

# Lay Down Your Life

by Susan Vogt



Lent is a time to take a hard look at ourselves and our relationships with others. Before his passion, Jesus reminded his followers that ultimate love means laying down one's life for one's friends. For whom are you willing to give of the essence of your life?

## For

Adult / Couple

## Season

Spring

## Needed

Bible turned to John 15:12-17 "Lay Down Your Life"

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.

I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name.

I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another."

## Prepare in Advance

Choose a time when you and your spouse have a few free moments to sit with this scripture passage. (If you are not married, see Variation for single adults, below.)

## Activity Plan

1. Slowly read the story above of Jesus' instructions to his disciples shortly before his betrayal and passion. (You might alternate paragraphs with your spouse.)
2. Sit quietly for a moment to let it sink in.
3. Many happily married couples describe their spouse as their "best friend." Although at times this may feel overly idealistic or Pollyannaish, Jesus holds friendship as a sacred trust.
  - What qualities do you think it is important for a person to have to be a true friend to you?
  - Which of these qualities especially characterize your beloved?
4. *Love one another as I have loved you.* This is close to the scripture often referred to as the Golden Rule, "Do to others as you would have them do to you" (Matt. 7:12) Here Jesus raises



the level of love, however, to reflect how HE loves – a more perfect, sacrificial love than even how we love ourselves.

- Most spouses are not called to literally lay down their physical lives for their beloved, but consider how you lay down your time or your preferred way of doing things for your spouse. Think of one way that your beloved has sacrificed time, his/her way, or comfort for you.
5. *I do not call you servants.* Jesus refers here to “servants” in the sense of “slaves.” Slaves are required to serve in order to stay alive and avoid punishment. Friends also serve, but they do it of their own free will and out of love.
    - When was the last time you freely did an act of service for your beloved? It could be as simple as emptying the dishwasher, getting a snack, or watching the kids so he/she could take a break.
  6. *You did not choose me but I chose you.* You can have a little fun with this one. Although you presumably both freely and totally chose each other to marry,
    - Do you know which of you first had the idea that this would be the person I marry?
  7. *Whatever you ask God in Jesus name.*
    - Each think of one thing that is on your mind that you would like to ask God for – in Jesus’ name.

### **For Adults Without a Spouse or Beloved**

Single adults still need love and friendship, perhaps even more than those with the daily support of a spouse. If you are not living with a spouse, consider what qualities are important to you in a friend, who your best friends are, and how you serve and sacrifice for each other.

