

ActNow! (Applying Christ's Teaching NOW) follows the weekly sermon series of TPMC, and challenges us to apply and put into practice the biblical truths we hear each week. It is the recommended Bible discussion material for TPMC's Connect Groups, and leader's notes are available to all Connect Group Leaders and at the Information Counter.

## 5 Marks of a Methodist: Loves Others

Rev Adrian Ng  
1 John 4:20

### SERMON SYNOPSIS

- In Matthew 22:36-38, Jesus teaches us to “love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” and to “love your neighbours as yourself. God also teaches us to love our brother and sister in 1 John 4:19-21, and loving others gives evidence to our claim of loving God. **People who have been born of God will not find God’s commandment burdensome because it is about (a) God’s power – His transformation in us – through being born again *in Christ* and about (b) how God’s power having defeated the influence from the world and our own impulses that once controlled us.**
- **What is “Loving others”?** It is about showing others God’s transformational love through us. John Wesley wrote that a Methodist can truly love others is because his heart has been purified and cleansed by the love of God from all revengeful passions, from envy, malice, and wrath, from every unkind temper or malign affection. The love that a Methodist received from God removes pride and haughtiness of spirit, from which contention flows out from; and God’s love replaces them these instead with mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, and patience. Hence, he exercises self-control and forgives – as God in Christ has forgiven him. He loves others as a response to God’s love.
- **Who do we love?** We love our brothers and sisters. And every child of God is our brother and sister. John Wesley plainly wrote that a Methodist loves *every man* as his own soul and described that the latter’s heart is *full of love to all mankind* – loving even a stranger, his enemies, the enemies of God like the evil and the unthankful. Wesley acknowledged that while it is not in a Methodist’s power to “do good to them that hate him,” yet he will not cease to pray for them although they would continue to spurn his love, spitefully use him and persecute him. This is possible because loving others is about showing God’s transformational love to everyone around him.
- **Why must we love others?** This is because loving others is a *commandment* of Jesus (Obedience); because it *transforms* our hearts to be like Christ (Holiness), and it is for the glory of God (witness). Wesley wrote that a Methodist obeys all the commandments of God with all his might as his obedience is in proportion to his love, the source that enables him to love others. Hence, he continually presents his soul and body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God – entirely and without reserve devoting himself, all he has, and all he is, to God’s glory.
- **How to love others?** We love others by *doing good, blessing, praying, giving and being merciful* (Luke 6:27-37). And in doing so, these others can encounter God who is love, that they will in turn love God and love others also! A Methodist loves God, rejoices in God, give thanks, prays constantly and loves others. And these FIVE marks of a Methodist are really all about

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transformational love as a disciple of Jesus and are fundamentally marks of a disciple of Jesus Christ.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### RELATE

1. Love according to the world can be very different from the Love of God. Share your personal experiences on the different kinds of love offered by the world and that offered by God written in the Bible.

### REFLECT

2. How do these three Scripture Texts further teach us to love others?

[Verses to help us go deeper Philippians 2:1-4; Ephesians 4:32; 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a]

### RESPOND

3. Identify one specific way that you would commit to grow in loving others. (Eg. To be kind in your words or behaviour towards others, to be patient with others, to count others more important than yourself, to forgive others who have offended you... etc). At the next Connect Group meeting, share with your group how your growth in Christlikeness went.

## PRAYER POINTERS

- Ask God to forgive us for having not been sensitive and diligent in loving our brothers and sisters in church.
- Thank God for first loving us while we were yet sinners, and for loving us despite our failing to love others again and again.
- Pray for the awakening of our love for Jesus, that we will obey His commandment to love one another, and so, our obedience in loving one another will glorify His name and draw all men to Himself.

## SCRIPTURE TO MEDITATE ON

"If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen." [1 John 4:20 NASB1995]