

Name: _____

Date: _____

Christian Leadership

How to influence the ideas, opinions and actions of others for Jesus Christ.

Lesson 14: The Tender Heart of a Leader (Day One) Love me Tender

Love me tender¹
Love me sweet
Never let me go
You have made my life complete
And I love you so

Love me tender
Love me true
All my dreams fulfilled
For, my darling... I love you
And I always will...

Love me tender
Love me long
Take me in your heart
For it's there where I belong
And will never part

The lyrics to this old ballad can be a tender love song between you and Jesus. Certainly Jesus “loves you tender.” He cares for you and expresses His feelings for you in many ways. He is considerate and protective of you and will never let you go. Sing or say the words to Jesus and listen in your heart for Him to sing or say these tender words back to you.

God may sing a love song to you through a Christian hymn or a secular (nonreligious) song like this one. Listen and look daily for God’s voice whispering His tender love for you in varied and marvelous ways. Open your heart in new ways to His tenderness and care.

God the Father is **Tender**. God the Spirit is **Tender**. God the Son is **Tender** and gives us our perfect model of the **Tender Leader**. Remember that God has many characteristics and one does not reduce the reality of the others. For example, God’s righteousness and power do not diminish His love and tenderness for His people. The same is true of our character.

¹ "Love Me Tender" is a song sung by Elvis Presley (1935-1977), to the tune of "Aura Lee" (or "Aura Lea"), a sentimental Civil War ballad with music by George R. Poulton and words by W.W. Fosdick." Aura Lee" was published in 1861 and this Civil War song later became popular with college glee clubs and barbershop quartets. It was also sung at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York. From: Wikipedia website, 2007.

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He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.³ He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.⁴ Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.^{NIV} Isaiah 53:2-4

Read Isaiah 53:2-4 and answer questions 1-6.

1. The prophet Isaiah prophesied about the Messiah long before He was born. In verse 2 Isaiah says that Jesus grew up like a _____ shoot, and like a root out of dry ground.
2. How is Jesus described physically? (v.2) _____
3. How was Jesus treated by the men He created? (v.3) _____
4. Isaiah says “we” esteemed him not (v.3). Who are these people that Isaiah identifies with by including himself with the word “we”? _____
5. What kind of person would take up your diseases and carry your sorrows? (v.4)

Jesus grew up like a tender or young sprout. He was a seedling or sapling from King David’s dynasty. David’s royal line (his family) had not been producing kings; they were stuck in dry ground.

Even though Jesus was a King in the line of David, He was different from the people’s view of a king. In fact, He wasn’t like earthly kings at all. He had no majesty or beauty in His appearance and was despised and rejected by those He had come to serve and save.

There was a time in our life when we were in sin and rejected our tender King. Yes, the “we” in Isaiah 53:2-3 applied to the Israelites and to every person that has ever been born, including you and me. Sadly, there are still times as Christians that we do not value the Man of Sorrows. We don’t want to identify with Him in His rejection, sadness and grief. We only want to identify with Him in His resurrection joy and glory.

We fail to understand that our glory, like Jesus’ comes after the earthly life. In our efforts to avoid carrying our own cross in identification with our Leader we may reject Him in many varied and subtle ways. For example, to avoid rejection, pain or discomfort, we may take control or manipulate a situation or circumstance.

Jesus asked to be released from the cross, but immediately prayed, *yet not my will, but yours be done* (Luke 22:42). By His actions Jesus has shown us how to handle difficult situations. We pray about the difficulty but willingly accept the assignment or circumstance on God’s terms. Our contentment is in God, not in circumstances.

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6. Examine your heart. Do you have a situation or way of life that is rejecting and despising the Man of Sorrows? Yes No (Circle One) If so, what are you going to do about it?

Jesus was, is, and always will be a tender Leader. He does not come in the **clothing** of earthly royalty but **of heavenly royalty**. He is clothed with compassion, mercy, sympathy, empathy and love. He is also sensitive in that He is responsive to the feelings and circumstances of others. These are the characteristics that define the “tender leader.”

7. Are these words that describe your heart of leadership? Yes No Sometimes (Circle One)

Personal Application:

Read and meditate on Deuteronomy 32:1-3, Proverbs 4:3-4 and Mark 10:13-16. Ask God to speak to you through these verses.

What did God say or impress upon you through these Scripture passages?

