

Love

Lesson 01 of the series, "Love & Commitment"

I. Love is the greatest thing in the world.

"If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing. If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing." 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 (NLT)

"For the commandments say, 'You must not commit adultery. You must not murder. You must not steal. You must not covet. These—and other such commandments—are summed up in this one commandment: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" Romans 13:9 (NLT)

Life Application: "Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples." John 13:35 (NLT)

II. Love puts others first.

"Love is not jealous or boastful or proud ...It does not demand its own way." 1 Corinthians 13:4-5 (NLT)

Life Application for him: "For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her." Ephesians 5:25 (NLT)

Life Application for her: "Wives, understand and support your husbands by submitting to them in ways that honor the Master." Colossians 3:18 (MSG)

Life Application for both: "Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross." Philippians 2:3-8 (NLT)

III. Love is kind.

"Love is patient and kind. Love is not ...rude... It is not irritable..." 1 Corinthians 13:4-5 (NLT)

Life Application for him: "Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly." Colossians 3:19 (NLT)

Life Application for her: "She tormented him with her nagging day after day until he was sick to death of it." Judges 16:16 (NLT)

Life Application for both: "Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other." Romans 12:10 (NLT)

IV. Love seeks resolution **NOT** blame.

"(Love) keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out." 1 Corinthians 13:5-6 (NLT)

Life Application for him: "An angry man stirs up dissension, and a hot-tempered one commits many sins." Proverbs 29:22 (NIV)

Life Application for her: "A quarrelsome wife is as annoying as constant dripping on a rainy day." Proverbs 27:15 (NLT)

Life Application for both: "'Don't sin by letting anger control you.' Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil." Ephesians 4:26-27 (NLT)

"Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love." Ephesians 4:2 (NLT)

V. Love believes the best.

"Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance."

1 Corinthians 13:7 (NLT)

Life Application: "Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony." Colossians 3:12-14 (NLT)

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Connect Group Questions.

To prepare for this week's meeting, take some time to focus on the following questions and write out a few brief answers. Be prepared to share them with your group.

1. Looking back at your notes from this week's message on "Love" was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?
2. Discuss the following statements which give three reasons why love is a choice:
 - Love always means risking pain.
 - Love always involves sacrifice.
 - Love always requires forgiveness.

Share a time in your life when you had to sacrifice, risk pain or forgive someone you love. Why did you do it? Would you do it again? Why? Why not?

3. Read Ephesians 5:21-33. What does it mean to "submit to one another" in marriage. What role does God assign to the husband? What sacrifices does he need to make? What role does God assign to the wife? What sacrifices does she need to make? How does the relationship between husband and wife mirror the relationship between Christ and his Church? Why does Paul describe this as a great mystery?
4. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 and Philippians 2:1-4. What does love look like? Why is love more than a feeling? Why is commitment an important part of love? ...of marriage? What is the difference between love and "falling in love"? Why don't the goose bumps last forever? What should we do when they fade?
5. Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-3. Do you agree that love is greater than knowledge and faith and charity? Why / why not? Who is the most loving person you know? Describe him/her.
6. Read 1 John 3:16 and Romans 5:8-11. What did Jesus teach us about love?

Resources

Love & Respect by Dr. Emerson Eggerichs, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2004

The Five Love Languages by Dr. Gary Chapman, Northfield Publishing, 1995