

**Slide 1**

# **You Make Me Want To Be A Christian**

## **JOHN 13:34-35**

### **Introduction**

1. If I were to go around this room tonight and ask each of you to tell me why you are a Christian, I am sure I would get a number of answers.
2. Some of you might respond by saying something like this:
  - a. "I was lost in my sins, and I knew that Jesus came to die for my sins. Therefore, I knew I needed Him to take away those sins."
  - b. "I knew that Jesus is the only way to God, and I want to go be with Him when my life here comes to an end."
  - c. "I became a Christian because of the abundant life which I find in Christ."
3. Some of you might focus your answers upon the blessings you now enjoy in Christ:
  - a. "I have found this incredible peace in Christ that I didn't have before."
  - b. "He has given me the comfort which I needed after the losses I have experienced in my life."
  - c. "There is this inner joy which I now have that gives me strength for each day."
4. We could go on and on, and each of you could give me far more reasons for your obedience to Christ than I have given you.
5. There is one reason that I would like for each of us to consider tonight, and it is you.
6. What I mean by this is there is no other body of people like the church of our Lord.
7. It is because of you and others like you that some people want to become a Christian.
8. Our passage for tonight's lesson was spoken by Jesus to His disciples in the

upper room on the eve of His crucifixion.

### Slide 2

9. It is a command which Jesus gave to these men and sets forth one piece of evidence which identifies us as His disciples:

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34–35, NASB95)

10. Jesus said that our love for each other is to imitate the love which He had for His disciples.
11. Such love would cause those around us to know that we are His disciples.
12. Tonight, I would like for us to consider three things:
  - a. The differences which exist among us.
  - b. God’s attitude toward our differences.
  - c. Our own attitude toward our differences and toward one another.

### Slide 3

## I. The Differences Which Exist Among Us

### A. OUR DIFFERENCES ARE MANY AND VARIED

1. We are different in so many ways.
2. Physically different (i.e., tall, short, young, old, hair color, eye color, etc.).
3. Socioeconomic status (i.e., poor, middle income, wealthy).
4. Different lifestyles (where we choose to live, type of home we prefer to live in, type of vehicle we like to drive, clothes we prefer).
5. Secular interests (sports, hobbies, etc.).
6. Political ideologies (conservative, liberal, libertarian, etc.).
7. Spiritual maturity (weak or strong in our faith).

### Slide 4

### B. OUR DIFFERENCES HAVE WITHIN THEM THE POTENTIAL FOR DISRUPTION

1. They can destroy the unity of our fellowship as a church if we allow.
2. Sometimes, if we are not careful, we may limit ourselves to spending time around those with whom we have common interests.
3. The truth, however, is that God's love for us which He demonstrated through the sacrifice of His Son encourages us to overcome those things.

**Slide 5**

## **II. God's Attitude Toward Our Differences**

### **A. HE IS NOT ONE TO SHOW PARTIALITY**

1. Moses pointed out this aspect of God's character some 3,400 years ago (Deuteronomy 10:17).

“For the Lord your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe.” (Deuteronomy 10:17, NASB95)

2. Paul told the Christians in Rome that God is an impartial judge (Romans 2:9-11).

“There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God.” (Romans 2:9–11, NASB95)

3. Peter did the same (1 Peter 1:17).

“If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth;” (1 Peter 1:17, NASB95)

**Slide 6**

### **B. HE IS WILLING TO ACCEPT EVERYONE**

1. When he arrived at the home of the Roman centurion, Peter understood

this was the truth which God sought to impress upon him with his vision at the home of Simon the tanner (cf. Acts 10:34-35).

“I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.” (Acts 10:34–35, NASB95)

2. Later at the Jerusalem conference involving the apostle Paul and what he was teaching among the Gentile churches, Peter shared with them the events which had taken place in Caesarea and how he now understood that God makes not distinctions (Acts 15:7-9).

“After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, “Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe. “And God, who knows the heart, testified to them giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us; and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith.” (Acts 15:7–9, NASB95)

3. In his last letter, written shortly before his death, Peter affirmed the truth that God desires that all people come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9).

