

LOVE SERIES Ep. 1: LOVE IS, LOVE DOES

FEBRUARY 7, 2021

WORSHIP

Because of Your Love, One Thing Remains, Man of Sorrows, The Love of God

WELCOME

Even as we are still in a pandemic, what do you look forward to in February, tagged as the “love month”?

WORD

1 JOHN 4:7-11

⁷ Beloved, let's love one another; for love is from God, and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ The one who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ By this the love of God was revealed in us, that God has sent His only Son into the world so that we may live through Him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

February is known as the love month and we begin a new Sunday message series—the LOVE Series. Episode One “Love Is, Love Does!” is about understanding what true love is. It emphasizes the definition (LOVE IS) and the practice (LOVE DOES) of love. God wants us to experience true love; but many times, we fall into the trap of counterfeit love which the world defines as “*a feeling of deep affection or fondness for someone typically arising from a recognition of attractive qualities*” (Oxford English Dictionary). The focus is on emotions or the strong affection for another arising out of kinship or personal ties and the attraction is often based on sexual desires.

The Bible gives us different Greek translations for love: **eros** (erotic love), **phileo** (brotherly love), **storge** (love of parents to children), and **agape** (an unconditional commitment). The word used in the passage is **agape**. It is a sacrificial love; a giving kind of love and was made popular by the early Christians.

How then should we define LOVE?

1. LOVE IS AN UNCONDITIONAL COMMITMENT...

Oftentimes, the hardest people to love are the ones closest to us. We know their flaws, lapses, and mistakes giving us reasons to love or not to love them. Not with God! He shows us that love is a choice; a decision we commit to do. **Deuteronomy 7:7-8** shows God's love to the people of Israel. God chose Israel not because they were deserving. The choice came from God Himself. God's love comes with complete knowledge of our flaws, lapses, and mistakes; yet He loves us still. In **Jeremiah 31:3**, this commitment to love was taken very seriously by God—an **everlasting love** made available to us even before we were born.

John 13:1 tells us on the last night of Jesus that “**He loved them to the end**” including **Peter** who later on denied Jesus 3 times, **Thomas** who doubted the resurrected Christ, **James** and **John** who fled away upon Jesus' arrest along with the rest of the disciples. He loved them **INSPIRE OF**; such is the love of God. It is an unconditional commitment.

This love is supernatural. In **Romans 5:5-6**, we read that the “**love of God**” has been “**poured out within our hearts**”. It is given to us by God through the Holy Spirit. We are able to love because God's love is poured out into our hearts!

True love is from God. It is considered to be the fruit of the Holy Spirit alongside other virtues in **Galatians 5:22-23**. If you don't have love and these other virtues, you might be trying to live the Christian life in your own power. We are not the source of true love. We are the distributors of true love! If you truly have Christ, you will be able to love unconditionally. This kind of love doesn't have emotions as its master, but the WILL. It is a choice and decision we have to make. The enemy of true love is oftentimes “feelings”—the heart is deceitful above all things (**Jeremiah 17:9**).

2. TOWARDS IMPERFECT PEOPLE...

NO ONE IS PERFECT. The command to love one another is for imperfect people! **Mark 12:31** tells us to love our “**neighbors**”. God commands us to direct our love towards imperfect people because love is not mere sentimentalism. Since LOVE IS from God, we ought to follow Him in how He loves us. **Romans 5:6** shows the level of commitment God has to love us this way. He loved us while we were yet sinners. **1 Peter 3:1**, though directed to wives, cites an example for all of us of the transformative power of true love!

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3. TO SEEK THEIR HIGHEST GOOD...

LOVE IS also purposeful. It seeks the highest good of the person being loved. Again, the model for this is God's love. **Hebrews 12:6** gives us a picture of this kind of love that is not all sentiment or feelings but includes discipline! An example of this is when parents do not spoil their children or give in to every whim or cry. It seeks for what is best because love aims for the highest good of the other. We can place our confidence in God's love because it has sought for and continues to seek our highest good. If we have received this kind of love and are experiencing the joy of being accepted, forgiven, loved, and led to what is good; then we will be able to love others just the same!

4. WHICH OFTEN REQUIRES SACRIFICE...

Romans 5:8 tells us plainly that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. We need to not only know how to define love, we also need to practice it. Jesus has demonstrated this sacrificial love for all of us. **1 John 4:10-11** says that God put this love into action by sending His Son as a propitiation—to satisfy divine retribution in our place, for our sins. Jesus died on the cross for the full satisfactory payment for our sins. If we are loved by God this way, we ought to love others this way too. Love is not just a mere concept; it is tested in action. It can be painful too because sacrificing means giving up something valuable to restore or continue loving. Sometimes, it means sacrificing time, effort, or letting go of our selfish desires to give way to the needs of others. We have to be able to put this knowledge and understanding into action because LOVE DOES. This is the TRUE TEST of love!

5. RESULTING IN GOD'S GLORY!

We ought to be **God-centered** when it comes to loving. **John 13:34-35** introduces us to a new commandment. The newness is HOW we are to love one another. **We must emulate the kind of love Jesus has given to us.** All men will know that you are a follower of Jesus **IF YOU HAVE LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER.** We are to love as Christ has loved us. Some people think that the greatest evidence of intimacy with God is power, success, or passion. The truth is the greatest evidence of God's presence in your life is **LOVE.** Are you growing in love for GOD and for one another? Francis Schaeffer said, "**Love is the final apologetic. It is the defense for which there is no defense.**" May we all experience this love of God and be conduits of this amazing love!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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

1. Self-Check.

Why is it important to know what TRUE LOVE is?

2. Setting It Right

What does it mean when we say we are distributors of God's love and not the source of it?

3. Living It Out

What are practical ways you can show TRUE LOVE to specific people this week? Is there someone you want to apologize to, that you have not shown the love of God to?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for people to turn their hearts to God—the Source and Giver of Love. Intentionally look for people who are in need of love and care within your reach (home, neighborhood, workplace, Dgroup, etc.) and extend an act of love to them this week. Share the message of God's love through Jesus Christ to 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
- Wisdom and timely, effective response to the pandemic

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



10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

1 John 4:10