

WORSHIP

SUGGESTED WORSHIP SONGS:

Lion and the Lamb, Magnificent, How Great Thou Art

WELCOME

Love Is. Share with your group your definition of LOVE.

WORD

EPHESIANS 5:28–30

²⁸ So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; ²⁹ for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, ³⁰ because we are members of His body.

LOVE DEFINED

In these changing times, there is one thing that never changes aside from our unchanging God, and that is “love.” Love has never changed since the dawn of creation and it will never ever change.

Love, however, is a complicated concept. If we ask a hundred people to define love, we might actually get a hundred different definitions of love. Pastors, Bible teachers and Christian parents tell us that we should love one another and that we should be a loving person so that we may please God. And yet, it is seldom that anyone ever defines what love is. If we cannot define love, how can we know that we are expressing love? And if we do not define love, then we run the danger of allowing the world to define it for us and to our young children.

If we do not know what love is, everything we know about truth, evangelism, discipleship, faith, etc. will all be like a clanging cymbal. If we say speak the truth in love, but cannot define love, how then can we speak the truth?

So what is love? Most Christians will say God is love. But this is not a definition. Others will say love is defined in **1 Corinthians 13**. However, this passage shows us what love does but not what love is. Others still will say love is a feeling. But while love can result into a feeling, it is not a feeling. Otherwise God could not command it, because one cannot command an emotion.

To command something, it must be a decision or a choice that results in an action. Since love is a command, therefore it must be a decision that results into action.

LOVE OTHERS AS OURSELVES

The Bible says that husbands ought to love their wives as their own (**Ephesians 5:28**). God also commands us to love Him with all our hearts, souls and minds, and to love our neighbors as ourselves (**Matthew 22: 37–39**). Both verses tell us that the standard for Christians in loving others: if we do not know how to love ourselves we will not know how to love our spouse, our children, our parents, and the people around us.

However, the kind of “love of self” in **2 Timothy 3:2** is different. Here, Paul used the Greek word “philautos” from two root words “phil” or “philos” which means “deep friendship” and “autos” meaning “self”. This kind of “love of self” is all about “I”, “me” and “mine.” It means satisfying and following ungodly desires (**Jude 1:18; 2 Peter 3:3**).

In **Ephesians 5** and **Matthew 22**, the word used for “love” is “agape.” It means thinking of others first, of their desire, their needs and their welfare. This may seem contradicting to the command to love others as we love ourselves but it is not. You see, in the process of thinking about the welfare of others, we make sure we are taking care of ourselves so that we could love and take care of our parents, our spouse, our children and those around us.

A classic illustration of this is taken from the standard flight safety instruction. Passengers with children are instructed to put the emergency mask on themselves first before putting on the mask of their child. If we do it the other way around, we will only put our lives and the lives of our children in danger. If we do not ‘agape’ ourselves, we will not have the capacity to ‘agape’ our loved ones.

WORD (cont'd)

LOVE PROVIDES AND PROTECTS

If the husband loves his wife as his own body, he will **nourish and cherish** her, for no one hates his own body but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does for the church which is His body (**Ephesians 5:29–30**).

Love, therefore, means to nourish and to cherish.

To nourish means to provide for someone in order to bring the person to maturity. Jesus is our example of how to grow in maturity; He kept increasing in wisdom, in stature, and in favor of God and men (**Luke 2:52**).

Love is to nourish or nurture the beloved to maturity in four areas of our lives — mental, physical, spiritual and relational. If one loves a person, he will choose to nurture himself to maturity in these four areas and will do the same for others that he loves.

Love is also to cherish which means to care for in the context of protecting. If a person loves himself then he will choose to care for and protect himself from anything or anyone that will hinder the nurturing process in his life. In simple but exacting definition from the Bible, love means protect and provide.

God is love and every commandment of God is a reflection of His character. He protects and provides. God is not a cosmic killjoy. When He gives us a commandment, it is His act of love. He loves us, so He gives us commandments to protect us and to provide for us. Our obedience to his commands are for our own good (**Deuteronomy 10:13**).

Let us choose to act to love one another as we love ourselves. Love protects and provides.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. **Love Defined.** What is love according **Ephesians 5:28–30**? How different is this definition of love from how love is commonly defined?
2. **Agape Yourself.** What is the difficulty, if any, in loving ourselves? How do you love others as you love yourself?
3. **Agape Others.** How will you provide to and protect your spouse, children, spiritual children, and others, if you truly love them Biblically?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Now knowing the definition of love from the passage, **Ephesians 5:28–30** (i.e. Love means protect and provide), how will you put love into action?

Write down specific actionable points to demonstrate your love to your family especially to those who do not know Christ yet.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of Public Servants and a God-centered Philippines
- Repentance and Salvation

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples
- Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
- Ministries and Churches worldwide

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living
- Salvation of family and friends