

## 21T16g Now What? (Part 7) LOVE PEOPLE

Hello my friends. Thanks for joining me @ the PUNLA coffee table.

Now What? We have been asking this question. Once you are a Christian, Now What? What should I do? How should I do it? How do I act? and on and on and on. I know the questions because I have asked these questions myself over and over during my life. But honestly, did you ever get an answer to those questions?

Well, the short answer to all these questions is the Bible. But I know that is not very specific. Today we are going to ask the Now What question. How and why do we love people?

Before we get started today, **Let's Pray. Heavenly Father please bless our time today. Help me to stay out of your way. Please use me Lord. I pray that our time result in a deeper more satisfying relationship with you Jesus. And I pray this in your name Lord Jesus. Amen.**

Again, let me ask you. Now what? How and why do we love people?

I ask you to let the Bible speak to you. Listen without preconceived ideas, so Jesus can speak to your soul through the Holy Spirit and His Holy word the Bible.

Jesus told us what the greatest commandment is, *“Love the Lord your God. Love him with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.”* *The second most important command is this: ‘Love your neighbor as you love yourself.’ These two commands are the most important commands.”* (Mark 12:30-31 ICB)

Most of us know this as the golden rule, to treat others as we want to be treated. But, Jesus calls us to a much higher standard as His followers, *“This is my command: Love each other as I have loved you. The greatest love a person can show is to die for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.”* (John 15:12-14 ICB)

Jesus tells us, we are His followers **only if** we do what He tells us to do. We must love others as He loved people. This is bigger love than we even have for ourselves. We have to be willing to do things for others even when it is inconvenient or can even hurt us. Loving others the way Jesus does means sacrificially serving others the way Jesus did. But how and why we still need to explore.

Let's start with the Why? Well God told us too. Okay I know that does not seem to address our question but doesn't it. Being a Christian. Being a follower of Jesus means we do what our master does. We try to emulate our King, king Jesus. Jesus is asking us to care about people. Care about people the way He cares about people. It's not about how good or bad someone is. It's not about what that person does for us. Even wicked people love those close to them. This is not why we love people. We love people because that is what Jesus wants us to do. This is how we show the world we

are a follower of Jesus. We offer love to the unlovable. This is a life of service to others. Putting others ahead of our needs just like Jesus. We are to love God and love people because God loves us even though none of us are worthy. But despite how unworthy we are, the Apostle Paul has encouragement for us. Paul says, *“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* (Romans 8:38-39 ICB).

So, okay we love people because God told us to. Because He loved us even though we were unworthy of His love.

But how do we do this. How can we love the unlovable? If I don't like someone how to I love them? This is really the question we wrestle with. I can love God, well He's God. But there are people I just don't like. God says love them. How.?

First you don't need to like someone to love them. This is not the mussy hugs and kisses kind of love. We love people by treating them fairly even if they cheat or lie about us. We love people by being kind to them even if they hurt us or insult us. We love people by doing for them what Jesus wants for them and for us. In fact, Jesus puts it this way, *“You have heard the law that says, ‘Love your neighbor’ and hate your enemy. I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike. If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that. But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.* (Matthew 5:43-48 NLT).

Jesus' words have a way of piercing our heart and soul. We claim to be Christian, yet only love those who love us. Then how are we different from Non-Christians. Jesus prayed for His enemies. So we should pray for blessings for our enemies. When someone treats you badly, don't retaliate. Example would be, you are at the store buying something and the cashier is rude and mean to you. Maybe says something bad to you. Jesus is telling us to resist fighting back. Don't return evil with evil instead be kind. The reason is we don't know what has been going on before we showed up. That person might just have been spoken to rudely or maybe something is happening at home. As Christians, we figuratively turn the other cheek. Hey, I see you are having a bad day today, is there anything I can do for you. That is going an extra mile. But be prepared, sometimes they are going to get worse. But sometimes, that person might really need you to listen. Give them the time they need, Treat them with kindness. Speak Jesus into their life with your behavior. Be different because you are a Christian. We don't do this because it is easy. Quite the contrary. This is against our nature. But it is in God's nature. Every time we choose to act like Jesus instead of how we might like too, We grow closer to God.

So, why do we love people. Because God loved us even though we did not desire it. So, how do we love people. By being kind. We resist our nature to retaliate and show love with our actions and words. Not the mushy hugs and kisses kind of love. The love that points the world to Jesus. Treat others like Jesus wants us to treat them.

I want to leave you with one last thing. God is not telling us not to defend ourselves. We don't need to allow people to continual use and abuse us. That is not love. Part of loving people is correction and rebuke. Telling someone they are wrong is loving them. The most hateful thing you could do to someone is not tell them they are doing something wrong. Their soul is potentially at stake. Loving people means doing what is right. Be kind when the need is kindness. Serve when the need is service. Correct when the need is instruction or rebuke. And help when what is needed is help.

**Father God. Help us to recognize the way you want us to love every person we meet. Help us to be kind, serve and correct when you direct us to. Thank you for wanting me and loving me, even though nothing I can do will ever deserve your Love.**

**I pray in your name Lord Jesus, Amen.**

Thank you for joining me @ the PUNLA Coffee Table today, I hope you'll join us for the rest of the series "Now what" as we dig into the Bible to answer those Now What questions.

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See you next time @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.

LINKS

Dallas Willard (Love as a Life) <https://youtu.be/utvZKFTkq2Q>