



THE HEART OF A METHODIST

STUDY GUIDE

Mark #5: Loves Others

Book: *Five Marks of a Methodist* by Steve Harper

SCRIPTURE

36 "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" **37** Jesus said to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.'

38 This is the greatest and first commandment. **39** And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' **40** On these two commandments hang all the law and prophets."

Matthew 22:36-40 (NRSV)

9 Whoever says, "I am in the light," while hating a brother or sister, is still in the darkness.

10 Whoever loves a brother or sister lives in the light...

1 John 2:9-10a (NRSV)

34 "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. **35** By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

John 13:34-35 (NRSV)

4 Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant **5** or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; **6** it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. **7** It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (NRSV)

STUDY & REFLECT/DISCUSS:

The Five Marks of a Methodist, Mark #5: Loves Others

1. Spend a few moments reflecting on the sermon. **Where did you relate? What didn't make sense? How did God communicate with you during it?**

2. The sermon referred to **the path of graces** that God offers to people:

Prevenient Grace – God loves me before I love God.

Saving Grace – I surrender to God's love.

Sanctifying Grace – God's love perfects me.

To be perfected by God's grace is not to be free of any mistakes. It is to be so transformed by God's love that a person's thoughts, feelings, and actions become motivated by love over any other factor. **Can you think of a person that serves as an example of being sanctified in this way? What stands out about that person to you?**

3. *1 John 2:9-10a* equates hating another person with being in the darkness. Consider someone for whom there is good reason for you to hate. **What would it look like to choose to not hate that person anymore? Does choosing love over hate mean condoning the actions of that particular person?**

4. "They will know we are Christians by our _____." **What answers have you seen Christians put in this blank?** Using the descriptors found in *1 Corinthians 13*, consider specific ways you might let your classmates, co-workers and neighbors know that you are a follower of Jesus Christ.

LIVING IT OUT

Character is formed, it rarely just "happens" upon us. Devoting ourselves to the five marks laid out by John Wesley develops the heart of a Methodist. **If you have practiced these marks during this series, are you able to assess any transformation that is happening in your heart? In your character? Can anyone who spends time with you see a change in you?**

What areas come naturally to you and what areas are challenging? Find someone, or several someones, who are willing to regularly share with you in the joys and struggles of being formed into the image of Jesus Christ.

PRAYER

Ask the Holy Spirit to guide and empower you in loving others. Ask God to make you aware of opportunities to love others in meaningful and transformational ways. Pray for each other, and pray for other needs you may be aware of. Pray for the "empty chair," for those who are not yet with our group/our church. Thank God for the transforming work that God has done and is yet to do in our lives, families, the community, and the world.