

# Adult Teaching Resources

April 24, 2016



## Close Encounters of the Jesus Kind: Conversations with Jesus (April 3-May 8)

A Disciple We Can Like — John 20:19-31

One Shepherd to Another — John 21:1-19

Ask the Sheep — John 10:22-30

**A Serious Summary — John 13:31-35**

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# A Serious Summary

*John 13:31-35*

## FIT Teaching Guide

by Rick Jordan

This adult teaching outline is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartlege, printed in *Baptists Today*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Baptists Today* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Baptists Today* so they can prepare before the lesson.

**Before the Lesson:** Have the handout, “A Challenge to Love,” and pens/pencils for the Transformational Exercise.

### Fellowship Question

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Use *one* of the following to break the ice, to begin discussion, and lead into the study:

What is one rule or commandment that you remember from a teacher in your life? (For example, “My fourth grade teacher, Ms. Angel, taught me “i before e, except after c.”)

What has been a recent “glory day” for you? (Define “glory day” however you’d like!)

### Information

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[Have class members stand. Give the following instructions, then read the quotes. After the class members have placed themselves near or between opposite walls of the room, identify the person who is being quoted. If your room is too small for moving, or your class members too shy or feeble, you might ask them to raise fingers, 1 for disagree, 10 for agree.]

To begin this morning, I am going to read some quotes about love. This wall represents, “I agree wholeheartedly” with this quote. This wall represents, “I absolutely disagree with this quote.” And in-between represents the degree to which you agree or disagree with the quote. After I read the quote, place yourself somewhere on that spectrum.

[Read the quotes and let the class members place themselves where they wish.]

“A friend is someone who knows all about you and still loves you.” — Elbert Hubbard

“Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.” — Martin Luther King Jr.

“One gains a profoundly personal, selfish joy from the mere existence of the person one loves. It is one’s own personal, selfish happiness that one seeks, earns and derives from love.”  
— Ayn Rand

“It is not a lack of love, but a lack of friendship that makes unhappy marriages.” — Friedrich Nietzsche

“Love hurts, Love scars, Love wounds and mars any heart not tough or strong enough to take a lot of pain” — lyrics of “Love Hurts” sung by Everly Brothers

## Information *continued*

“The opposite of love is not hate, it’s indifference.” — Elie Wiesel

[Have class members be seated.]

Which quote did you have the most feeling about (positively or negatively)? Why?

Today’s lesson is about love. Jesus, our Master Teacher, is giving what he calls “a new commandment” to his disciples. The setting is Jerusalem. The time is the week after Jesus has entered the city in a celebration with the waving of palm branches and shouts of victory. While in town, some foreigners ask to see Jesus.

[Have a class member read John 12:20-25.]

Somehow, this visit by the Greeks causes Jesus to say, “The hour is come for the Son of Man to be glorified.” Words based on the root word for glory (*dox-ad-zo*) are found 42 times in John’s gospel, while the next most frequent New Testament usage is 19 times in Revelation and 9 times by Luke. “Glory” is a theme that runs throughout this gospel. For example, John begins his gospel with a description of Jesus.

[Have a class member read John 1:14.]

From what we know of Jesus from his birth to his entrance into Jerusalem, what would you say was “glorious”? (miracles, healings, teachings, etc.)

That sounds different from you or me. Glorious miracles are clear evidence that Jesus is more powerful than any of us. Glorious teachings of Jesus are clear evidence that Jesus has far superior intelligence and wisdom than any of us. This kind of glory marks a clear separation — Jesus is glorious and we, well, we are not.

This use of “glory” is true for the first part of John’s gospel. But from this story of the Greeks’ request to see Jesus, “glory” takes a different shape. Glory means a release of the power that separates us from God and one another. Jesus empties himself of one kind of glory to incarnate a new kind of glory.

[Have class members read John 13:1-5 and John 13:12-15.]

What do you think went through the disciple’s minds when Jesus caressed their feet and washed them?

How have the basin and towel become new symbols of God’s glory?

Judas Iscariot leaves the room to set into play Jesus’ arrest.

[Have a class member read John 13:27, 31-33.]

Because the verb tenses and pronouns shift around here, translators and interpreters have a difficult time determining exactly what this saying means. However, our printed lesson writer notes: “A likely solution is to recognize that Judas’ departure... set in motion the crucifixion story through which both the Father and the Son would be glorified. Once Judas left, the die had been cast: there was no going back.”

## Information *continued*

[Ask if class members have the translations *The Message* or *The New Living Bible*. If so, ask them to read John 13:31-32 in those translations. If not, here are those translations of this text.]

