



The Rafiki Foundation, Inc.

19001 Huebner Road #2 • San Antonio TX 78258-4040 • 210-244-2600 • FAX 210-244-2605

March 2003

Excerpts from John 13, 14 and 15:

“(Jesus) having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love” (John 13:1).

“By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35).

As the Father has loved me so have I loved you. Now remain in my love” (John 15:9).

“if you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love” (John 15:10).

“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you” (John 15:12).

“This is my command: Love each other” (John 15:17).

Dear Friends and Family,

To summarize and simply state it, we as Christians are to love each other.

That’s the command.

Any Questions?

I have some. What about when it’s not easy? What about when I’ve been hurt? What if I’m not loved back? Jesus, when He spoke all these words, knew this would be the case. He knew I/we would find it difficult sometimes. In these same verses He is an example of love to His disciples, even the one who betrayed Him. In reading these verses, I have a richer sense of Jesus’ love for me, and an example to show me what He meant. It’s a simple statement, three words, “love each other.”

You may be wondering why I am focused on these verses. In the last month, I have been away from my work at the *Rafiki Academy* at the *Rafiki Village Ghana*. I have been in Nigeria visiting the seven BSF (Bible Study Fellowship) classes in Jos and Ibadan. Our BSF West Africa area team deliberately set aside the month of February for these visits to avoid being in Nigeria during its preparation for the upcoming democratic elections. Nigeria is a three- or four-year-old democracy, and a fragile one at that. It seems that as we set aside the month to avoid possible trouble, I was given this time to reflect on this one command: Love one another.

In reflecting on the text we’ve studied between John 13-15, it is obvious what direction God has for me and

for you as Christians. We are to love each other, and let others see that love. As you pray with me for the children at the *Rafiki Children’s Center* and for the BSF classes in West Africa, you are loving them and loving me. Your financial gifts make it possible for me to work, live, and eat here. Thank you for such a tangible display of your love. Your e-mails of encouragement express your love and support for what God is doing in me and in West Africa. Let me tell you about some of the love I’ve seen during this last month.

Rafiki in West Africa

Although I was not traveling on behalf of *Rafiki*, I saw what God is doing through *Rafiki* in the cities we visited. God’s love, through *Rafiki Overseas Staff (ROS)* to teenage girls in Nigeria is overflowing. There are three different *Rafiki Girls’ Centers* in Nigeria, currently serving twenty teenage girls. There are four girls who attend in Ibadan, eight in Lagos, and eight in Jos. In these *Rafiki Girls’ Centers* the girls are learning to read and write properly in English. They are learning hygienic ways of cooking and menu planning. They are also learning specific attributes of God each morning—as well as skills in sewing and jewelry making. While this is the curriculum, there is much more to the experience.

I have seen the ROS return from a day of work excited because “Patience asked a question!” The trust is developing. I’ve seen them delighted because “two girls came to school on time instead of a one-half hour

late as usual.” They are learning that promptness matters. One ROS told me she spends her time at the center doing “whatever the director asks her to do, even if that means finding the teenagers who are hiding outside to bring them back into the instruction.” That teenager is learning that she is loved and missed and that her presence matters.

The love these girls experience each day is evident to me by the stories the ROS tell. They get excited about the learning breakthroughs and take the challenges of hormone-filled teenagers in stride. The *Rafiki* staff is discussing and exploring effective ways to discipline. They are challenged to find ways to teach the girls that the quality of their work matters. This is especially challenging in an environment where many things are not attended to with much care. I’ve heard stories and observed that dancing to music among themselves is a common joy of all teenage girls. It seems to provide a moment of freedom to be themselves and a healthy way to get all that energy out of their system. The ROS at the *Rafiki* Girls’ Centers in Nigeria are helping the girls to use their youthful energy in constructive ways, ways that build their confidence and trust. Trust in God, Jesus, themselves, and these “old white people” who seem to care what they do and how they do it. The girls feel God’s love through the ROS staff each day.

As you pray for *Rafiki* and BSF please pray:

- For the ROS: that we will remain /abide in the Word of God and love each other—day in and day out
- For the children at the RCC and teenage girls to experience God’s love through us
- For the children and class members in BSF all over the world to know God’s love and make their commitment to Jesus evident by their love for other Christians (this is so important in a world where the alternative of Islam can seem inviting, interesting, and compassionate)
- For Nigeria: for peace during the up coming elections
- There is a BSF retreat coming up in West Africa (October 2003). Please begin praying with us now for:
 - continued clear and effective communication with the hotel
 - the BSF leaders—that all will be able to attend

- the transportation needs of all 400 leaders to be met efficiently. The majority of the 400 will travel for at least a day to get there
- the continued development and establishment of the women and men’s BSF classes in Lagos, Nigeria.

- For me: pray that I will remain in Jesus, the True Vine, and that His love for me will enable me to love others, especially at this time for my family. Thank you for your prayers for my Aunt Minnie.

What a privilege it is to travel to these cities and see what God is doing. It has also been a privilege to have the time to focus on God’s Word and abide in Him deeply. It motivates me to spend more time each day in His Word.

The next few months for me will be full of teaching nursery school and primary school at the *Rafiki* Academy at the *Rafiki* Village Ghana. We are now in our new school building (thank you for praying with us for its construction). I look forward to working there. It will be a wonderful place to talk about Jesus and God’s love and to give it to the children. Thank you for making it all possible.

With love in Christ,



Charmaine Fiumos
P.O. Box KIA 9459
Accra, Ghana
WEST AFRICA

(Please keep those cards and letters coming!!)

Phone: 011 233 21 777 400
E-mail: cfiumos@ighmail.com

NOTE: The *Rafiki* web site has been revised. Please visit at www.rafiki-foundation.org and find information on your ROS, what *Rafiki* is doing, the centers, and the Exchange