

“Just Do It! Believe and Love”

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“Just Do It!” Nike used this phrase to encourage Americans and people all over the world, to get up, get out, and be active and participate in life. Even if it was in activities you really didn’t think you were capable of doing. But, if you wore their shoes, you would be more able. Whether we realize it or not, this is exactly the same message Jesus gives us and showed us as He was on earth.

Jesus is our Savior. He came to earth and willingly gave up everything, including His own life, to take our place and redeem us. His crucifixion and resurrection made all the difference. His love for us changes us and the rest of the world. By what He did in love for us, He showed us how to live and love as His people.

Jesus is our Example. As He came to share the message of God and Himself, look at who He surrounded Himself with: the lowly, the disadvantaged, the rejected by society. But He didn’t care what the rest of society thought, He knew His mission – Love!

Open to 1 John 3. John tells us that love has been part of God’s plan for humanity from the beginning. As Adam and Eve were in the Garden, God surrounded them with His love. It was His love for them that caused Him to create them and give them all things. But sin made a difference. Sin caused lies, deceit, hatred, and even death.

But John also tells us that if we believe in Jesus as our Savior and live our lives in faith and love, the world won’t necessarily fall in love with us, but instead will hate us! Look at verses 13-15, *“Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.”*

Even though the world might hate you, God loves you! He loves you so much that He gave His very best, His One and Only Son! John 15:13 says, *“Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.”* You are a friend of God!

Look at verse 16, *“By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.”* This is a tall order! But just as Jesus laid down His life for our salvation, He wants us to totally give our lives that everyone around us might be blessed and saved.

But there’s a powerful connection between love and action. Look at verse 17, *“But if anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him?”* **Jesus asks us to love in deeds, not just words.** This raises the question, “When we don’t love, is God really in us?”

Verse 18, *“Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.”*
True love benefits the giver and the receiver.

It’s so easy to say we love all people, but sometimes if that love means we have to do something, we shut down or refuse to do it because it takes our time or energy. But when we’re filled with God’s grace and we do something that benefits someone else, many times, if not all the time, it benefits us as well! When you see someone with

whom you've actively shared love, smile and have peace in their life because of you, it makes you feel good too.

However, God knows you and I don't always follow His Will and we like to go our own way. We like control. It makes us feel good. When we ask for forgiveness for this, God forgives and continues to love us. Love and grace come from God alone. We're just recipients of all He gives us each and every day. He understands us and wants the best for us.

So God gives us two commands. Verse 23, *"And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us."* The commands are very simple and very clear. His commands?

Believe in Jesus Christ. Love one another.

As we believe in Jesus Christ, we see all He has done and continues to do in our lives. He's given us salvation and as we walk with Him, heaven is ours. God and all who believe in Him receive His Spirit Who grants us to know His Word and be in His abiding presence.

But there's one more point, **when we truly believe and love, we are being identified with Jesus.** We're being identified with the King of kings and Lord of lords. Because of being one of His, we have nothing to fear. Romans 8:38-39, *"For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

Did you catch that? There's nothing! Nothing that can separate us from our loving God! In love He gave Himself. We need to follow His example and give ourselves loving all the way. Listen carefully to John 15:12-13 to close, *"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends."*

Believe in Him! Follow Him! Stand in the gap for Him! Love Him and all people! Be known as one of His! Just do it!