Let's listen to how two modern translations have attempted to make these verses understandable to our ears:

“When he had left, Jesus said, ‘Now the Son of Man is seen for who he is, and God seen for who he is in him. The moment God is seen in him, God’s glory will be on display. In glorifying him, he himself is glorified—glory all around!’” — *The Message*

“As soon as Judas left the room, Jesus said, ‘The time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory, and God will be glorified because of him. And since God receives glory because of the Son, he will give his own glory to the Son, and he will do so at once.’” — *The New Living Bible*

Whereas the earlier “glory” has to do with power and light and superhuman miracles, now the glory that demonstrates the character of God/Jesus has to do with condescension and service and sacrifice.

“The suffering and struggle of Jesus are only alternative names for his glory. In fact, glory hurts. It is when it hurts and is accepted that it becomes glory.’ Leon Morris, commenting on Jesus’ statement, ‘The glory that you have given me I have given to them’ (17:22), reminds us that ‘just as His true glory was to follow the path of lowly service culminating in the cross, so for them the true glory lay in the path of lowly service wherever it might lead them.’” [<http://beginningwithmoses.org/bt-articles/195/glory-suffering-in-the-fourth-gospel-a-paradox-of-discipleship>]

[Have a class member read John 13:34-35.]

“Just as I have loved you,” Jesus says. How has Jesus loved his disciples? Let’s think of at least five ways Jesus showed that he loved his disciples.

[Write answers on the board, which may include some of these: (He invited them to follow him; he taught them the highest way to live; he modeled a whole human; he loved those who had roles others hated, such the tax collector, Matthew; he healed Peter’s mother-in-law; he fed them; he washed their feet, etc.)]

How do these apply to how we are to love others?

We began today’s lesson with quotations about love. Some of those may have been about a romantic love, but that is not the love that Jesus is referring to here. How would you describe this love?

Jesus told us to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. When someone asked Jesus to define “neighbor,” he told the story of the Good Samaritan. Martin Luther King, Jr. said this in a sermon based on that text: “I imagine that the first question the priest and Levite asked was: ‘If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?’ But by the very nature of his

## Information *continued*

concern, the good Samaritan reversed the question: ‘If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?’ [Martin Luther King, Jr. “On Being a Good Neighbor.” *Strength to Love*. New York: Harper and Row. 1963. p. 20. ]

That was the kind of love Jesus demonstrated for us. With apologies to MLK, Jesus said, “If I do not *stoop* to help them, what will happen to them?”

Another demonstration of this glorious love comes from Jesus on the cross, when he said, “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.” MLK, again: “This was Jesus’ finest hour: ...Jesus eloquently affirmed from the cross a higher law. He knew that the old eye-for-an-eye philosophy would leave everyone blind. He did not seek to overcome evil with evil. He overcame evil with good. Although crucified by hate, he responded with aggressive love.” [Ibid. pp. 27, 28.]

## Transformational Exercise

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[Distribute the handout, “A Challenge to Love,” and pens/pencils. Summarize or invite class members to read silently the paragraphs at the top of the page, then complete the form at the bottom of the page.]

[After allowing some time to complete the form, close in a prayer something like this: *Lord, we will never love this world with your depth of love or the sacrifice of your love. Our limited compassion again separates us from your glorious compassion. So, help us not to do what we cannot, but to do what we can, to act this week in love as you would. Amen.*]

**Comments or Questions for Rick Jordan?** You may send comments to the lesson plan author at [rjordan@cbfnc.org](mailto:rjordan@cbfnc.org). Rick is also available to lead workshops and conferences on Christian Education, with particular emphasis on how best to use the FIT Faith model.

## Digging Deeper

by Tony Cartlege

Digging Deeper is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartlege, printed in *Baptists Today*. Watch for the “shovel” icon in the THE BIBLE LESSON, and then reference that item in this Digging Deeper resource. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Baptists Today* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Baptists Today* so they can prepare before the lesson.

**The soundtrack of our lives** — For more on the subject of how the music we danced to as teens continues to rock our lives, see Mark Joseph Stern’s nice summary article at Slate.com ([http://www.slate.com/articles/health\\_and\\_science/science/2014/08/musical\\_nostalgia\\_the\\_psychology\\_and\\_neuroscience\\_for\\_song\\_preference\\_and.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/science/2014/08/musical_nostalgia_the_psychology_and_neuroscience_for_song_preference_and.html)), or rocker-turned-neuroscientist Daniel J. Levitin’s book, *This is Your Brain on Music: The Science of a Human Obsession* (Plume/Penguin, 2007).

