

**Introduction:**

- Think of how honorable it is to have Jesus call you friend.
- John 15:12-15, ESV
- We must remember the context of the passage especially when we are going verse by verse. It is easy to forget context when doing that.
- Jesus is talking about staying in the vine, love, commands all with the cross in his sights.

**I. His Command Is To Love - John 15:12**

- A. Jesus command/commission is: *"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."* (John 15:12, ESV)
1. Love is a central theme of the Bible, of the main characters, of Jesus and of course His church. You can't escape God's love if you are a student of the Word and of His presence. Love is a central theme of Christianity.
  2. God is love. 1 John 4:8 and all that know God naturally love others because God is love!
  3. What God calls his followers to, is to love Him and to love one another.
    - a) It is a command - meaning that love is a directive given to all of God's people.
    - b) It is a commission - because it is an expectation of heaven place upon all who call on the name of the Lord.
    - c) It is a given if you are in a relationship with God or call yourself Christian.
- B. His command in John 15:12 is the second great command...which is much like the first command.
1. *"And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."* (Matthew 22:37, ESV)
  2. *"And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself."* (Matthew 22:39, ESV)
  3. *"On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."* (Matthew 22:40, ESV)
- C. We love because He loved us! *"We love because he first loved us."* (1 John 4:19, ESV)
1. It is the nature of God to love!
  2. It should be no surprise that He first loved us.

**II. Two Big Questions:** John 15:13-14

- A. What is the greater love? Isn't love, love? Is there a greater agape and a lesser agape?
1. Wouldn't the greater love be the love required to lay down your life for your enemy???
  2. *"but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."* (Romans 5:8, ESV) Christ died for us while we were still sinners, enemies, ungodly.
  3. We were undeserving, unworthy, unlovable but Jesus loved us enough to die for us.
  4. It seems to me to be greater love to die for an enemy than for a friend.

5. The 'greater love' is being measured by the price (laying down of life) not the object of love of friend or enemy. I.e. Which is greater? Giving a friend something to eat or dying for them? Yes! The greater love is in dying for them. The greater love is the Son of God choosing to die for us! It is the greatest way to demonstrate how much one loves! Now for the second question...
- B. What's up with "*You are my friends "if" you do what I command you.*"
1. What does Jesus mean by friend? Friend - phileo - philéō means "*to treat somebody as one of one's own people. It means to like and to value. A special form of friendship is the love of Jesus for the beloved disciples.*" Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume* (p. 1262). W.B. Eerdmans.
    - a) Jesus is saying, I not only love (agape) you, but I like you.
  2. Friends of God in scripture:
    - a) Abraham. "... *Abraham believed God,...and he was called a friend of God.*" (James 2:23, ESV); "*But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham, my friend;*" (Isaiah 41:8, ESV)
    - b) Moses. "*Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.*" (Exodus 33:11, ESV)
    - c) John the Baptist. John 3:29 JTB is called a friend of the Bride groom.
  3. The big "if"! It would be so wrong to read this passage and understand the 'if' as a conditional 'if'.
    - a) The error: "If you obey my commands you can be my friend." What kind of friend would that be?
      - (1) Do what I command.
      - (2) Qualify to be my friend.
      - (3) Then I will value you enough to die for you.
      - (4) Do you see why that is wrong understanding of the that passage?
    - b) The 'if' is not a cause that precedes the effect. The 'if' is an effect that follows and confirms the cause. He loves us, and because He loves us we desire to obey. As we obey it confirms that we are His friends therefore He lays down His life for us.

### III. We Are Never In The Dark

- A. Because we are loved with the greatest love, He lays down His life for us. We obey because of His great love! (Obedience of a friend not a servant.) Because of all this...
- B. We are informed. vs. 15. We are welcomed into the family!
  1. A slave is kept in the dark. They do not get to know all the family business. Therefore they are kept in the dark.
  2. *For all that I have heard from my Father...*I have made known to you.
  3. I have given you everything that you need to make obedience possible and make it a glad obedience!

C. *Go bear fruit and may your fruit remain.* vs. 16

1. le. There is a scene at the end of Saving Private Ryan in which Tom Hanks, who is dying, tells Private Ryan, "Earn this." It is not a bondage statement. It is make your life count statement. Many men died so that you would get that chance.
2. Earn this...bear fruit that remains. The most important life in the universe died for you. Make your life count in bearing fruit that remains!
3. Jesus finishes where He started: "*This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.*" (John 15:12, ESV)

**Conclusion:**

- With the cross in sight, Jesus exhorts His disciples to do what He is doing: Love one another. vs. 17