

“Lessons on Love”

Children of God #5

INTRODUCTION

We are the children of a loving heavenly father, and our lives should be a reflection of His love, but that isn't always the case. John gives us some instruction in his letter about demonstrating true love through our actions. That is not always easy to do. In fact, on our own, it is impossible. But when we consider the love God expressed to the world through Jesus we find the example and source of real love.

Ice Breaker (Optional): Who do you know that best demonstrates an attitude of Godly love?

STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

The Elusiveness of Love

Q1. Read Genesis 4:4-7; Proverbs 10:12; Romans 12:16-21

How easy it is to be swept up in an attitude of anger, vengeance, or self-righteousness rather than an attitude of love! What does Genesis 4:7 tell us about the proximity of sin and its intent for us? Love is a choice, not a feeling. We are in a spiritual battle and if we do not deliberately choose love it will elude us, allowing our enemy to gain ground. If we find ourselves in the midst of strife, what is the antidote given in Proverbs 10:12? Romans 12:16 tells us to live in harmony, and lists many ways to accomplish this. Which one of these would be the most helpful to you personally?

The Evidence of Love

Q2. Read 1 John 3:13-14; Ephesians 4:31-32; Psalm 130:3-4; Matthew 6:12-15

What is it that distinguishes those who are spiritually alive from those who are still “abiding in death” according to 1 John 3:14? Ephesians 4:31-32 not only tells us how we should and shouldn't act toward our brothers, it also tells us that God's forgiveness through Christ should both motivate us and be our example. What consequence may we face if we refuse to forgive someone?(Mat 6:15) If there is anyone you need to forgive, ask God first to fill you to overflowing with His love, so that you can extend forgiveness, deserved or not, to that person.

The Essence of Love

Q3. Read 1 John 4:9-10; 1 John 3:16-17; John 15:9-13

Jesus will forever be THE example and prototype of what love looks like (1 John 4:9-10), and so Christ's love becomes the model for our own love! That love is, in its essence, selfless, others-focused, costly, inconvenient, and tangible. What practical example of this is given in 1 John 3:17? Is there an example of this kind of practical, tangible love that your group can participate in together?

The Expression and Effect of Love

Q4. Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; Galatians 5:6, 13-14; James 2:14-17; Romans 13:8-10; John 13:35

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 tells us Christ died that we would live, not for ourselves, but for him. And that loving our neighbor both fulfills the law (Galatians 5:14) and witnesses our faith to the world (James 2:14-17.) Which do you feel more motivated by, the commands listed in Romans 13:9 or the command to “Love your neighbor as yourself?” Can you relate a personal experience where the expression of Christian love was noticed by an unbeliever?

WRAP-UP

Living in love is not an effortless task for God's children; in fact it will elude us unless we consciously choose to humble ourselves and love our brothers. The evidence of God's love in us can be seen when we forgive others, as we ourselves have been forgiven. We see the essence of true love in the costly, and selfless life of Jesus that should both motivate us and serve as our example. And it is only when God's love in us is apparent that we can be identified as His disciples and draw others to Him.

Memory Verse

By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”
John 13:35 ESV

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____
Pray for your group members' needs: _____

Challenge: Take time this week to specifically thank God for the many ways He has extended forgiveness to you, and consider who you might extend forgiveness to.

Q1 Genesis 4:4-7 ESV - 4 and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, 5 but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. 6 The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it."

Proverbs 10:12 ESV - 12 Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses.

Read Romans 12:16-21 in your Bible

Q2

1 John 3:13-14 ESV - 13 Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. 14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death

Ephesians 4:31-32 ESV - 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Psalms 130:3-4 ESV - 3 If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? 4 But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared.

Matthew 6:12-15 ESV - 12 and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. 14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Q3

1 John 4:9-10 NIV - 9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

1 John 3:16-17 NIV - 16 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. 17 If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?

John 15:9-13 NIV - 9 "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. 11 I have told

you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. 12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

Q4

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 ESV - 14 For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; 15 and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

Galatians 5:6, 13-14 ESV - 6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love. ... 13 For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. 14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

James 2:14-17 ESV - 14 What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? 17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

Romans 13:8-10 ESV - 8 Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. 9 For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

John 13:35 ESV - 35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Prayers con't
