

## WORSHIP

### SUGGESTED WORSHIP SONGS:

Your Love Awakens Me, The Wonderful Cross, Magnificent

## WELCOME

**True Love.** Fill up the blank: True love is \_\_\_\_\_.

## WORD

### JOHN 13:34–35

<sup>34</sup> *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.*

<sup>35</sup> *By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

### LOVE IS

One of the prevailing problems in America today, and throughout the world, is depression. Based on research, it is discovered that the root of the depression problem lies in peoples' lack of connection for true relationships.

God made us for relationships and He created us for love. No wonder all of us desire love. However, not everyone understands what true love is and without discovering the truth about love, we will never experience God's design for it. Furthermore, until we know and experience God's love, we will not be able to love each other the way God wants us to love.

According to **1 John 4:7–8**, a person who does not love would not know God, because God is love. Although the very nature of God is love, we must remember that love itself is not God and love is not all there is to God. We have to connect God's love to His other attributes such as His holiness and righteousness. And so, the root of all sin is actually the failure to love God and the failure to love each other.

In **Matthew 22:37–40**, Jesus summarized all of God's commandments in the Old Testament this way: love God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength, and love others as we love ourselves. He made it unmistakably clear that love is the fulfillment of the law (**Romans 13:10**).

Then in **John 13:34–35**, Jesus defined what true love is all about in a *new* commandment that He gave. He said that if ever we are to love it is because He first loved us (**1 John 4:19**). So, how do we love one another like Christ loved us?

*Love is an unconditional commitment directed towards imperfect people, to seek their highest good, which may require sacrifice resulting in God's glory.*

### UNCONDITIONAL COMMITMENT

Because love is a command, it has to be carried out as a choice and as a commitment. It is more than just feelings and is never dependent on emotions because we cannot command emotions. There will be days when we do not feel like loving, even our own families, but we have made a commitment to love them anyway.

Worldly love is based on conditions, contributions or performance. But Jesus has chosen and has committed to love us unconditionally. Jesus Himself is the standard of what God's love is all about.

### TOWARDS IMPERFECT PEOPLE

True love is directed towards imperfect people. To love somebody perfect is not the problem; the challenge is to love imperfect people. And the hardest people to love are usually those we live with.

When Jesus gave his new commandment, He was talking to His disciples who included Judas (whom He knew would betray Him later on) and Peter (who would deny Him three times in public). They were obviously imperfect just like us, yet He loved them. He loves us just the same, not because we deserve it but because He made it a commitment to love us.

The book of Hosea gives us a picture of the radical love of God. He commanded Hosea to love Gomer, a woman of harlotry, and to continue loving her again and again (**Hosea 1:2–4**). Gomer was like the Israelites—undeserving, unfaithful, undesirable, imperfect, stubborn, an adulteress, and yet God continues to love them again and again (**3:1**).

## WORD (cont'd)

### TO SEEK THEIR HIGHEST GOOD

Many of us do not know how to truly love. We tend to be sentimental and emotional. But God's love is not sentimentalism. Instead, it seeks our highest good which may include pain and discipline (**Hebrews 12:6**). As God's children, if we do not shape up, we can expect His discipline which is for our own good (**Hebrews 12:7-8**). God disciplines us in order for us to share in His holiness (**v.10**).

### REQUIRES SACRIFICE

Jesus demonstrates His own love for us, while we were yet sinners, He died for our sins (**Romans 5:8**). He gave His life knowing that we will never earn God's love ourselves. God gave us our families so we could extend the same kind of love. For example, babies are not capable of contributing anything to the family. In fact,

they even bring mess to the house. Yet, we clean-up after them again and again and we do it simply because we love them.

### RESULTING IN GOD'S GLORY

The greatest testimony we can give to honor God is to love one another (**John 13:35**). We can start with our own family: build relationships, demonstrate true love, appreciate and affirm each other, communicate well to connect and strengthen relationships, and always make time for children.

God's love is unchanging. We must receive it and give it, starting with our family, and even to our enemies. To love is not an option but a command from God and if we truly love God we will obey Him (**John 14:15**).

*"Love others in such a way that people cannot explain your behavior apart from Jesus."*

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

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

1. **True Love.** How is true love defined according to **John 13:34-35**?
2. **I Love You.** When was the last time you demonstrated true love to others? How do you love them?
3. **Receive and Give.** Have you received the love of God? Are you giving out love? How?

## WORKS

### PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

*"Love others in such a way that people cannot explain your behavior apart from Jesus."*

List down action points that you are already doing and/or willing to do to demonstrate true love for others starting with your family then to others. Let your life be a living testimony to attract others who do not know Jesus yet and to be curious about what makes your life different.

### 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