How will you change in thought, attitude or action because of your answer above?_____

Lesson 14: The Tender Heart of Leadership (Day Two) The Royal Cloth of Compassion and Mercy

Jesus, our leadership model is clothed in a royal robe of many colors. Each color is brilliant and blends marvelously together with the others. The royal cloth is made with the color of (1) compassion, (2) mercy, (3) sympathy, (4) empathy, (5) sensitivity and (6) love. These are all characteristics of our tender Leader and ones that we will want to cloth ourselves in also. First, let’s discuss compassion.

And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness,"^{NIV} Exodus 34:6

1. In Exodus 34:6 when God passed in front of Moses, what was the first adjective He used in

describing Himself? _____

The Triune God is compassionate. He knows of our sufferings and struggles and wants to help us. In fact, He longs to help. God tell us plainly through Scripture that He is tender hearted.

The **first characteristic of a tender hearted leader is compassion.** When you put on the royal cloth of compassion you are able to feel pity for others and want to help them in their sufferings or difficulties. You are concerned about individuals or groups of people in need. You want to copy the compassion of God.

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.^{NIV} Matthew 9:36

2. Read Matthew 9:36. Why did Jesus have compassion on the crowds? _____

A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean."⁴¹ Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!"⁴² Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured.^{NIV} Mark 1:40

3. Read Mark 1:40-42. When a man with leprosy begged Jesus to make him clean, how did Jesus respond? _____

Another way to translate the Greek word *splagchnizomai*, (σπλαγχνίζομαι) for “filled with compassion”² is “moved by compassion” or pity. Jesus had compassion, moved forward and took action. He reached out and touched a diseased man. Not just any diseased man, but a man with a horrible, ugly, infectious disease. The NIV translates the infectious skin disease as leprosy. Those with leprosy³ can have many deforming lesions and patches on their skin.

Joseph de Veuster (1840-1889) from Flanders in Belgian desired a heart of compassion like Jesus. He joined the priesthood of the Catholic Church and went to Hawaii as a missionary in 1864. The native Hawaiians were being infected and dying from various diseases including leprosy that had been introduced by traders and sailors.⁴

The king of Hawaii ordered that those infected with leprosy were to be moved to the north side of the island of Molokai. This was done to protect the rest of the population from contracting the disease. It became a chaotic leper colony with 816 men, women and children. There was no

² σπλαγχνισθεῖς verb participle aorist passive nominative masculine singular. [UBS] σπλαγχνίζομαι be moved with pity or compassion, have pity or compassion. BibleWorks 6.

³ Hansen's disease, is a chronic infectious disease caused by the bacterium *mycobacterium leprae*. Leprosy is primarily a granulomatous disease of the peripheral nerves and mucosa of the upper respiratory tract; skin lesions are the primary external symptom. Left untreated, leprosy can be progressive, causing permanent damage to the skin, nerves, limbs, and eyes. Wikipedia 2007

⁴ Ibid

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Christian or secular leadership; sin was rampant. Think about it, in addition to the ugliness of this infectious disease, a trip to Molokai most likely meant a death sentence.

Who would want to go to an island and serve such an unappealing group? Who would have compassion on these tormented souls? Who would take pity on this particular crowd that was harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd? Who would reach out and touch them?

God saw the anguish and the hurt. He needed a leader with compassion like His Son's. "Here am I", said Joseph, "I will go." Joseph, better known as Father Damien went to Molokai in 1873. He built a church, homes, beds and coffins. Although not medically trained as a doctor, he dressed the leper's ulcers and their wounds with love and comfort. Father Damien also presided (in charge of) over funerals including digging graves for the dead.

Like his Master, Father Damien also gave his life for his flock. The man from Flanders, contracted leprosy and died on the Island of Molokai after 13 years of compassionate service. Even with the deadly disease, he kept right on serving until his physical strength was gone.

4. Would you have willing served in a leper colony in the 1800's? Yes No Maybe (Circle One)
5. What do you think gave Father Damien the courage and ability to give up his life for such physically and spiritually unattractive sheep? _____

We may think that we are a tender hearted leader but when we read about men and women like Father Damien, we realize that we have a long way to go. The only way Father Damien or any of us can have real compassion is through Jesus. Let us pray.

Holy Father,

I pray in Jesus' name to have true compassion. O Spirit, move in my heart and help me cooperate with You so that I may look on crowds and individuals like Jesus. Move me immediately into action and use me to provide spiritual and physical comfort to those in need. Help me to develop compassion in those I am leading by being compassionate appropriately and honestly. Amen.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,⁴ who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.⁵ For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.^{NIV} 2 Corinthians 1:3-5

6. Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-5. What is God telling you through these verses?
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The second characteristic of the tender hearted leader is having mercy. Mercy is similar to compassion and in fact, the word in Greek that is translated mercy also means having

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compassion.⁵ However, we are going to stress a certain aspect of mercy. In other words, God is fine-tuning⁶ your tender heart! He wants precise “heart adjustments” so that you and those you lead will have hearts like Him.

