

Discipleship at Bent Tree

Christ in you: Loved | Christ thru you: Loving

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. (John 15:12)

Realizing who we are in Christ — that we are constantly in the place and position of being loved fully, without hesitation or reservation — is the starting point for discipleship. It's what Jesus gave to his followers in John 15:9 when he said, "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love."

This is a fundamental shift from the old paradigm of the Old Covenant. It's a new way of living because a new Source is given. In our culture, most often the thought on what a disciple is and what a disciple should be doing is to *Love God and Love Others*. (see Matthew 11:34-40)

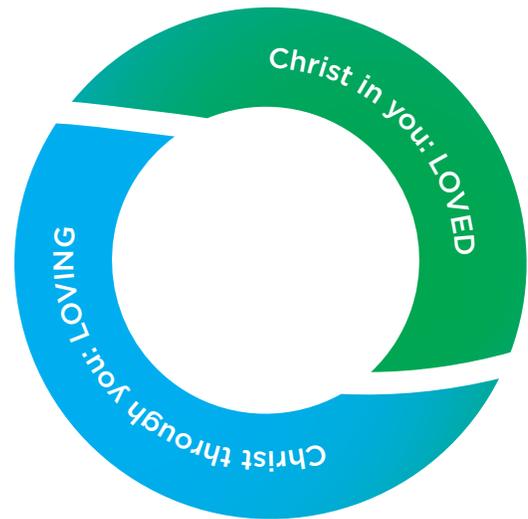
However, this is Jesus *summing up the Law and Prophets*, not declaring how we will live in the New Covenant. He fulfilled the Law through his life and death, and ushered in a *new and living way* through his resurrection life (Hebrews 10:19-21).

Looking to Jesus as our only hope and Source for Life, we learn more of how much God loves us and love him in return. Not out of obligation, but in response to the intimate relationship we have been invited into with him. We begin to see him, ourselves, and others differently.

At Bent Tree, we want to see believers living fully out of their relationship with Christ in the reality of the New Covenant. We want believers to realize how loved they are, because that is true of them, and leads them to live the life they were made to live. A life of actively loving — operating, demonstrating, and giving Christ's love to others.

As you rest in the reality that you are fully loved by Christ, the overflow is that you love and are loving toward others. This active choice of the will is sourced in Christ and allows us to look to him as the one who loves perfectly.

In 1 John 4:18-20, the power of God's love and the reality that it changes us is explained like this, "**There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.**"



We love because he first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen.”

All of this encourages the believer to live confidently out of their relationship with Christ, in the context of their personal life as well as in relationship with others. We aren't calling people to try to carry out the old Law — to “*Love God, Love Others!*” — but rather to live in the new, freeing, full Life in Christ, a life that begins with love and continues in his love every step of the way. *We're fully loved by Christ with true love, which enables us to love God and gives us the power and ability to love others - to love them as he loves them through us.*

**Christ in you: Loved.
Christ thru you: Loving.**

Our hope, as you utilize the resources in each section, is that you will enjoy your relationship with Jesus more and thrive in your relationships with others. All of this flows from knowing who Jesus is, who you are in him, and what it means to live from him in each area of your life.

Something you'll hear around Bent Tree a lot is something we heard years ago: “Jesus gave his Life for us, so he could give his Life to us, so he could live his Life through us.” (Major W. Ian Thomas)

To process this more, check out the next resource - ***New Covenant Key Terms***