

By: Rev. Mark Breese

Pastor Mark is the Agency Minister and the Director of Ministry & Community partnerships at Community Missions.

### Sometimes 'Should' Is Not A Bad Word

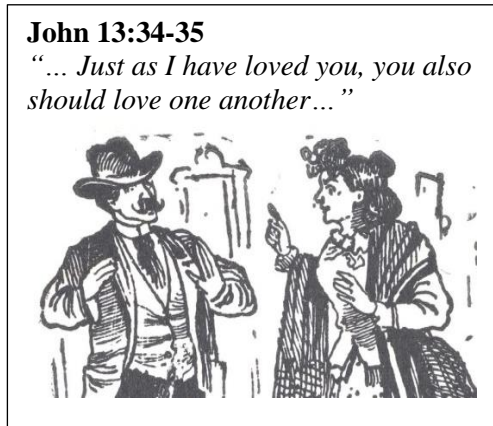
If someone has had even the smallest bit of training in counseling, or been in some kind of counseling or therapy yourself, one of the most basic things you pick up is trying to avoid using “should” language. As a counselor, one ‘should’ avoid telling a client “You Should...”

In our personal relationships this is an issue as well. Who among us does not feel a bit defensive when our parents or significant other tells us pointedly “You should...!” Let’s face it squarely— we do not like people telling us what to do. And yet, if we really face it squarely, no matter how such comments upset us, more often than not we walk away thinking and feeling (after our annoyance passes) that maybe, just maybe, we heard something we needed to hear.

It is interesting to me that in scripture we never really hear Jesus saying things like, “I would like you to think about doing this...” when he calls us to a Christian life. What Jesus did (and does) was talk in the kind of language that we often do not like to hear. He used “should” statements about how we are to live our lives as Christians. More to the point, he did not give us instruction or direction, but commandments!

*“<sup>34</sup> I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:34-35*

Perhaps that is something we really need to hear right about now. People are getting restless. We are getting tired of feeling restricted. We are getting worried about what the future looks like and how much it will be changed. We are scared



By: Rev. Mark Breese

Pastor Mark is the Agency Minister and the Director of Ministry & Community partnerships at Community Missions.

### Sometimes 'Should' Is Not A Bad Word

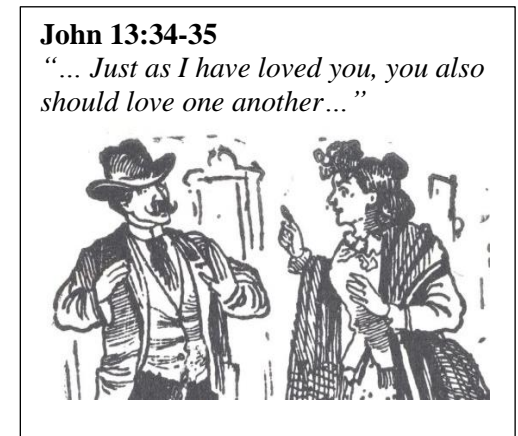
If someone has had even the smallest bit of training in counseling, or been in some kind of counseling or therapy yourself, one of the most basic things you pick up is trying to avoid using “should” language. As a counselor, one ‘should’ avoid telling a client “You Should...”

In our personal relationships this is an issue as well. Who among us does not feel a bit defensive when our parents or significant other tells us pointedly “You should...!” Let’s face it squarely— we do not like people telling us what to do. And yet, if we really face it squarely, no matter how such comments upset us, more often than not we walk away thinking and feeling (after our annoyance passes) that maybe, just maybe, we heard something we needed to hear.

It is interesting to me that in scripture we never really hear Jesus saying things like, “I would like you to think about doing this...” when he calls us to a Christian life. What Jesus did (and does) was talk in the kind of language that we often do not like to hear. He used “should” statements about how we are to live our lives as Christians. More to the point, he did not give us instruction or direction, but commandments!

*“<sup>34</sup> I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:34-35*

Perhaps that is something we really need to hear right about now. People are getting restless. We are getting tired of feeling restricted. We are getting worried about what the future looks like and how much it will be changed. We are scared that the “new normal” will not be temporary but the actual normal for a long,



long time. But mostly there is more and more noise to just stop all these restrictions because it is an infringement on... liberty, freedom, self-determination, etc., etc.

As human beings, we need to be thinking about others, thinking more about we and less about me. And as Christians we especially should be thinking about the commandment Jesus gives—that we love one another. Besides, what is there not to like about obeying Jesus' new command? Last time I checked it seemed to me that the world could use a lot more Love.



“A woman wagging her finger at a man with his hands raised”  
ca. 1880–1910, by José Guadalupe Posada.  
<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/735901>

that the “new normal” will not be temporary but the actual normal for a long, long time. But mostly there is more and more noise to just stop all these restrictions because it is an infringement on... liberty, freedom, self-determination, etc., etc.

As human beings, we need to be thinking about others, thinking more about we and less about me. And as Christians we especially should be thinking about the commandment Jesus gives—that we love one another. Besides, what is there not to like about obeying Jesus' new command? Last time I checked it seemed to me that the world could use a lot more Love.



“A woman wagging her finger at a man with his hands raised”  
ca. 1880–1910, by José Guadalupe Posada.  
<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/735901>