“The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9, NASB95)

## Slide 7

### **C. HE CALLS US TO ACCEPT ONE ANOTHER**

1. Even as Christ has accepted us, so we are to accept one another (Romans 15:7).

“Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.” (Romans 15:7, NASB95)

“Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.” (Romans 15:7, ESV)

**Slide 8**

### **III. Our Own Attitude Toward Our Differences And Toward One Another**

#### **A. A CHANGE IS TO TAKE PLACE WHEN WE BECOME CHRISTIANS**

1. When we become Christians, we put on the “new self” and work to become like Christ (Colossians 3:9-10).

“Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—” (Colossians 3:9–10, NASB95)

**Slide 9**

2. As we do so, our differences lose their significance (Colossians 3:11).

“a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.” (Colossians 3:11, NASB95)

- a. National distinctions (Greek and Jew ) — Jews called those outside their nation Greeks (Gentiles)
- b. Religious distinctions (circumcised and uncircumcised )
- c. Cultural distinctions (barbarian, Scythian )
  - 1) A barbarian was anyone foreign to Greek culture
  - 2) A Scythian was considered a wild, savage nomad.
- d. Economic or social distinctions (slave and freeman )

**Slide 10**

3. As we become more Christ-like, our potential for partiality lessens (Colossians 3:12-15).

“So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a

heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful." (Colossians 3:12–15, NASB95)

- a. We develop a heart of compassion, not ice.
- b. We work to be kind, not cruel.
- c. We strive to be humble, not proud.
- d. We are gentle, not harsh.
- e. We become more patient and less intolerant.
- f. We are forgiving, not judgmental.
- g. We focus on becoming more loving and less uncaring.

#### Slide 11

### **B. WE RECOGNIZE THAT EVERY MEMBER IS NEEDED**

1. In 1 Corinthians 12:14-25, the apostle Paul compared the church to a physical body and made two important points:
  - a. In verses 14-19, it is the fact that every member is important.
  - b. In verses 20-25, it is the truth that every member is needed.
2. One of our goals as a congregation should be to make sure that no member ever thinks to themselves . . .
  - a. "I am not needed here."
  - b. "I won't be missed."
  - c. "There is nothing I can do here that is important."

#### 11a

### **C. WE COMMUNICATE TO EACH MEMBER THAT HE OR SHE IS NEEDED**

#### Slide 12

1. We are hospitable toward one another (1 Peter 4:9).

“Be hospitable to one another without complaint.” (1 Peter 4:9, NASB95)

**12a**

2. We show concern for one another (1 Corinthians 12:26).

“And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.” (1 Corinthians 12:26, NASB95)

**12b**

3. We pray for one another (James 5:16).

“Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.” (James 5:16, NASB95)

**Slide 13**

4. We serve one another (Galatians 5:13).

“For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” (Galatians 5:13, NASB95)

**13a**

5. We work to restore someone caught in a trespass (Galatians 6:1).

“Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.” (Galatians 6:1, NASB95)

**13b**

6. We “bear one another’s burdens” (Galatians 6:2).

“Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.” (Galatians 6:2, NASB95)

**Slide 14**

## **IV. We Cherish Our New Designation — Family**

## **A. JESUS VIEWED HIS CHURCH AS A FAMILY**

1. Jesus often spoke of . . .
  - a. God as His Father (*John 5:17, 43*)

“My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working” (*John 5:17*).

“I have come in My Father’s name” (*John 5:43*).
  - b. His followers as His family relatives (*Mark 3:35*)

“For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother” (*Mark 3:35, NASB95*).
2. The apostles referred to the church as . . .
  - a. A “brotherhood” (*1 Peter 2:17*).
  - b. The “house (family) of God” (*1 Timothy 3:15; 2 Corinthians 6:17-18*).
3. Jesus viewed His church as a family who would be doing the will of His Father (*Mark 3:35; Matthew 12:50*).

**14a**

## **B. AS A RESULT, THE CHURCH BECOMES OUR TRUE HOME**

1. There will be times when the cost of discipleship can be great.
  - a. For some, it may even mean forsaking their earthly family.
  - b. On one occasion, Jesus said, “I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man’s enemies will be the members of his household” (*Matthew 10:35-36*).
2. Our Lord intends for us, as His church, to make up for any cost.
  - a. Whether it be . . .
    - 1) The cost of putting Christ before family.
    - 2) The cost of leaving family to serve Christ (e.g., going to missionary fields).

- b. Christ has promised a hundredfold in replacement (cf. Mark 10:28-30)
- 3. As our Lord's church, you and I can be a home (family) for all:
  - a. Especially for those away from home (e.g. college students, those learning a trade).
  - b. Especially for those who never had a family at all, or an incomplete one (e.g., orphans, or those with single parents).
  - c. Especially for those from a "dysfunctional" family (e.g., abused, neglected).

## **Conclusion**

- 1. As our Lord's church, you and I are to be an intimate household, a family.
- 2. As such a family we deeply care about one another.
  - a. We are compassionate toward one another.
  - b. We pray for one another.
  - c. We serve one another and meet each other's needs.
  - d. At times, we even teach and admonish one another.
- 3. The love we demonstrate toward one another can be a powerful factor in motivating someone to become a Christian.
- 4. Their thought is, "I want to be around those people. I want to be one of them."

### **Slide 15**

- 5. How are we doing at being such a family? What do we need to work on? What do you need to work on?
- 6. Are you a Christian? Would you like to become one tonight?