**Love Canon?** — I’ve tried without success to discover an author or time of writing for the song, which is variously called “The Gospel in a Word is Love,” “Love Canon,” “Love, Love,” or just “The Love Song.” A website devoted to Christian devotional songs labels it an English folk hymn (<http://lyrics.bradlis7.com/songs.php?song=203>), while Hymnary.org says it is anonymous ([http://www.hymnary.org/tune/love\\_love\\_love\\_love\\_the\\_gospel\\_in\\_a\\_word](http://www.hymnary.org/tune/love_love_love_love_the_gospel_in_a_word)).

Additional verses in the traditional version focus on peace, joy, and Christ. A version with Coptic-flavored lyrics can be found at the Saint Takla Haymanout website (<http://st-takla.org/Lyrics-Spiritual-Songs/English-Coptic-Hymns-Texts/5-Christian-n-Gospel-Lyrics-K-L/Love.html>).

You can hear an *a capella* version of the song by the Harding University Concert Choir on YouTube at this link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=epynV\\_tray0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=epynV_tray0).

**Glorification** — What does it mean that both the Father and the Son had been (and would be) glorified? George R. Beasley-Murray explains it this way:

God glorified the Son of Man in making his self-offering effective for the race; therein God was glorified in the perfect obedience and love of the Son, which was however at the same time a revelation of the love of God to humankind; in virtue of that act God glorifies the Son “in himself,” i.e., in (his own) person, and he does it “immediately”— in the death and in the exaltation. In the whole event (note the singular!) the saving sovereignty of God is operative; it “comes” in the dying and the rising, and the redemptive dying is inconceivable apart from the rising, as the rising is from the dying. Hence it is “in Christ,” crucified and risen, that we have justification (Rom 8:1), redemption (Eph 1:7) and reconciliation (2 Cor 5:17–21).

(*John*, vol. 36 of Word Biblical Commentary, Accordance electronic ed. [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987], 246).

**News to the Jews** — The author says, in v. 33, that Jesus prefaced his comments about going to a place they could not follow with “as I said to the Jews so now I say to you.” Why would

## Digging Deeper *continued*

this be significant? Although such conversations are absent from the synoptic gospels, on two previous occasions John says that Jesus, while in conversation with Jews, had said he was leaving but they could not follow.

In John 7:33-34, Jesus and the people of Jerusalem (assumed to be Jewish) had been in conversation about whether he could be the Messiah. While not claiming outright to be the Messiah, Jesus rebutted their reasoning for why he could not be. When the Pharisees heard of it and sent temple police to arrest him, Jesus said “I will be with you a little while longer, and then I am going to him who sent me. You will search for me, but you will not find me; and where I am, you cannot come.”

In John 8:21, while teaching in the temple, a group of Pharisees criticized Jesus for claiming to be the light of the world, sent from the Father. Afterward, he said “I am going away, and you will search for me, but you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come.”

Note that in both cases, Jesus’ teaching left the Jews perplexed, scratching their heads in wonderment over what he meant. Although belief was not an issue for the disciples as for the Jews, they were also puzzled to hear their teacher’s words about leaving, confused about what Jesus meant and where he was going that they could not follow. Jesus did not elaborate, but focused instead on what the disciples should do once he was gone.

**A touching metaphor**—The closest comparison to Jesus’ love that many of us see is in our mothers. Maybe that’s why we resonate so well with the story in which Jesus, while weeping over the people of Jerusalem, compared himself to a mother hen who sought to gather her chicks and protect them beneath her wings.

On the western slope of the Mount of Olives, just across the Kidron Valley from Jerusalem, sits a small chapel called Dominus Flevit. It has a beautiful close-up view of Jerusalem, leading to the tradition that it is where Jesus wept for the doomed city. One who stands inside the chapel and looks over the altar finds a high arched window that frames the city as if it were an intricate stained glass window. Down below, on the front of the altar, is a mosaic depicting a white hen wearing a golden halo. Her red comb resembles a crown, and her wings are spread wide to shelter seven pale yellow chicks that cluster around her feet. The chicks look happy to be there. The hen looks ready to spit fire at anyone who threatens her babies.

Who would have thought that Jesus would use such an image to describe his love? Why not recall the mighty eagle of Exodus 19, or the fierce lion of Judah? Why would Jesus picture himself as a *mother hen*? That image doesn’t seem to inspire much confidence. But, Jesus had a penchant for turning things around, or upside down, so it’s not really surprising that he portrayed himself as a protective mother hen. In commenting on this text, Barbara Brown Taylor notes that Jesus consciously chose not to portray himself as a fierce predator. Rather, she says, “*What he will be is a mother hen, who stands between the chicks and those who mean to do them harm. She has no fangs, no claws, no rippling*

## Digging Deeper *continued*

*muscles. All she has is her willingness to shield her babies with her own body. If the fox wants them, he will have to kill her first ...*

*... “Which he does, as it turns out. He slides up on her one night in the yard while all the babies are asleep. When her cry wakens them, they scatter. She dies the next day where both foxes and chickens can see her — wings spread, breast exposed — without a single chick beneath her feathers.”* (Condensed from “As a Hen Gathers Her Brood,” by Barbara Brown Taylor, in *Christian Century* [Feb. 25, 1998], p. 201).