A merciful leader refrains from inflicting (causing) punishment or pain on someone when it is in his or her power to do so. Certainly Jesus modeled mercy on the cross as He died a horrible death for the unrighteous (Romans 3:10). Being God, it was within in His power to inflict punishment and pain to those who crucified him. Nevertheless, He remained on the cross and asked God to forgive them (and us). God is merciful and expects us to be merciful also.

In addition, Jesus withstood the insults and false accusations while He walked the earth. Indeed, He still sees and hears all the insults and false accusations that pervade the earth and the people that He created. Still, he shows mercy, wanting all to come to repentance and spend eternity with Him (1 Timothy 2:4).

When Jesus was eating with Matthew, tax collectors, and other “sinners”, the Pharisees questioned His disciples about it in a negative way (Matthew 9:11-13). They were not concerned about the “sinners” who needed to hear about God but were only interested in rule keeping and rule giving. They did not read or search out the Scriptures with the intent of knowing God’s heart and His ways.

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.^{NIV} Psalm 1:1

Read Psalm 1:1 and answer questions 7-8.

7. Does God bless men and women who do not follow sinners? Yes No (Circle One)

8. Was Jesus or His disciples taking advice and instruction from sinners? Yes No (Circle One)

Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways.⁹ He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.^{NIV} Psalm 25:8

9. Read Psalm 25:8. Does God instruct sinners in His ways? Yes No (Circle One)

Neither Jesus nor His disciples were taking advice from sinners nor were they following them in any way. They were in the company of sinners to give them instruction or counsel in the ways of God. Their intent was that sinners would turn from their evil ways and follow God.

⁵ [UBS] ἔλεος, οὐκ n mercy, compassion, BibleWorks 6.

⁶In theoretical physics, fine-tuning refers to circumstances when the parameters of a model must be adjusted very precisely in order to agree with observations. From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

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The Pharisees did not want to forgive or help “sinners.” They had no mercy in their hearts. They were in love with their own self righteous rituals and not in love with God. They missed the whole point of the law: Love your God, love your neighbor.

But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”^{NIV} Matthew 9:13 (Jesus quoted Hosea 6:6)

10. Jesus answers the Pharisees in Matthew 9:13. He says, “But _____ and _____ what this means: ‘I desire _____, not _____.’ For _____ have _____ come to _____ the righteous, but _____.”

By the way, Jesus was not saying that the Pharisees were righteous because we know *that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God* (Romans 3:23). He was making a distinction between the humble who recognize they are sinners and the proud who don’t. The rest of the gospel account makes it clear that the Pharisees were indeed sinners.

11. In Matthew 9:13, what does God mean when He says, “I desire mercy and not sacrifice”?

God wants us to be merciful toward Him and to others. We have free will. It is within our power to accept or reject God on a daily basis. When we choose sin, we have chosen to inflict pain and indeed these very sins caused suffering to Jesus when He was on the cross. We show God mercy by loving Him and following Him from our heart. Although we don’t know exactly how God feels, we do know that actions can be pleasing or displeasing to Him. Therefore we show mercy to God when we think and act out of our deep love and devotion to Him. Our motivation is more important to God than the animal sacrifices that the Israelites offered or the rules that we champion.

12. Will you begin showing mercy to God? Yes No Maybe (Circle One)

“But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.²⁹ If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic.³⁰ Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back.
^{NIV} Luke 6:27-30

Read Luke 6:27-30 and answer question 13. **Option:** Memorize Luke 6:27-30.

13. Why are Jesus’ mercy commands in Luke 6:27-30 so radical? _____

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Personal Application: Read the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant: Matthew 18:21-35

Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?"^{NIV} Matthew 18:33

Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to convict you (to show guilt) of any unmerciful acts that you have done or any unmerciful attitudes that you have in your heart. With each remembrance ask God if there is anything that He would like for you to do about it now. Do it immediately. Ask God's forgiveness in the blood of Christ and move on in mercy in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Lesson 14: The Tender Heart of Leadership (Day Three) The Royal Cloth of Sympathy

The third characteristic of the tender hearted leader is having or being covered by the royal cloth of sympathy. Sympathetic means that one has the ability to share another's emotions or sensations. The leader feels sorrow or pity toward someone who is suffering pain or grief. He also feels happy at one's joys. To be in sympathy with another also means that you have similar beliefs, opinions or tastes. In this respect Christians are in sympathy with one another because of the same belief in our Lord Jesus Christ. He gives us our opinions and tastes!

