

As You Wish

Love Others As God Loves You

There are so many ways to say, "I love you." In a popular film about a so-called "kissing book," a rugged "farm boy" and a beautiful girl fall in love. But whenever she bosses him around, he always responds with, "As you wish," when he really means, "I love you." Later, when she finds out he's still alive, the only way she knows it's truly him — the love of her life — is when he shouts, "As you wish" while tumbling down a hill. But these two phrases aren't as different as you might think.

We're modeling our servanthood after Jesus' servanthood, as we continue our [Cross Training](#) journey. Servanthood includes seeing with new eyes, humility, sacrificial love, and honor. So, what does it look like to love someone enough to sacrifice for them?

What You Need to Know

The *Princess Bride* tells a sweet love story, but it's nothing compared to the Lord who loved us — *his bride* (Eph. 5:25-27) — when we seemed unlovable. "*For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly*" (Rom. 5:6). The Servant Songs of Isaiah (Isa. 42:1-9, 49:1-6, 50:4-9, 52:13-53:12) tell of the obedient Servant who "*carried our sorrows*" (Isa. 53:4) though we were the straying sheep (Isa. 53:6).

It's easy to think of love as some warm and fuzzy feeling you have towards someone, but Christlike love is a commitment to everyone — friend and enemy alike (Matt. 5:43-48) — seen in each interaction with others (1 Cor. 13:4-8). It's good to *tell* people we love them, but we also need to *show* them (1 John 3:18). Jesus didn't express love in empty platitudes but on a cross. Sacrifice is an undeniable "language of love," so whenever you doubt his love for you, go back to that supreme "I love you" (1 John 3:16). Then, resolve again to lay down your life by serving people around you (1 John 3:16).

What You Need to Do

Examine the motive behind your sacrifices. You can give away everything you own or even lay down your life for someone, but if you don't do it out of love, it gains nothing (1 Cor. 13:3). On the surface, your sacrifice might look noble or loving, but only you (and the Lord) know that for sure. Do you serve out of obligation, victimization, or a martyr complex? Or does it come from willing love, the decision to pursue another's wellbeing? Like a lamb before the shearers, practice silent submission to God rather than fighting for yourself (Isa. 53:7; 1 Peter 2:20-25).

Broaden the scope of your kindness beyond your friends and people who treat you well. "*For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? ... if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others?*" (Matt. 5:46-47). Extend your welcoming warmth and friendship to neglected people around you (James 1:27).

Lean in to listen for ways to serve. Ideally, we'd all express our needs clearly, but sometimes it takes investigation to understand how to support each other. Listen for people's struggles. Pray with specificity and give with generosity (James 5:16).

How can you pour yourself out without going empty? It only works because God promises to fill us back up (Luke 6:27-38). We can give because God provides (Phil. 4:18-19). Do you believe his promise (2 Cor. 9:6-11)?

Through the Week

- **Read** — John 3:10-17; 1 Cor. 13:1-8; 1 John 3:11-24; Matt. 5:38-48; Rom. 5:6-11
- **Reflect** — Ask yourself, *"What does it look like for me to lay down my life for others in my day-to-day choices?"*
- **Request** — Pray, *"Lord, pour into me a love for others that reflects your love"* (cf. Rom. 5:5; 1 John 4:19).
- **Respond** — Tell someone you love them today, not with words, but with your actions.
- **Reach Out** — Ask someone, *"How do you balance your needs with sacrificing for others?"*