



# LOVE GROWS IN CIRCLES, NOT ROWS

## IN CIRCLES, NOT ROWS: PART 3

August 21, 2021

### OUR VISION

1. **Every member** connects with Jesus and one another in a Connect Group (small group) and or a Sabbath School functioning as a Connect Group.
2. **All ministry** for one another and those outside the church walls flows out of these Connect Groups.

### "ONE ANOTHER"

Ἀλλήλων → Translated "one another"

- It appears 100 times in the New Testament in 94 different verses.
- 59 of those occurrences are part of specific commands teaching us how or how not to relate to one another.
- These commands break down into four groups
- 33% Focus on Unity in the Body of Christ (the church)
- 33% Focus on Christian Love
- 15% Focus on Humility
- 13 "one another" texts about random other commands

## **LOVE GROWS IN CIRCLES, NOT ROWS:**

One Third of the “One Another” commands deal with growing in love for fellow followers of Jesus.

- Love one another (Jn 13:34, 15:12, 15:17; Ro 13:8; 1 Th 3:12, 4:9, 1 Pe 1:22; 1 Jn 3:11, 4:7, 4:11; 2 Jn 5)
- Through love, serve one another (Ga 5:13)
- Tolerate one another in love (Ep 4:2)
- Greet one another with a kiss of love (1 Pe 5:14)
- Be devoted to one another in love (Ro 12:10)

**These texts are fulfilled in relationships,  
which grow in circles, not rows.**

“Connecting to the Vine (Jesus) grows as we grow in our love for one another.” –John 15 (ESV)

- John 15:1-8 is a metaphor for our connection to God through Jesus His Son
- John 15:9-16 are commentary on that metaphor
- John 15:17 sets up the contrast between true followers of Jesus and the world’s followers.

### **THE METAPHOR:**

- Jesus is the Vine
- You, me, and the rest of humanity are the branches.
- Branches are either connected to Jesus or not. There is no in between.
- Branches connected to the vine grow fruit! (MUCH FRUIT)

### **THE COMMENTARY:**

We know we are connected to the Vine (Jesus), “If you (we) keep my (Jesus’) commands.” Jn 15:10a (NIV)

Jesus summarizes the commands He is referring to here under one big idea, “that you love one another as I have loved you.” Jn. 15:12 (ESV)

**Big Idea:** We can measure our connection to Jesus by the growth of our love for His people, our fellow believers.

“Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. (21) And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.” 1 Jn 4:20, 21 (NIV)

## **FOLLOWERS OF JESUS CONTRASTED WITH THE WORLD’S FOLLOWERS**

“These things I command you, so that you will love one another. 18 If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.” Jn. 15:17, 18 (NIV)

Jesus said about the Holy Spirit, “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. 14 He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you.” Jn.16:13, 14 (NIV)

### ***Who do you follow?***

**Are you a connected branch of a burning branch?**

Followers of Jesus are known by their love and the characteristics that exemplify that love: forgiveness, serving one another, kindness, gentleness, etc.

The World’s followers are known by their hate and the characteristics that exemplify that hate: bitterness, a lack of forgiveness, attacking others, gossip, a critical spirit, etc.

John always states things in the black and white.

*All of us are either truly part of the body of Christ or part of the world.  
You can know yourself by the fruit of your feelings towards others.*

**Either for Christ or for the world, there is no stage between.**

If you are lacking may I encourage you to join a connect group and grow in your love for Jesus and for others. You will be blessed and you will develop relationships that previously you were missing and you will grow.

**UNITY GROWS IN CIRCLES, NOT ROWS!**

Join a Connect Group.

Start a Connect Group.

Facilitate a Connect Group.

Sign-up for specific connect groups in September

Learn more at [spencervillechurch.org/connectgroups](http://spencervillechurch.org/connectgroups)

SERMON NOTES

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