

Why Missions Discipleship Is Important for Adults

“Adults on Mission has been instrumental in keeping our church informed about local and international missions needs and encouraging the members to support missions offerings.”

— Sylvia Todd

Missions discipleship empowers adults to become more effective witnesses in their world. When adults explore current missions efforts around the world, delve into the biblical mandate for missions, and become personally involved, they clearly see their responsibility to take the gospel to the nations.

As adults grow and learn, they will seek out needs in their communities and become involved in meeting those needs. A commonly asked question is, “How is God calling us to meet this need?”

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How to Start Missions Discipleship for Adults



Adults on Mission is a coed organization for women and men over 18 years old. This missions discipleship group prepares men and women to work together to share the gospel of Jesus Christ and to hear God's call.

Most Adults on Mission groups are activity-based, so the groups can be formed to meet an identified need in your community or when an existing small group decides to become involved in missions. Groups can also be formed around natural networks or affiliations (such as professions) or around life issues (such as parenting or retirement).

The goals of Adults on Mission are to learn about missions, pray for and give to missions, and disciple others to live on mission for Christ.

How to start Adults on Mission:

- 1. Pray.** Involve your church leadership in seeking direction for starting and leading Adults on Mission.
- 2. Determine the focus.** Consult with women and men in the church to choose what your focus will be.
- 3. Identify leaders.** Select a group leader and others who will be willing to lead and provide training.
- 4. Choose resources.** Review the sample included in this starter pack and talk to others about the options.
- 5. Order resources.** Place orders at wmustore.com or call 1-800-968-7301.
- 6. Check the calendar.** Select a meeting time and location.
- 7. Promote.** Promote 6–8 weeks prior to your first meeting using personal invitations, email, social media, and print format.

Contact your local Baptist association, your state WMU office, or national WMU for training opportunities.

To learn more, visit us at wmu.com/adults (click on "Adults on Mission").

For additional information, contact national WMU at adults@wmu.org.



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Resources for Adults



Missions for Life 2022-23

Each of Missions for Life's 12 monthly units includes a Bible study and Bible study lesson plan, a prayer article, suggestions for mission action projects, and ideas for getting involved in a special monthly emphasis, such as the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. You will also receive access to a special monthly online mission study and mission study lesson plan.

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national WMU at adults@wmu.org.



GENUINE LOVE: What does it mean to truly love Christ?

Matthew 22:34–40

By Claudia Johnson

*Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart
and with all your soul and with all your mind.”*

—Matthew 22:37

The Ten Commandments God gave Moses were instructions to teach the Israelites how they were supposed to live and act if they wanted to follow the One True God (see Exodus 20:1–17). In Jesus’ time, the Pharisees used these commandments as a measuring stick by which to determine the holiness of one’s life. The more perfectly someone followed the commands, the holier he or she was. In the modern church, we often have a similar mentality.

But was this the true intention behind the Law as God wrote it? Does someone genuinely love Christ only when he or she perfectly follows every one of His commands without exception? Or does genuine love of Christ mean something different?

Let’s look at Matthew 22:36–40 to see what Christ had to say about the true heart of the Law and how it differs from pharisaical legalism. As you study, use this as an opportunity to examine your own heart toward Christ and others.

DO YOU JUDGE AS THE PHARISEES DID WHEN THEY QUESTIONED JESUS?

The rule-following, Law-keeping Pharisees carefully crafted a question for Jesus. How could He offer the kingdom of God to such worthless people who flocked

to Him daily? What had the crowds done to earn such opportunity? The Pharisees knew the Law. They studied and taught the Law. They put in the years to become experts in the Law.

Jesus stole attention from them in every way. People were hungry to hear His words and see the miracles He performed. They wanted to feel, understand, and experience Him personally. How could the Pharisees compete? They chose their words to catch Jesus off guard, “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” (v. 36). Surely Jesus’ response to this important question would trap Him and turn people away.

DO YOU HAVE THE GENUINE LOVE REVEALED IN JESUS’ ANSWER?

