

Loris First Baptist Church
“Twelve Marks of a Mature Disciple of Christ”

TEST NINE OF DISCIPLESHIP MATURITY

Characteristic #3 - “Arms of Love”

A careful study of the transformation of the Apostle Paul, from a brand new Christian (Acts 9) into a mature disciple of Jesus Christ (Acts 28), reveals that there were six key “Christ-like” characteristics he exhibited which were developed through his spiritual growth after his salvation. The failure for a Christian to have and work on these characteristics will severely hinder his or her ability to display Christ-likeness as has been commanded by The Word of God (Luke 6:40; Matthew 16:24; 1Peter 2:21; 1John 2:3-6).

One characteristic of a disciple of Jesus Christ is that he or she will have openly display an “agape” (i.e. sacrificial) love for “others”, especially those who are fellow Christians (John 13:34-35; 1John 4:19-21). A person’s normal (sinful) nature is focused on fulfilling the “lusts” of the flesh and will fight others in order to achieve their own desires and goals (1John 2:16; Galatians 5:19-22). Therefore, in order for a person to prove they are a mature disciple of Jesus Christ they must have a life that is dominated by a love for other people whether they be strangers or enemies (Luke 10:25-37; Romans 12:20-21). So, do you have ARMS OF LOVE for others?

Directions: Please circle the number that best represents how you would rate yourself in response to each of the 12 questions and corresponding Scripture provided.

Scripture #1: *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ LAID DOWN HIS LOVE FOR US. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. (1 John 3:16)*

THIS IS LOVE: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an ATONING SACRIFICE for our sins. (1 John 4:10)

Question #1: I know what the true “biblical” definition of love is. I know that it is not the same as the world defines it. Biblical love is not based on emotions or a personal desire to get something from someone just to benefit yourself. It is making a sacrifice that only benefits others.

I Don't Understand this Concept	I Sort Of Understand This Concept	I Totally Understand This Concept
1 2	3 4 5	6 7

Scripture #2: *“But God DEMONSTRATES HIS OWN LOVE FOR US in this: While we were still sinners, CHRIST DIED FOR US.” (Romans 5:8)*

“This is love: not that we loved God, but that HE LOVED US AND SENT HIS SON AS AN ATONING SACRIFICE FOR OUR SINS.” (1 John 4:10)

Question #2: I know that I am totally loved by God and that He will always love me; because, His love for me is not based on what I do, how I look, or how I feel. Rather, God’s love for me is based on a sacrifice He was willing to make for me by sending His Son to die for me.

I Don't Understand this Concept		I Sort Of Understand This Concept			I Totally Understand This Concept	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Scripture #3: *Dear friends, let us love one another, FOR LOVE COMES FROM GOD. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. (1 John 4:7-8)*

Question #3: I know that I am saved and a child of God because I find myself regularly putting others’ needs ahead of my own. I know that God loves “sacrificially” and has given me a desire to love others like He does. My relationship with God (“knowing God”) is revealed by my consistent and ever-growing impulse to love others, even though I regularly fall short of that ideal.

This is Not True About Me		This is Sort of True About Me			This is Totally True About Me	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Scripture #4: *“A new command I give you: Love (i.e. “agape”) one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (John 13:34-35)*

And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love (i.e. “agape”) one another as He commanded us. (1 John 3:23)

Question #4: I know that Jesus has commanded me to love (“agape”) other people. Therefore, I try to obey Him daily by making sacrifices that benefits other people even when it inconveniences me.

This is Not True About Me		This is Sort of True About Me			This is Totally True About Me	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Scripture #5: "But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: WHILE WE WERE STILL SINNERS, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

Dear friends, SINCE GOD SO LOVED US, we also ought to love one another. (1 John 4:11)

Question #5: I understand that God didn't choose to love me because I am a good person who has always done the right things. Instead, He chose to love me even though I had sinned against Him and did not deserve His love. Therefore, I believe I can and "ought" to love others who may have hurt me and/or do NOT "deserve" my love.