When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."³³ When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.³⁴ "Where have you laid him?" he asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied.³⁵ Jesus wept.^{NIV} John 11:32-35

Read John 11:32-35 and answer questions 1-4.

1. When Jesus saw Mary and the other mourners weeping, how did He feel and what was His response? _____

Jesus was sympathetic. He was deeply moved and troubled and He wept. Please see the order of Jesus' actions. He did not slough off (shed, cast) their emotions even when He knew He was going to raise their brother from the dead. He shared in their grief and then raised Lazarus.

2. Are you able to share in another's grief and pain? Yes No Sometimes (Circle One)

3. In regard to your answer above, explain why or why not you are able to sympathize with others? _____

4. How may we pray for you in this regard? _____

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Even if you are a person who doesn't have many pains, hurts, or challenges, isn't it gratifying to have a sympathetic ear when you do? Isn't it healing to have someone listen patiently and show concern for your hurts and misfortunes. Your sheep need to see this side of your leadership. They need to feel it and see it modeled for them. They need to know that you care.

As with every good thing, be careful not to overdue it. There is balance in life, even in holy characteristics. Jesus was not continually weeping nor did He encourage it. If you or your sheep are always having problems and seeking attention, that is a different issue. Specifically, it is masking a selfish and self-centered agenda. Prayerfully consider what the root problem is and seek a solution. Don't enable anyone to be a constant complainer, grumbler or attention seeker. Your job as a shepherd leader is to allow the Spirit to move you in sympathy and all other godly characteristics appropriately.

Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another.^{NIV} Romans 12:15-16a

Read Romans 12:15-16a and answer questions 5-7.

5. In addition to mourning with those who mourn, what are two other things we should to do?

1. _____

2. _____

6. Which do you think is easier: to be sympathetic in someone's suffering or in their joy? Why?

7. How will wearing the cloth of sympathy help you to live in harmony with one another?

Not only are we to sympathize with those who are grieving but we are to rejoice with those who are rejoicing (Exodus 18:9). Sometimes it may be easier to feel sympathy for someone having a difficult time than it is to be happy for someone's good fortune. It comes down to jealousy.

We are not envious of someone's illness or grief, but what about his new house or car? We are not covetous of a Christian's struggle with sin, but what about her success in ministry? Sometimes another's success can make us feel unsuccessful or unacceptable. We desire the achievement or accomplishment of the other person. When this happens our focus is off God and His will for us.

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Christians can be tempted and succumb (surrender) to earthly success and earthly approval even in ministry. **Guard your heart and remember to be happy for those upon whom God smiles!** It doesn't mean that God loves you less; it just means that His plan for you is different.

Understanding and sharing another's feelings, whether sad or happy can help us live in harmony with one another. Living in sympathy with one another is paramount to living in harmony. It would be difficult to argue and disagree when you're trying to understand another's circumstance or situation.

The fourth characteristic of the tender hearted leader is being empathetic. Empathy is similar to sympathy but takes feelings deeper. Empathy is the ability to identify oneself mentally with a person and understand his or her feelings, motives and particular situations. In a sense, as you empathize, you become the other person.

For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.¹⁸ Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.^{NIV} Hebrews 2:17

Read Hebrews 2:17-18 and answer questions 8-10.

8. In what way was Jesus made like people? _____

9. What was the purpose of Jesus being made like you and me? _____

10. Why do you think Jesus is empathetic to your suffering and pain? _____

Jesus really understands us, not only because He is God, but because He was made like us in every way. He was made human so that He could become a merciful and faithful high priest reconciling human beings to the triune God. He suffered a great amount of emotional and physical pain as well as the challenges of trials and temptations.

Empathy is experiencing what the other is experiencing. It is the ability to participate vicariously⁷ with another. When a leader is communicating empathically, he or she is totally receptive to what others are expressing. You are not thinking about how you will respond or how you are personally affected. You are involved in understanding and identifying with the other person. The goal is unity and not separation.

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion,² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.⁴ Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.⁵ Your attitude

⁷ Vicarious is an adjective describing feeling and emotions that are felt through sharing imaginatively in the feelings or activities etc. of another person. Oxford Dictionary

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should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross! ^{NIV} Philippians 2:1-8

Read Philippians 2:1-8 and answer questions 11-13.

