



LESSON 3 // LOVE IS

Big Idea: What we all need most in our lives is to receive love and to give love to others. Part of what makes this challenging for us is our confusion over the definition of love.

In the New Testament, the Greek word *agape* describes God's love for us and provides the basis for understanding what love is. *Agape* love is a way of thinking. To love others, we must choose to think the right way about their value and worth, needs, challenges and pain, perspectives, vulnerabilities and insecurities. This love is also a way of acting, as 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 beautifully captures with 15 statements about the actions of love.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (NIV) *Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*

1 John 4:7-8 (NIV) *Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.*

Start Talking:

According to 1 Corinthians 13:6, "Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth." Why is it so important that love is based on truth? What happens when that's not the case?

Start Thinking:

Read Mark 12:30. In what ways is love "far more than a feeling"? How is your mind (or thinking) involved in genuine love for God and others?

Read 1 Peter 2:9-10. What do you learn from these verses about God's love for you as one of His "chosen people"? How can you apply this to your love for others?

Read Matthew 5:43-46. What is the most challenging part of these commands of Jesus for you to live out? Why?

Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-8. How would you summarize *agape* love in action based on these verses?

Start Praying and Doing:

Pray that your love will be expressed in tangible ways that point people to the Lord, the Source of all genuine *agape* love (1 John 4:8).

Print out 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, place it in a prominent place where you will see it regularly (like your refrigerator, dashboard, etc.) and commit to memorizing one or more of these verses. Also look for ways to demonstrate the qualities you are memorizing in your daily interactions.