I Don't Understand this Concept	I Sort Of Understand This Concept	I Totally Understand This Concept
1 2	3 4 5	6 7

Scripture #6: *If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, HOW CAN THE LOVE OF GOD BE IN HIM?* (1 John 3:17-18)

"Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, 'Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,' BUT DOES NOTHING ABOUT HIS PHYSICAL NEEDS, WHAT GOOD IS IT? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, IS DEAD." (James 2:15-17)

Question #6: I understand that when a person is truly saved by "biblical" faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, a PROOF to the world (and myself) is that I have a powerful inner desire to "love" others who are in need. If I don't care about others who are struggling when I have the means to help them, it could mean that my "faith" in God is not "saving" faith. I may still be lost because God's love is not within me.

I Don't Understand this Concept	I Sort Of Understand This Concept	I Totally Understand This Concept
1 2	3 4 5	6 7

Scripture #7: *Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.* (1 John 3:18)

Question #7: I love others on a regular basis by doing things to help them even when it is not convenient for me and it costs me significant time, money, or energy.

Not Very Often (I struggle with this; not sure How to)	Usually (I am trying to, but need to improve)	Almost Always (I concentrate on this daily)
1 2	3 4 5	6 7

Scripture #8: *BE IMITATORS OF GOD, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*
(Ephesians 5:1-2)

...AS I HAVE LOVED YOU, so you must love one another. (John 13:34b)

Question #8: I try my best to imitate God and show the world what He is like by loving others unconditionally in word and in action the way Jesus Christ has loved me, whomever God puts in my path.

Not Very Often (I struggle with putting others first)		Usually (I am trying to, but need to improve)			Almost Always (I concentrate on this daily)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Scripture #9: "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, THAT YOU MAY BE CALLED SONS OF YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN.

 (Matthew 5:43-48)

On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:20-21)

Question #9: God's agape' love so dominates my life that I find ways to serve and minister to those who have hurt me and/or someone I care about. Because Jesus Christ has forgiven me, I do not hold grudges or avoid helping people who have sinned against me.

This is Not True About Me		This is Sort of True About Me			This is Totally True About Me	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Scripture #10: *Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, IT IS NOT PROUD.*
(1 Corinthians 13:4)

Question #10: The reason it is easy for me to love others that speak, act, or think different from me is because I know that, but for the sake of God's grace, I could speak, act, or think just like them.

This is Not True About Me		This is Sort of True About Me			This is Totally True About Me	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Scripture #11: It (i.e. “agape” love) is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. (1 Corinthians 13:5)

Question #11: I do not slander or say things rude about (or “to”) others. It takes a lot for others to say or do something to me that angers me and I am quick to forgive and forget when they do.

This is Not True About Me		This is Sort of True About Me			This is Totally True About Me	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Scripture #12: EACH MAN SHOULD GIVE what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. (2 Corinthians 9:7-8)

He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God. (Proverbs 14:31)

Question #12: I not only “tithe” and give “regularly” to my church so that the lost and needy people in the world can be helped, but I also cheerfully look for ways to use my remaining material blessings to bless others whom God puts in my path when I am not in church.

This is Not True About Me		This is Sort of True About Me			This is Totally True About Me	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

How to Grade Yourself on “Who is Your Lord”?

- 1) Add up all of the numbers you circled for the 12 questions above. (Max score “84”).
- 2) Compare your scores to the scales below and take action as the Lord leads you:

84 – 56 *You have “arms of love” that demonstrates God’s love for others around you.. Continue to allow God’s love to dominate your interactions with others.*

55 – 29 *You need to pray and ask God to help you love others with His sacrificial love that He has placed within you. Repent of any self-centeredness and selfishness and begin looking for and practicing kindness and generosity towards others.. (1 John 4:7-12)*

28-7 *Are you sure you are really saved? If you are, you are in danger of severe “discipline” by Jesus if you do not repent and allow His love for you to influence how you love others around you. (2Corinthians 13:5; Hebrews 12:4-6)*