disciples do not need to wear "one-way" pins, clerical collars or ecclesiastical robes. We can have diversity in garments and be as easy to identify as a giant in a colony of midgets. We have the most distinctive identification of all.*

*It is unnecessary for our staff homes in the ghetto to have signs that advertise "World Impact Home" or "House of God." Our love for one another must be so obvious that our neighbors cannot mistake our allegiance to Christ.*

*When some of our women's staff went to the corner market for the first time, the proprietor said, "Oh, you're from the Christian home, aren't you? I can always tell you girls by your big smile and your love."*

*A month after we opened a staff home in Fresno, someone who had an appointment with me lost our address as well as the name of our organization. He stopped in the community and asked*

*a neighbor if she knew where a group of Christians lived. She replied, "Oh, yes, we all know who they are. They live on the next block on the corner." His encounter with our neighbor spoke more loudly than anything I had to say.*

*Since the world knows we are disciples by our love for one another, we must make sure our identity is conspicuous. In order to have a strong, consistent love for other believers, we must understand and be experiencing forgiveness and community.*

### **Forgiveness**

*A disciple cannot love God or himself, let alone others, unless he accepts God's complete forgiveness, and on that basis, forgives himself, forgives others and accepts the forgiveness of others.*

### **Accept God's Forgiveness**

*You must accept God's complete forgiveness for your past, present and future. There is no sin for which you cannot be forgiven by confession and genuine repentance. God promises to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9) and to forget our sins forever (Isaiah 43:25). God's forgiveness is perfect.*

*Seven years ago, Pat Williams attended her first World Impact Bible club on a vacant lot in Watts. When she made a commitment to follow Jesus, her life began to change. She faithfully studied the Bible, prayed and worshipped God. After graduation she joined our staff and started to minister in the very community in which she had grown up. Pat appeared to be a sterling example of God's redemptive power.*

*But hidden under her contagious smile, Pat concealed a childhood devastated by oppression and physical abuse. Her father deserted the family when her mother was three months pregnant with Pat. She and her five brothers had three different fathers. They lived in poverty, at times going without food.*

*But it was the sexual abuse that haunted Pat. Her own uncle began raping her when she was still a child. "He'd give me candy," Pat relates, "and come get me whenever he pleased. Since he was part of the family, there was nothing I could do about it. He threatened to kill me if I ever told anyone."*

*Pat grew up hating all men and hating herself for what her uncle had done to her. Even after she joined our staff, she detested the sight of men or having to be with them. Her Christian life was crippled by guilt, hate and hurt. Like so many Christians, Pat had accepted God's gift of salvation, but had not accepted His complete forgiveness.*

### **Forgive Yourself on the Basis of God's Forgiveness of You**

*You demonstrate that you have accepted God's complete forgiveness by forgiving yourself. When you understand that God loves you, your sense of spiritual dignity is restored. This liberates you to forgive yourself. Only then can you love and accept who you are. Paul, both the "chief of sinners" and the great apostle of Christ, declares, "But by the grace of God I am what I am..." (1 Corinthians 15:10). Divine approval is the fabric of self-love.*

*Paul indicates the quality of self-love God expects from disciples. "No one hates his own body but lovingly cares for it, just as Christ cares for his body the church..." (Ephesians 5:29 LB). Christ intended that you have a healthy, positive opinion of yourself. The very repetition of the biblical teaching, "love your neighbor as yourself," underscores the importance God places on self-love. If you do not love yourself, it will invariably surface in a lack of love for your neighbor.*

*Failure to forgive yourself when God has forgiven you relegates God's forgiveness to an abstract idea. It means that you do not believe that His forgiveness for your sins was perfect. You question His sovereignty by denying the effectiveness of Christ's saving and healing work. Your pride says that your sins are too great for God to forgive and that you are beyond His redemption.*

*This renders your Christian life a shambles. It robs you of the peace, security and love God intended for you to enjoy. The absence of these experiences is destructive, not redemptive. No*

*disciple who is dead to himself and has Christ living in him would contemplate doing less than forgiving himself because God has forgiven him.*

*Pat Williams realized that self-hatred was foreign to a disciple. But even though she had been the victim of sexual abuse, she felt guilty and dirty. How could God forgive her? How could she forgive herself?*

*When Pat moved into our women's staff home, she experienced the security of God's unconditional love. Through acceptance in the body, she realized that God loved her no matter what she had done or what had happened to her. Because of Christ's sacrifice, God erased her sins and paid for the abuse. He treated her as if they had never existed. On that basis she could love herself.*

*Pat says it best: "I found out that when Jesus died, He paid for all the hurt, guilt and bitterness in my life. He took care of that. By worrying about the past and not accepting God's perfect forgiveness, I was questioning His power to completely clean me and make me new. But now I know He has completely forgiven me, and so I can accept and forgive myself."*

*pp.59-62*

**Step 6:** *Share personal prayer requests then each person prays for the other's requests.*

**Source:** The Making of a Disciple by Dr. Keith Philips. Pub. by Fleming H. Revell Company, 1981. ISBN 0-8007-1181-5. Introduction by Robert E. Coleman. Content (except study questions) is taken from the book without revisions.

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