

## WORSHIP

### SUGGESTED WORSHIP SONGS:

We Praise Your Name, Let the Praises Ring, Holy, The Love of Jesus, Build My Life, Lord I Need You

## WELCOME

What was the most selfless act that you have ever done for someone you loved?

## WORD

### 1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-5

*<sup>4</sup>Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, <sup>5</sup>does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered,*

### MATTHEW 1:18-19

*<sup>18</sup>Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup>And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly.*

Many branded items get faked these days, but even if an imitation is not the real thing, people buy it and use it because we want to feel like a million dollars even if we only have loose change left in our pockets! We may get away with wearing faked brands in clothing, jewelry, make-up, etc. in life, but how about giving and receiving fake love? Sadly, when we settle for the fake and thinking it is real, it will destroy us from the inside out. Sexual immorality is the world's version of love, and it is fake love because it fails the standard for the kind of love that God has designed us for.

### TRUE LOVE IS PURE

The Bible tells us that true love *does not act unbecomingly* (**1 Corinthians 13:5**). This means that if you truly love others, you will not want to dishonor them. You will keep your thoughts and behavior pure towards them. Such was the example shown by Joseph towards Mary (**Matthew 1:18-19**) — he was thinking of Mary's honor, not wanting to disgrace her. He could have simply allowed the Law to condemn her to death by stoning, or publicly divorced her such that everyone will know that she was pregnant before they were married. Instead, he wanted to quietly divorce her to spare her condemnation from others.

### TRUE LOVE IS SELFLESS

True love is like that. It never seeks one's own gain or pleasure above those of their beloved. Joseph's love for Mary was selfless, for even though in his mind (before the angel showed him otherwise), Mary has betrayed him and he was the aggrieved party, he still wanted to put her welfare above his own sense of "fairness" or justice.

In Jewish culture in those times, keeping yourselves pure for the wedding day was the norm. Joseph and Mary understood that to honor God, they must honor each other and avoid sexual immorality. People who love God then

and now demonstrate their love for God by keeping marriage sacred (**Hebrews 13:4**). But how about those who may have been less-than-pure in their relationships? God is a redeeming God, and many others have experienced how the love of God enabled them to start living a pure life even if they have been sexually promiscuous or had immoral relationships in the past. Our bodies belong to God and are handmade by Him; we are not to use our bodies in ways that dishonor God (**1 Corinthians 6:18-20**; **Psalm 139:13**).

The Lord is also **for** our bodies, not against it. In fact, God invented sex and designed for it to be pleasurable, a blessing in the context of marriage between a biological man and a biological woman. If the gift of sex is used outside of this context, it may still be pleasurable for a time but sooner or later, the consequences of this violation of God's design will be disastrous one way or another.

### OUR PROPER RESPONSE TO TRUE LOVE

**Romans 12:1-2** outlines how we are to rightly respond to God's true love for us. Let us say "I do" to God before we even say "I do" to our future spouse by offering our bodies as a living sacrifice to the Lord. How are we to do this in practical ways?

**Practice purity in our marriage.** One way to do this is to guard what you watch on cable TV or Netflix, YouTube, etc. Protect your marriage from anything impure. Let your prayer to God be that your passion and attraction only be directed towards your spouse.

**Practice purity at home.** Keep your home a safe place especially for your children. Keep it free from pornography (internet, movies, music) and any form of abuse. The Bible has a stern warning especially for anyone who will cause "little ones" to stumble (**Matthew 18:6**)!

## WORD (cont'd)

**Practice purity in your youth.** 1 Timothy 4:12 is a command to young people to set an example in purity for others, even older adults. If you grew up in a family where purity in marriage and the home was not evident, you do not have to follow that pattern in your life. Leave a positive and godly mark on your parents, your siblings, friends, and others around you!

**Practice purity in your thoughts.** Lust starts in the mind, and adultery is first committed in your heart (Matthew 5:27-28). Make a firm decision to guard your eyes and make your eyes your partners in purity, not your accomplices in sin. Like Job of old, make a covenant with your eyes not to look on with lust on another person, virtually or in reality (Job 31:1). Instead, keep your life pure as you let your eyes

feast on God's words and treasure them in your heart as you go after Jesus with all your heart (Psalm 119:9-11).

**Practice purity every day.** Romans 13:14 tells us to put on Jesus Christ, live everyday with the Lord's protection, live to please God, and to not just to do as we please. Getting out of a bad habit means we need to replace it with a good one such as reading the Bible daily, prayer and accountability, not spending time alone with anyone who could be a source of temptation, using internet accountability software, etc..

Practicing purity (Philippians 2:12-13) is simply our proper response to God's TRUE LOVE that is pure and selfless. He loved us unconditionally as imperfect people (while we were still sinners), and it required the sacrifice of His beloved and only Son, Jesus Christ to save us so that we may experience the highest good — God's own love for us (Romans 5:6,8).

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

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

1. **Heart Check.** How does your love for others compare to the Bible's definition of true love?
2. **Setting It Right.** Based on your insights from this lesson, how will you love your spouse, children, co-workers, friends, etc. more selflessly?
3. **Living It Out.** In what areas in everyday life will you need to practice purity better? What does it mean for you to "put on Jesus Christ" in response to God's TRUE LOVE for you?

## WORKS

### PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for families whose relationships are breaking up or couples who are struggling in their marriage. Seek God's intervention for redemption and renewal for these families and marriages. Find compassionate ways this week to share God's TRUE LOVE for them through Jesus and what He has done on the cross to make God's redeeming love available for them.

### 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
- 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