Compare their question to Jesus’ answer in verses 37 to 40, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

His answer exposes truth. Genuine love must begin in the heart, against which there is no Law. Genuine love changes one’s heart, which in turn changes one’s actions



toward a neighbor. It's the kind of love that allowed Jesus to say of those who flogged and nailed Him to a Cross, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34).

THROUGH CHRIST'S GENUINE LOVE FOR US, WE CAN FIND RESTORATION.

The Pharisees' question shows how much emphasis they placed on the Law in their day. They may have believed their knowledge of the Law far surpassed what Jesus could have possibly known. However, Jesus' answer points to the state of their hearts, as well as yours and mine.

Are you still trying to keep the letter of the Law, while forgetting genuine love? I'm often guilty of doing this, but I'm grateful that by God's grace, we can be reconciled to Him. We may know this, but do we live in that grace?

Christ's love for us transforms us and leads us to salvation. When we humble ourselves before Him, recognizing His sacrifice on the Cross, we are better able to live lives of genuine love for Him and for others.

Throughout the New Testament, we see examples of the saving power of Christ's love versus the condemnation of the Law:

THE LAW CONDEMNS	THE LOVE OF CHRIST SAVES
Woman commits adultery (John 8:1-11).	Christ asked for the sinless to begin the stoning, pointing each sinner to the state of his heart.
Zacchaeus steals as he collects taxes (Luke 19:1-10).	Jesus ate with Zacchaeus and other sinners, showing them genuine love, more valuable than worldly goods.
Peter denies Christ (Luke 22:54-62 and John 21:15-19).	Christ restored Peter with a breakfast at the sea, allowing him to restate his genuine love for Christ, which he previously denied out of fear when questioned.
You sin in your thoughts and deeds (Eph. 2).	Jesus' death and Resurrection provided a way of salvation, allowing us to be reconciled to Him and experience genuine love.

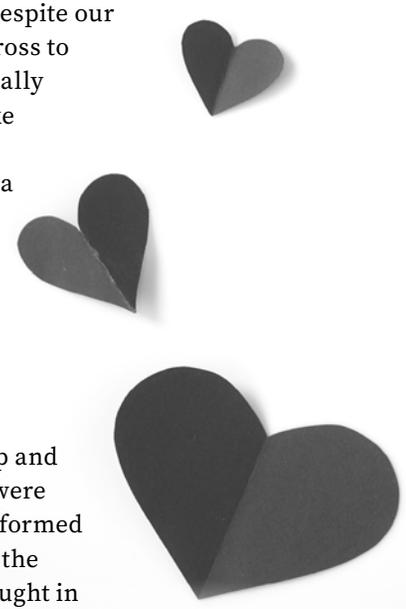


If you are a follower of Christ, you know the power of Christ's love—that despite our sin, He gave His life on the Cross to save us so we could live eternally with Him. But sometimes, like me, you may forget this. You may find yourself acting like a modern-day Pharisee, ready to condemn others, while forgetting all Christ has done for you.

When the sin of others disgusts you and you find yourself growing high and mighty in your judgment, stop and remind yourself of what you were like before Christ's love transformed your life. Just as Christ asked the condemners of the woman caught in adultery in John 8:7, ask yourself: "Am I without sin?" If your answer is yes, then by all means, go ahead and "cast the first stone."

If your answer is no, then lay down your stone, letting this reminder of your imperfections encourage you to love others from the lens of Christ's love for you, and your genuine love for Him.

Claudia Johnson worked with the International Mission Board for 28 years. She now serves as associate minister of discipleship at Riverchase Baptist Church.





Genuine Love for Christ: Matthew 22:34–40

By Claudia Johnson

Do you love Christ? You read God’s Word. You pray for missions and missionaries. You give generously, and you attend church. You check off all the boxes, and yet, there’s that nagging question. Is it genuine? Do you truly follow Christ’s commands?

If you struggle with such questions, you can be sure others do as well. Jesus simplifies the commandments we should live by in Matthew 22:34–40.



