



Do Love

“Little children (believers, dear ones), let us not love [merely in theory] with word or with tongue [giving lip service to compassion], but in action and in truth [in practice and in sincerity, because practical acts of love are more than words.]” 1 John 3:18 (Amplified Bible)

I don't know about you, but when I read the above Scripture, it is very convicting! I say that I love people – and I do love people. But do I *really* love people the way God expects me to - the way that God loves me? Love is a verb. Love requires action and intentionality on our part.

If you have felt God calling you to join this mission team to serve in Jonestown, MS, then you have begun to understand that love begins with obedience to God's call. You may be wondering what to expect, or how love in action may be played out on this trip. It could be playing games or teaching our kids. It could be holding or comforting a little one who is unsure about being left with strangers. It may be mowing grass, cleaning buildings, or setting up for an event. Maybe you will be doing a project at someone's home or prayer walking in the community. Hopefully you will have an opportunity to just speak to someone or offer a smile or a hug or a handshake. All of those are love in action. Every person needs to know that they are loved - by God and by others. You, me, all of us who are born again believers and followers of Christ are **commanded** to *'love the Lord our God with all our hearts, and to love our neighbor as we love ourselves.'* There is nothing more important than those two things, and those are also very important values of our MS Delta team.

I'm reminded of the parable of the Good Samaritan. As you may remember, a man was traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho when he was robbed and beaten and left half dead on the road. A priest comes along, but when he saw the man he moved to the other side of the road and kept walking. Next, a Levite happens by and also moved to the other side and continued on his way. Next, a Samaritan saw the man, had pity on him, bandaged up his wounds, put the man on his own donkey and then paid for him to be cared for. Jesus asked the question, "Which of these was a neighbor to the man?" Of course, we know the answer is the 'Good Samaritan.' But I challenge you to go back and really *read* this passage, put yourself in each of these people's shoes, and see where your attitudes line up. This is how the Life Application Study Bible commentary breaks it down:

- To the expert in the law, the wounded man was a subject to discuss.
- To the robbers, the wounded man was someone to use and exploit.
- To the religious men, the wounded man was a problem to be avoided.
- To the innkeeper, the wounded man was a customer to serve for a fee.
- To the Samaritan, the wounded man was a human being worth being cared for and loved.
- To Jesus, ALL of them (and all of us) were worth dying for.

Our mission statement for the BGM Delta Team is centered around the idea of “Being before Doing.” Essentially that means that we value loving on people even more than accomplishing planned activities or projects. Would you begin now to develop this mindset - to value time spent building relationships with people more than staying busy with tasks? Why is this important? Go back up to 1 John 3:18.... “because practical acts of love are more than words.”

For Further Reading: Luke 10:25-37

Small Group Questions:

Why do you think that we value ‘Being before Doing?’ What steps could you take to begin to form a mindset of being over doing?

What obstacles, if any, can you identify within yourself that need to be overcome in order for you to love like Jesus expects us to?

These are the questions I challenged myself with as I studied through the Luke 10 passage again (And the answers that God revealed in my heart were not all pretty!). Take some time to study the passage and then honestly answer these questions:

- (1) Am I too busy to be bothered with other people’s problems?
- (2) Do I avoid getting involved in messy situations?
- (3) Do I have a ‘what’s in it for me?’ mindset about helping others?
- (4) Do I try to justify my reasons for not stepping in to love and care for others?