11. Who has totally identified with you? _____

12. What did Christ do in order to empathize with you? _____

13. Should Christians be empathetic? Yes No (Circle One)

Christ became man and totally identified with us. He empathizes with our suffering and encourages us with His love. We should have the same empathetic attitude in love and purpose. Jesus actually took the concept of empathy to a degree that we cannot emulate, however it should lead us to praise God everyday. He actually took our sins into His body on the cross and paid the price for our transgressions; by His wounds we are healed. Although we do not have the capacity to take someone’s sins, we do have the ability to tell others about the Christ who did.

Personal Application: Memorize: Philippians 2:1-8

Pray and practice being a sympathetic and empathetic leader this week and answer the following question:

What did you learn or discover about yourself from this experience? _____

Lesson 14: The Tender Heart of Leadership (Day Four) The Royal Cloth of Sensitivity

Sensitivity is the fifth characteristic of a tender hearted leader. Jesus had a tender and soft heart toward God. Jesus was always open and sensitive to the Father’s leading no matter how difficult the assignment. Another word for sensitive is responsive. Jesus was always aware of God the Father and God the Spirit. He listened and watched. He complied with, and acted upon what He heard and observed.

but the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me. ^{NIV} John 14:31

1. Read John 14:31. What are the two things that the world must learn?

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1. _____ 2. _____

The magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart was hard and he would not listen, just as the LORD had said.^{NIV} Exodus 8:19

Read Exodus 8:19 and answer questions 1-2.

2. Who had a hard heart and was not responsive to God? _____

3. Pharaoh's heart was _____ and he would not _____ to the magicians who said "This is the _____ of _____."

The opposite of having a soft (sensitive, aware, responsive) heart to God is having a hard (insensitive, unaware, unresponsive) heart to God. After the third plague (gnats) even Pharaoh's magicians were aware that God was working powerfully in Egypt. But Pharaoh refused to listen.

*They made their hearts as hard as flint and would not listen to the law or to the words that the LORD Almighty had sent by his Spirit through the earlier prophets. So the LORD Almighty was very angry.*¹³ *"When I called, they did not listen; so when they called, I would not listen," says the LORD Almighty.*^{NIV} Zechariah 7:12-13

Read Zechariah 7:12-13 and answer questions 4-7.

4. Did God's people, the Israelites make their hearts hard as flint? (v. 12) Yes No (Circle One)

5. How did the Israelites respond to the law and God's words through the prophets? (v.12)

6. Was the LORD Almighty very angry? (v.12) Yes No (Circle One)

7. How does God respond to people with hard hearts that are not responsive to Him? (v. 13)

Zechariah began preaching about 520 B.C., about 900 years after God freed the Israelites from Pharaoh's captivity. They had hardened their hearts and would not listen to God through the law and the prophets which were important ways God communicated with His people. The Israelites were not sensitive to God and His desires so that when they called on Him for their selfish motives, He would not answer.

Another 900 years go by and Jesus is born. Religious groups called the Pharisees and Sadducees were leading God's people at the time. Their hearts were so hardened that they were unable to recognize the Son of God. God was working around them with signs, miracles and healings and yet they attributed His work to the devil (John 8:52).

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This lie spread. Even after Jesus' death, the miracles done through His disciples were considered from the devil. A Jewish text, the Babylonian Talmud which was finalized in the sixth century has two references to Jesus and His unusual powers. The references charge that the "Nazarene" practiced sorcery and led Israel astray. The Talmud warned others not to have anything to do with these people.⁸

Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not confess their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue;⁴³ for they loved praise from men more than praise from God.^{NIV} John 12:42-43

Read John 12:42-43 and answer questions 8-11.

8. Can you believe in Jesus and still have a hard and unresponsive heart? Yes No (Circle One)
9. What is one reason that people who believe Jesus is the Son of God, do not respond to Him?

10. Why do you think some people are more sensitive to other humans rather than to God?

11. How should you respond to Jesus?_____

See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.^{NIV} Hebrews 3:12

12. Read Hebrews 3:12. Could you or any Christian leader be in danger of developing a hard heart? Why or why not?_____

But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.^{NIV} Hebrews 3:13

13. According to Hebrews 3:13 what is one way that you can lead and help others have a soft heart toward God?_____

You may support and cheer on one another in many ways (Ephesians 5:19-20). However, the encouragement is centered on God. It is not about making someone feel good about themselves apart from Christ, but in Christ. Therefore, encourage your sheep daily so that they are strong and sensitive to Him. How good is a timely word (Proverbs 15:23).

