

DAY 1 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

What is the difference between conditional and unconditional love?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

Scripture:

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**

Jacob's well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime. Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink." He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food. The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans.

She said to Jesus, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?" Jesus replied, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water." **John 4:6-10 NLT**

Sermon Insights:

If we follow Jesus, then we have to love each other. Do we only love people who:

- Believe like we believe?
- Think like we think?
- Act like we act?
- Vote like we vote?
- Who look like we look?

No, we are to simply love people.

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Do you have any "rules" you were taught growing up about "who" you should love? Are they the same rules Jesus has?

Are you tempted to use your preferences as an excuse to not love certain people?

What social, moral, political, and racial differences did Jesus overlook to show love to the Samaritan woman outcast?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, thank you for loving *even me*. Forgive me for holding up false pretense and selfish preference as reasons not to love. Fill me with the love and openness that your Holy Spirit longs to love people with, and use me to bring your love to a sad and hurting world.

DAY 2 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

From the sermon: “An old African proverb states: ‘If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem.’” Thoughts?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

Scripture:

Love is patient and kind.

Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude.

It does not demand its own way.

It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged.

It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out.

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

Prophecy and speaking in unknown languages and special knowledge will become useless. But love will last forever! **1 Corinthians 13:4-8 NLT**

“For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. **John 3:16 NLT**”

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

It is very tempting to point at the “news” or the “world” or the “culture” and make sweeping judgments without looking at ourselves first.

How are you going to be personally patient and kind today?

Do you have any jealousy or self-serving pride or rudeness you need to confess?

Where will you choose NOT to demand your own way today?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, I recognize that while there is much brokenness in the world, you made a personal sacrifice to love us through sending your Son...and you have asked me to make a personal sacrifice to follow you. Teach me to love others as you love me.

DAY 3 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

Who in your life do you admire most for having enduring love?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

Scripture:

Love is patient and kind.

Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude.

It does not demand its own way.

It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged.

It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out.

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

Prophecy and speaking in unknown languages and special knowledge will become useless. But love will last forever! **1 Corinthians 13:4-8 NLT**

Can anything ever separate us from Christ’s love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? (As the Scriptures say, “For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.”) No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.

And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Romans 8:35-39 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Are you willing to “lose the records” of being wronged?

Are you tempted to “rejoice about injustice” when people who anger you are mistreated?

Can you wish for someone to have negative consequences for their actions and still have their best interest in mind?

The early Christians (and many throughout the world today) suffered greatly. Paul reminded us that difficulty in life does not mean God is against us or absent from our situation. Rather, his love for us endures through everything. How is this a comfort to you?

How would you describe God’s heart for you?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, thank you for not keeping a record of my wrongs but allowing Jesus to take my guilt so I could go free. That is the basis for my love and forgiveness of others. Thank you for not letting anything separate me from your love!

DAY 4 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

What is one belief or perspective that has changed for you since childhood? What is one that has stayed the same?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

Scripture:

Now our knowledge is partial and incomplete, and even the gift of prophecy reveals only part of the whole picture! But when the time of perfection comes, these partial things will become useless. When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things. Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely. Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love. **1 Corinthians 13:9-13 NLT**

Sermon Insights:

If unloving behavior takes place, we need to help people “grow up”! We need to be able to say, “It’s time for you to put childish ways behind you. We are the Body of Christ, and being the Body of Christ and having an unloving spirit don’t go together.”

Proper doctrine is essential – but proper doctrine without love is no longer proper doctrine.

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

There is some confusion on what Paul meant about the “time of perfection.” Regardless, love will always be a part of God’s expectation on our lives, when we are childish and immature and when we are grown up and mature.

Does it give you confidence to know that God has a long-term plan to make everything right through Jesus?

How can love keep your heart pure?

Do you need someone to lovingly confront you and tell you to “grow up” in a certain area of your life?

Do you have someone in your life you need to lovingly confront?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, thank you for calling me to be childlike in my faith and grown up in my maturity. Help me to focus on loving others and wait patiently for you to make all things right one day.

DAY 5 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

Who in your life needs to be loved the most?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

Scripture:

Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ?

Any comfort from his love?

Any fellowship together in the Spirit?

Are your hearts tender and compassionate?

Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose. 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. Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. **Philippians 2:1-11 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

How would you honestly answer the four questions Paul starts with? The assumption is that you would be experiencing these gifts from Jesus. If not, why not?

Paul wrote, “Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.” How can you live this out today?

What surprises you most about the attitude Christ Jesus had? Take another look...is that the “Jesus” you know personally?

How are you going to imitate the attitude of Jesus today?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, thank you for using your power for good. Instead of punishing us as we deserved, you gave us undeserved grace and kindness. Teach us to humble ourselves so you can use us to spread your kindness and love!