Jesus died for a lot of people who will never accept the salvation he offers, but that did not change his willingness to stand there and say “you have to take me first.”

**A smiling quote** — I first saw this quote excerpted in *A Guide to Prayer*, eds. Reuben Job and Norman Shawchuck [Nashville: The Upper Room, 1983]). It is taken from Mother Teresa’s *A Gift for God: Prayers and Meditations*, first published by Collins in 1975. The quotation is from p. 62.

## The Hardest Question

by Tony Cartlege

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### Why was it significant that Jesus issued a “new commandment”?

We have discussed in the lesson that the “new” aspect of Jesus’ commandment to love one another is that we should love others, not just as ourselves, but as Jesus loved us. But is there another reason why the author of John’s gospel wanted to mark Jesus’ saving work with the giving of a new commandment?

Perhaps the author wanted to ground the deliverance Jesus offered in a framework that would be familiar to Jewish readers. At the heart of Israel’s faith was the memory of how God had delivered the Hebrews from captivity in Egypt. Two things permanently embedded God’s act of deliverance in Israel’s memory. First, the people were instructed to celebrate the inaugural Passover meal (Exodus 12), which occurred as the people were leaving and before the final act of deliverance in the crossing of the sea (Exodus 14). Second, the people entered a covenant with God and received the law at Sinai, most notably the Ten Commandments (Exodus 19-20). The new commands marked the new order of covenant relationship with God. Through Israel’s history, the annual observance of Passover and the constant call to keep the commandments were integral to the meaning and expression of faith in God.

As Jesus approached the final hours in which he would deliver all believers from captivity to sin through his crucifixion, he also engaged his followers in a ritual meal — closely associated with Passover — and instructed them to continue observing the meal of bread and wine, representing his body and blood, “in remembrance of me.”

Likewise, as John tells it, Jesus marked the occasion — in which people were called into a new covenant with God through Christ rather than the law — by giving a new commandment. This commandment, though far simpler than the complex law codes developed to guide Israel’s behavior, was just as inclusive: one who truly loved others as Jesus did would only do good for others, not harm.

Thus, as Israel’s deliverance from Egypt was marked by a commemorative meal and new covenant commandments, so Jesus marked his act of saving humankind from sin by instituting a memorial meal and a new commandment for those who live under the new covenant.

Although Matthew did not tie a “new commandment” to the passion narrative, his relating of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) also seems to be an intentional echo of Moses’ giving of the law at Mount Sinai.

Through the new covenant made possible through Jesus’ life, teachings, and self-sacrificial acts, those who follow him can experience a new Exodus from a sinful world into the kingdom of God, where they remember Christ’s work through the Lord’s Supper and obey his commands by loving as Jesus loved. As we practice the life and law of Christ, Jeremiah’s prophecy of a new covenant in which the law would be written on our hearts is fulfilled (Jer. 31:33), and we witness to the world of Christ’s presence will inviting others to experience the kingdom of God.

## A Challenge to Love

If we are to love others as Jesus loves us, it will not be easy. There are people who are hard to love. Some people have morals we cannot respect. Some people have hurt us through neglect. Some have hurt us through violence. Some have betrayed us. Some have shattered our trust. Others have done nothing to us, yet we fear them. They speak different languages, have different customs, or different religions. Those seem to be barriers to loving them. Some people are just odd, at least to us.

We may, then, be tempted to consider ourselves to be much better people (and much easier to love, of course) than all those other people.

Here is one suggestion if we are tempted to consider others less lovable or less pure than ourselves. "Self-righteousness is the opposite of love. Jesus attacked it repeatedly...No amount of 'goodness' puts a person in a position to render judgment on another's sin. Only God can do this. Growth toward perfect love in fact moves us increasingly into a deeper compassion for other people's human frailty. Love makes us less critical as we identify with others. When you see someone sin, says one of the Abbots, say, 'Oh, Lord, he today, I tomorrow!'" [Roberta C. Bondi. *To Love as God Loves*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press. 1987. p. 22.]

Use this form to name persons who are challenging for you to love and to list why this is so. Then, ask God to give you insight into one thing you can do to demonstrate Christ's love to one of those persons/groups this week. Jot that action under "a challenge to myself."

Who are some people you find difficult to love?

Name/category Reason(s) it is hard to love them A challenge to myself