FOR GROUP OR CHURCHWIDE STUDY:

1. Start with a self-survey by asking participants to write down what it means to have genuine love for Christ. Have participants share their results as you list these thoughts on a whiteboard.
2. Lead participants in prayer for understanding, and read Matthew 22:34–40.
3. Discuss the differences between the hearts of the Pharisees, your own hearts, and Jesus’ message.
4. Compare and contrast the list you have written (show sensitivity as you do so) with the Pharisees’ misconceptions. Explain the heart of the Law and how it is more about genuine love than just following a list of rules.
5. Ask: *What kind of fruit would the church bear if it had genuine love for Christ? How will others know we are Christians? How would that love be seen in your neighborhoods and in the world?*
6. Close in prayer.



FOR FAMILY STUDY:

1. With your family, brainstorm a list of rules that would make life easier for everyone. Write down all suggestions without question.
2. Use the list to choose only two rules that would make life easier for everyone. Consider implementing the rules for a couple days or even a week. How did it go? Was it easy?
3. Read Matthew 22:34–40.
4. Explain how the Pharisees tried to keep the law by making up a lot of rules.
5. Pray and ask: *How would our family operate differently if we all followed what Jesus mentions in the Bible passage?*



FOR INDIVIDUAL STUDY:

1. Pray for understanding as you read Matthew 22:34–40.
2. Make a short list of policies or laws being proposed by the government or a group you are a member of, and determine what motivates the creation of each law on your list.
3. Read Exodus 20, and connect each commandment to the two suggested by Jesus—love the Lord and love your neighbor as yourself.
4. When you have genuine love for Christ you begin to act like Christ. Pray and read each of the following passages. Write how Jesus showed genuine love:
 - John 8:1–11
 - Luke 19:1–10
 - John 21:15–19
5. Consider how your love for Christ continues to grow.

Claudia Johnson served as a teacher at an international school in Bangkok, Thailand, and as a teacher of refugees.



PRAY TO GROW IN LOVE FOR CHRIST

By David E. Crosby

*Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.
For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame,
and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

—Hebrews 12:2

Not everyone loves Jesus.

Most love Jesus the orator. He said the most amazing things. He is quoted often by Christians and nonbelievers alike. “Do unto others,” someone says, quoting Jesus. “Blessed are the peacemakers,” a mother tells her children. “Let him who has no sin cast the first stone.” The quotes of Jesus are everywhere in our culture.

Most love Jesus the friend of sinners. He was famous in His time because He did not show favoritism: “You aren’t swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are” (Matt. 22:16). Most love Jesus because He ignored religious laws, touched the untouchables, ate with tax collectors, talked with prostitutes, and lifted the fallen.

But Jesus loses most of His admirers at His arrest—the mob turned on Him, the disciples scattered—when He ordered the swords put away. Jesus surrendering to His executioners, dying on a Cross—this is not our mental image of a hero, a winner.

If we cannot love Christ as He spread His hands for the nails, we cannot really love Him at all. The Crucifixion of Christ is the way God saves us from our sin forever and saves us from our self-centeredness every day. We are in the middle of God’s purpose and plan when we are at the Cross.

The Apostle Paul wrote, “For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2).

The writer of Hebrews challenged Christians who were under fire with these words: “Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and

perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross” (Heb. 12:2).

The Apostle John went directly to the Cross of Christ when he explained what love is: “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us” (1 John 3:16).

