



DNA of a Believer

- I. Introduction. The passage of scripture from John 13-17 contains the final words of Jesus to his closest friends and disciples. They are the ones who will chart the course of the early church and advance the message of Christ himself. This is the family talk on the last night of Jesus' life. Everything we need to know about discipleship is found in these five chapters. He begins with an encounter with Peter that reveals the DNA of Jesus' followers.

- II. Three Strands of DNA in Every Committed Believer
 - A. The desire to glorify God- 13:31-33. The word "glory" literally means "to make great the name of God." We are created to give God glory in our lives. That is our purpose for life and reason for existence.
 1. "It is time for the Son of Man to enter his glory"- The glory of God is a major theme in the gospel of John (John 1:14, 2:11). Judas has left the room. The set of events that will result in Jesus' death have been set in place and started. Jesus says that it is now time for his death and God's glory. His death is his glory.
 2. "God will be glorified in this event"- The reason the death of Jesus will make God's name great is because the entire passion event brings sinful humanity back into a covenant relationship with God. God is glorified because His children can now come home.
 3. "God will soon give glory to the Son"- This is reference to the resurrection, ascension, and the reign of King Jesus over all the earth. In other words, his death is not the end of the story. It is the beginning of the ultimate greatness of the name of God over all the earth (Philippians 2:6-11).
 4. A disciple of Jesus lives to glorify God or to make His name great in home, business, entertainment, and relationships. When the Fall came, we were saddled with a fleshly nature that desires to make our own name great. The primary core issue of our relationship with God is living out this tension- Will I make my name great or God's name great? The only answer is death to self.
 5. What must die in me? Everyone has a treasure chest of things that are of great value to them: relationships, things, recreation outlets, health, jobs, etc. Are you willing to give up anything to make God's name great? Three questions:
 - a. Who will I worship? This is the deepest question you will ever ask. In what areas of your life do you worship yourself over God?
 - b. Will I make my name great or God's name great? How do you address this tension in the major areas of your life?
 - c. Will I bring death to self or bring death to others? I can't have both. How do I bring death to others? How does dying to self give God glory?

B. The capacity to love others- 13:34-35.

1. Love is the deepest need of every person. Every person wants to be fully known and fully loved, but most people are loved based on their performance. What sets apart God's love from human love is that it is unconditional. He completely knows us yet loves us anyway. Jesus says the church should be an extension of the unconditional love of God. We are to "love our neighbor as ourselves." Until we accept that God loves us without conditions, we will never be able to show others that kind of love. Satan keeps us in bondage of conditional, performance-based love so that we have no capacity to love others like God loves us. In this way, Satan tries to undermine the gospel of love. We must truly accept God's unconditional love for us and His incredible grace; then we can demonstrate unconditional love for others.
2. The identifying mark of a believer is love. Jesus tells His followers that the way the world will identify Christianity is by how the believers treat one another. Biblical love changes people's lives and will change the world.
3. Biblical love is also an accurate barometer of Christian maturity. In 1 John 4:20, John states that if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God whom we cannot see? John says we are liars if we claim to love God but don't love other people. The more you have the capacity to love others, especially those who are not like you, the more you are maturing in Christ. This gives glory to God.
4. Christ's love is so simple on one level, yet profoundly deep on another. Pure unconditional love is the gift of God to his children and the quest of all humanity. We make his name great when we love others as we love ourselves.
5. Why is unconditional love difficult for us to give to others? How does Biblical love set us apart from the world? How does Biblical love "set the table" for everything else in the gospel? Why is love the greatest command?

C. The willingness to stand firm for Christ- 13:36-38. Peter asks Jesus where he is going. Jesus says that Peter cannot come with him now but will later. Peter immediately engages his mouth and says he is ready to die for Jesus. Jesus predicts Peter's denial. Peter's words were admirable, but his actions were suspect. Jesus doesn't want Peter to die for Him; He wants Peter to stand up for Him. Peter was ready to fight and die for the cause; he was not prepared to simply stand for Jesus when it became apparent that Jesus would be crucified. Disciples stand firm for Jesus at all times. God is not looking for bold promises and fancy words; He is looking for people who will stand by Him when it matters most. God is not nearly as concerned if we will die for Him; He wants to know if we will live for Him. That makes His name great. That is how we glorify God with our lives. It is not some dramatic one-time event; it is daily life decisions that reflect God's nature and make His name great in a lost and dying world. The result will be nothing short of miraculous and culture changing. What are some ways you "stand firm" for Christ in your life? How does standing firm give God glory? What is the impact of standing firm on culture? What is your primary takeaway from this study?

