



NEW TESTAMENT • LESSON 76

LOVING ONE ANOTHER

The Gospel is our motive to love.



MONDAY

THE STORY: 1 JOHN 3:9-12

True love flows from the gospel. Love in our culture is motivated by selfish gain. We tend to love in order to get love. When our love is selfishly motivated, we withdraw it the moment we stop getting what we want. Love in God's kingdom is inspired and motivated by the example of unselfish love we see in the gospel. John is moving in his discussion on love to this point: "This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (1 John 3:10).

When our love flows from grace and is motivated by a desire to glorify God by following Christ's example, we will continue to love no matter what people do to us. Husbands love their wives as Christ loved, whether their wives respect them or not. Wives persevere in love and respect for their husbands in obedience to God regardless of whether their husbands return the love and care. The same is true for every relationship, even with our enemies!

TALK ABOUT IT:

What kinds of things do we say we love? (In our society, we say we "love" anything good. Help your children see this by drawing them out extensively. We say we love

pizza and popcorn, love sunny days and rainy nights, or love a good movie and a good nap.)

How is this different from the kind of love John speaks of? (None of those demonstrations of love are motivated by the gospel; they are motivated by our emotions.)

If we love someone based on how they make us feel, what will we do when they hurt us? (We will withhold our love, or worse we will try to hurt them in some way.)

PRAY:

Ask God to pour His Spirit into the lives of each member of your family that they might believe and then demonstrate gospel-motivated love.



T U E S D A Y

THE STORY: 1 JOHN 3:13-15

True love marks our conversion. Love motivated by the example of Christ's love in the gospel should mark every Christian. This kind of love is a product of our conversion. We know we have passed from death into life if we have this love; it is a key evidence of our conversion. That does not mean gospel-motivated love is automatic. If it were automatic, John would have no need to encourage his hearers toward it.

Unbelievers are incapable of this love; they are slaves to sin. But we who know “the love the Father has lavished on us” should live and must live gospel-inspired, love-filled lives. The person who consistently demonstrates God's kind of love has confidence in his salvation. The person who won't forgive, or who can't find motivation in the cross to love others, should doubt the sincerity of his or her conversion.

TALK ABOUT IT:

Why is gospel-motivated love a good evidence of our conversion? (Any time the cross of Jesus is at the center of our motive, it is evidence that the cross of Jesus is at the center of our lives. In other words, gospel motivation is what it means to follow Christ!)

Do Christians love perfectly? (No, we continue to sin and often love for selfish reasons. We must, however, always remember that we don't have to be selfish. We have been freed from the slavery of sin to do good works.)

PRAY:

Ask God to help each member of your family demonstrate gospel-centered love.



WEDNESDAY
WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?

THE STORY: 1 JOHN 3:16

We obey in faith not in works. We obey because we have salvation in Christ; we do not obey in order to earn salvation in Christ. We love others because He first loved us. Once again we see the gospel clearly outlined in Scripture. Verse 16 tells us that the ultimate example of love is Jesus laying down His life for us. Jesus did just what John is exhorting us to do. He saw that we were “in need” (verse 17) and gave up His life for us. Jesus’ sacrifice motivates us to love one another. Our motivation for loving someone is grounded upon what Jesus did for us, not upon what others have done for us. This is how we can find the grace to love even our enemies.

TALK ABOUT IT:

This passage tells us to love one another because of the example of Christ. Do we always live that way? (No, we don't always live that way.)

What are some examples of how you struggle to love your brother or sister? (Parents help the children see the times when they get angry etc.)

Jesus loved us by giving up His life for us on the cross. What kinds of things might we give up for our brothers and sisters? (Most of us are not going to follow Jesus' example and actually die for others. Instead, we will be called to sacrifice our preferences and wants for the good of others. We can love others by giving up of ourselves in service to them as well.)

Can you think of how others have sacrificed for you? (Mom and dad help the children see how the service and sacrifice of others has helped your children. Do not be afraid to use your own example of providing food and shelter for your children. Just as we are to love others because of Christ's example, so we can help encourage others to follow along by our own example of love by sacrificing for others. The apostle Paul put it this way, "follow my example as I follow the example of Christ," [1 Corinthians 11:1].)

PRAY:

As God to help each person in your family follow Christ's example of giving up of themselves for the benefit of others.



THURSDAY

THE STORY: 1 JOHN 3:17-24

True love demands action. Gospel-motivated love is practical. Because our example is Christ, who laid down his life for us, we know love is about giving, sacrifice, and action. James said it this way: "Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, 'Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead" (James 2:15-17). John tells us not to love with words but with deeds.

TALK ABOUT IT:

What does it mean to love with deeds? (We should not just tell people we love them; we should serve them.)

What kinds of things could you do to demonstrate love by actions in your family? (Parents, draw your children out. Make sure they see that all our love should be primarily motivated from a desire to glorify God by following Christ's example and not merely to please their parents.)

PRAY:

Ask God to help your family members remember what Jesus did for us that they might be motivated to serve one another in love.



**FRIDAY
ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS**

THE STORY: PSALM 35:19,20

Jesus connects this passage to himself in John 15:24,25 when he informed His disciples that they would be persecuted just as He was. The enemies of Jesus hated Him for no reason. Jesus told his disciples that they would be persecuted because they follow Him. John echoes this in his letter when he tells us, “Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you” (1 John 3:13).

TALK ABOUT IT:

What was Jesus' response to those who were His enemies? (Jesus did not defend Himself on the road to the cross, where He willingly gave up His life for us.)

What should our response be to those who hate and persecute us? (Jesus said, “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.”)