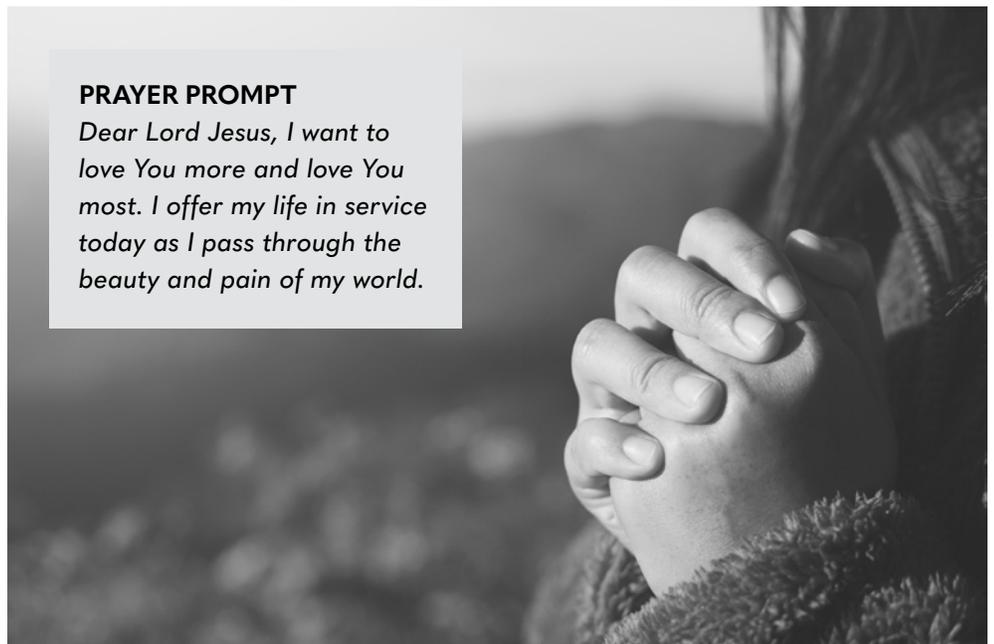
Growing in love for Christ means in part revisiting His death upon the Cross with a view to understanding and emulation: “I love thee for wearing the thorns on thy brow” (William Featherston, “My Jesus, I Love Thee”).

Jesus was not killing His enemies on the Cross. He was loving them. Jesus was not conquering with weapons of warfare. He was surrendering to them: the fist, the stake, the whip, the hammer, the governor’s edict, the executioner’s Cross. He was sweeping it all into His very heart as He completed in death every word He uttered, every deed for which He was famous.

David Crosby is pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church New Orleans and has served Baptist churches as a pastor for 50 years.

PRAYER PROMPT

Dear Lord Jesus, I want to love You more and love You most. I offer my life in service today as I pass through the beauty and pain of my world.





UNPACKING HOPE AT CHRISTMAS

By Travis McCormick

Estimates say around 11 million children in the US live in poverty. Many lack necessities like food and running water. In Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus said we would have to answer for what we do or don't do for the "least of these." As the Christmas season approaches, it is important to remember that for many children and their families, the holidays serve as a painful reminder of the hopelessness they face every day.

They need someone to model the love of Jesus by caring for them, meeting their physical needs, and sharing the hope of the gospel. As part of your preparation for the holidays, consider partnering with thousands of others across the country to impact the lives of children and families by providing Christmas Backpacks for children and teens.

WHAT ARE CHRISTMAS BACKPACKS?

Christmas Backpacks are simply backpacks filled with gifts provided by churches, small groups, families, or individuals. Each backpack must be purchased and filled with age- and gender-appropriate gifts. Requested items include clothing, nonperishable food, toys, hygiene products, shoes, bedding, and more. Each backpack also contains a printed copy of the Christmas story. Once the backpacks are filled, they are taken to a designated drop-off site.

Christmas Backpacks help bring hope at Christmastime to children and teens living in poverty. The gifts you provide help churches minister to their communities by creating outreach events where needs are met and the gospel is shared. By providing Christmas Backpacks, you help meet both physical and spiritual needs.



To learn more, visit christmasbackpacks.org. Here you will also find links for each of the state level partners and everything you need to get started, including information on the ministry, downloadable resources, and contact information for the person responsible for Christmas Backpacks in his or her state.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

You can begin by praying for the children who will receive the backpacks. Pray God would provide for their needs, and they would respond to the gospel. Pray God would give you a burden for this ministry and call others to help as well.

In addition to praying, you can participate in the ministry by purchasing and filling Christmas Backpacks and then partnering with a convention, church, or compassion ministry that distributes the backpacks.

Travis McCormick serves as men and boys mission strategist for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention in Little Rock, Arkansas.



CHILDREN'S MISSIONS DAY: September 17, 2022

By Heather Keller

*But we do not belong to those who shrink back and are destroyed,
but to those who have faith and are saved.*

—Hebrews 10:39

This year marks a significant change to Children's Missions Day (CMD) as the date moves from February to September 17, 2022. This change was made in the hope the new date would allow more groups to participate than ever before and would refresh the groups who have been participating for quite some time. And, with potentially nicer weather, your group can consider a project outdoors—maybe you'll deliver treats to a local business, host a prayerwalk, plant shrubs and bushes for a neighbor, or host an outdoor movie for your community.

