



LESSON 4 // LIFTING THE LIMITS OF YOUR LOVE

Big Idea: It's challenging for us to love others because we're all self-centered. Our selfish attitudes and actions get in the way and limit our love.

To lift these limits, we need to start with ourselves and deal with the "plank" of selfishness in our own eye. This means we understand that loving others is a command from God (not just a suggestion we can ignore), we consistently practice loving the people He has put in our lives, and we believe the promise of great reward that comes with this kind of love.

Matthew 7:3-4 (NIV) *Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," when all the time there is a plank in your own eye.*

1 John 3:18 (TLB) *Little children, let us stop just saying we love people; let us really love them, and show it by our actions.*

Start Talking:

How was love expressed in your family growing up? What were some of the challenges in giving and receiving love that you may have faced?

Start Thinking:

Read Matthew 7:3-4. How do these verses speak to you about your responsibilities in relationships?

Read Ephesians 4:2 and Colossians 3:13-14. What difference does it make when you are humble, forgiving and patient with others? What happens when these qualities are missing in your relationships?

Read 1 John 3:18. What are some of the practical, tangible ways you can show love in your daily interactions rather than just talking about loving others?

Read 1 Corinthians 13:8. How has God demonstrated His unfailing love to you? How should this inspire and encourage you in loving others?

Start Praying and Doing:

Pray that God will help you consistently recognize and repent of selfishness in you that limits your love.

The old expression says "practice makes perfect." This week and in the weeks ahead, put aside selfish excuses and look for specific practical opportunities to obey God's command to love the following people in your life: family members, friends and neighbors, fellow believers, the "unlovely," enemies and people who don't know Jesus. As you do this, expect God to respond in amazing ways that will bless others and bless you because His love never fails!