We live in a day or era of grace. Our sins are forgiven in Christ. But sin is devious and cunning. Sin doesn't always present itself as sin. For example, God has impressed upon you that you are to rest or worship on a particular day. He wants to spend time alone with you. Then someone

⁸ Bock, Darrell L., Studying the Historical Jesus. Baker Academic. Grand Rapids, Michigan. 2002. 58-59.

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calls with a physical need and you immediately rush off to help. Now it is excellent to help others and we are commanded to do so, but it is a matter of God’s will and priorities.

Did God change His mind about your spending the day with Him? This is where we need to be careful. Perhaps God wants someone else to help this person and not you. There is also the possibility that you want to help because you are afraid of what that person or others may think of you and your reputation as a caring Christian.

Thus sin tries to deceive you into disobeying God with a “good work”. Anything that takes you out of God’s will, no matter how honorable it appears, is sin. It usually comes down to seeking man’s approval and praise rather than God’s.

Personal Application:

Ask God to tenderize your heart and to give you practical ways to develop sensitivity.

What did God say and how are you putting it into practice? _____

Lesson 14: The Tender Heart of Leadership (Day Five) The Royal Cloth of Love

In Lesson 2: Triple Love Poured Out, you learned of God’s amazing love you. Your belief and trust in God’s unfailing love is an act of faith, just like your salvation. Although during your lifetime as a Christian you will feel and see the effects of both God’s love and salvation, there may be many times that you do not. But you are still loved and still saved.

This belief will help you tremendously when you put on **the royal cloth of love**. It is easier to love others when you are resting and trusting in God’s love yourself. **Love is the sixth and final characteristic** of the tender hearted leader.

But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.⁴⁶ If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?⁴⁸ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.^{NIV} Matthew 5:44-48

Read Matthew 5:44 and answer questions 1-2.

1. Jesus tells us to: Love your _____ and _____ for those who _____ you, that you may be _____ of your Father in heaven.

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2. Jesus continues and says in verse 46, "If you _____ those who _____ you, what _____ will you get? Are not even the _____ collectors doing that?"

3. How did Jesus model perfect love for us? _____

Israel was ruled by the Roman Empire during the time of Jesus' ministry. The Jewish tax collectors worked for the hated Romans. Not only were the tax collectors considered traitors, but robbers as well. They collected more money than Rome required and kept it for themselves.

Jesus used the tax collectors as a common example of an enemy. Yes, even they loved family or friends who loved them. God's sons (includes women) are to do more. Not only are we to love those who love us, but we are to love our enemies and love them with more than just a mental recognition of the command. We are to go further by praying and desiring good for them as well!

Jesus didn't suffer and die just for His family and friends. No, He loved and died for everyone. Some would repent and accept His love and salvation, others would not. We are to love and share God's plan of salvation with everyone. Some will repent and accept God's love and salvation, others will not. Still, our royal cloth of love remains fixed firmly over our tender heart.

We love because he first loved us.²⁰ If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.²¹ And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.^{NIV} 1 John 4:19-21

Read 1 John 4:19-21 and answer questions 4-6.

4. Why are we able to love? _____

5. Can you love God and hate other Christians? Yes No (Circle One)

6. Write the command of verse 21: _____

If you love God you will seek to love everyone. Nevertheless it is still a process and may not happen overnight. Don't be discouraged, you will grow in love and holiness. Like anything else, some develop faster than others. Loving those who hurt you is a challenge and you may not have reached such a level of perfection. But you and those you lead must still seek perfection.

7. Read Philippians 3:12-14 and 2 Peter 3:14. What lessons do you learn from these passages about your own struggle with loving others? _____

Lesson 14

Paul says plainly that he has not been made perfect but he is still straining forward. He is not giving up. Peter says to make every effort to be found spotless. As a Christian you are more loving today that you were in the past. Rejoice! But continue to weave a greater and richer cloth of love. Depend on the Holy Spirit, God's word, prayer and grace to be made perfect in love.

Remember also that any love that is not based on God's love will be tainted and self serving. Your leadership will become about you and your gifts and abilities. You will desire sheep for your own self satisfaction, emotional support and ego. Keep your heart and your love pure.

Personal Application: Memorize 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 and Romans 12:9-10

Pray that you feel a tender love for your people and that God opens their hearts to see and feel your love in all that you say and do.

Next: Lesson 15: The Leader in Worship

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