This year's theme, *Trusting All the Way*, will provide plenty of opportunities for children to show your community God's love. Just remember, the main idea of CMD is to give children an opportunity to experience telling someone about God's love, even if that person hasn't come to salvation just yet. It can be as simple as saying, "God loves me, and He loves you too," while serving treats or delivering a care package. God will use all those moments to teach others—and children participating in CMD—about trusting Him in every circumstance!

However you choose for children in your ministry to participate in CMD, ensure they have an opportunity to leave the walls of your church and interact directly with someone as they share God's love. For more CMD information and resources or to report your event, visit wmu.com/cmd.

TWO MONTHS PRIOR

- Put the date on your church calendar: September 17, 2022.
- Meet with the children in your church, and discuss the purpose of CMD.
- Create a list of ideas for your project. Include a variety of groups of people to serve.
- Practice saying, "God loves me, and He loves you too."



TRUSTING ALL THE WAY

ONE MONTH PRIOR

- Revisit the list you created last month with your children's groups. Which projects could children do while easily interacting with others?
- Determine which project your group will take on.
- Secure needed permission for your project.
- Meet with the children to discuss the project, needed supplies, and their role in this event.
- Practice what the children will do and what they need to say during this time.
- Send notes home about your event.

MONTH OF EMPHASIS

- Continue practicing, "God loves me, and He loves you too," with the children, along with what they will be doing during your CMD event.
- Gather supplies.
- Encourage children and families to participate in your event by sending out a reminder.
- Host your event. Ask others to take pictures so you can be present and available for the children participating during the event.
- Debrief with children, families, and volunteers afterward. Discover what they learned, and plan to follow up with the people you ministered to during your CMD event.

Heather Keller is the Girls in Action and Children in Action consultant.



MAKE CMD A CHURCHWIDE EVENT

By Heather Keller

Making Children's Missions Day (CMD) a churchwide event may sound like a big thing, but not only is it doable, it's exciting! Can you imagine the families of your church all working together to help children experience sharing God's love with your community? Talk about maximum impact! And this year's theme, *Trusting All the Way*, is a great way to talk about how we as believers trust and have faith in God's promises for our lives as we work to accomplish the Great Commission.

Before you start planning, remember the basics of CMD: taking children outside the walls of the church so they can lead the way in sharing God's love with someone who is potentially unchurched. In other words, children should help plan this event and be at the center of sharing God's love with the people you are serving. Consider these steps:

- 1 PLAN**—Invite the children and families of your church to a discussion about two or three different opportunities in your community. (Before you choose, consider how children will be able to interact with the people you are serving.) Ask children and families for input, and come to a decision together about who you will serve and what you will do. Remind adults present of the children's role in this event, and encourage them to play supporting roles for the day.
- 2 PREPARE**—Part of the fun of CMD is preparing for the actual day. Involve families by hosting a preparation party. You may need to pack supplies, create a craft pack, or possibly even cook. Whatever you do to prepare, make sure everyone is invited and has a specific role to accomplish. Again—remember children are leading and should have important roles to fill.
- 3 GO**—When it's time to serve, make sure everyone knows his or her role and is ready to participate.



Stand back, encourage children to share with those you are ministering to, and watch families work together to accomplish the day's work.

4 CELEBRATE—After your families have served, display pictures of the day on a bulletin board or a slideshow. Celebrate how God's love was shared with your community, and create a follow-up plan for families who want to continue ministering to those they served. Share the day's highlights with your congregation and specifically describe what the children did to lead.

By including the families of your church, you will give them an opportunity to see how important their children are to fulfilling the Great Commission. Activities like this will also help children build confidence in leading and sharing God's love. And you will quite possibly ignite a passion for missions within the families of your church by hosting a family CMD event for your entire congregation.

For more information, visit: wmu.com/cmd.

Heather Keller is the Girls in Action and Children in Action consultant.