DONE - Week 3 - Walking in Love: Reflecting God's Heart

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1 INTRO

APPLICATION

Week 3 - Walking in Love: Reflecting God's Heart

"In With the New" Series

Last Class

Next WED is Night of Worship & Prayer

PRAY

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APPLICATION

What does it mean to Walk In Love?

Can we start with what it's NOT?

Jesus is not your boyfriend - He is a holy God to be feared.

Love isn't just an emotion or feeling - it's the very **character** of God.

He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

1 John 4:8 (NKJV)

How Do We Walk In Love?

Therefore, **be imitators of God**, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Ephesians 5:1-2 (NKJV)

Imitator - Greek - mimētēs - "one who emulates," - English word "mimic."

as beloved children - highlights the natural tendency of children to imitate their parents.

What does it mean to be imitators of God?

Means to embody His qualities and live according to His principles:

1. **Walk in Love:**
    - Unconditional Love
    - Compassion and Kindness
2. **Live Righteously:**
    - Holiness
    - Integrity
3. **Forgiveness:**
    - Mercy and Grace: Extending forgiveness and grace to others, just as God forgives us. Letting go of grudges and showing mercy.
4. **Humility:**
    - Servanthood: Putting others before ourselves and serving with a humble heart.
5. **Faithfulness :**
    - Commitment to God

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APPLICATION

Practical Ways to "be imitators of God"

- **Daily Devotion**: Commit time in prayer, worship, and Bible study.
- **Acts of Kindness**: Serve others and meeting their needs.
- **Encourage and Support**: Lift up people with your words and actions.

Death and life are in the power of the tongue,
And those who love it will eat its fruit.

Proverbs 18:21 (NKJV)

- **Reflect Christ's Character**: Reflect His character in all areas of your life.

NOTE: We limit our understanding of God's love because we place it in our personal experience box.

We see love as a fleeting feeling, a momentary emotion that changes with time and circumstance.

God's Love is not passive or responsive - It is the driving force behind His actions, the foundation of His relationship with us, and the standard by which we are called to live.

Our every gesture of love OR lack of - has the potential to impact someone's life profoundly.

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APPLICATION

We often misunderstand God's love because we associate it with how **we experience love in a natural** realm.

We miss out on the eternal, **sacrificial nature of God's supernatural character of love** if we do not understand what His love means.

Let's look at three dimensions of divine love that help us understand the distinctions.

Agape Love: This unconditional love mirrors God's infinite love for us. We are to love without expecting anything in return.

This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

John 15:12-13 (NKJV)

What does laying one’s life down look like?

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:8 (NKJV)

Philia Love (**FEE-lee-uh**): Brotherly love emphasizes the importance of deep, meaningful relationships within our community. Based on mutual respect and care.

Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another.

Romans 12:10 (NKJV)

Eros Love: This love celebrates the passionate, intimate connection within marriage, reflecting God's design for marital union and the beauty of deep, personal love.

Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Genesis 2:24 (NKJV)

AND>>>

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—For your love is better than wine.

Song of Solomon 1:2 (NKJV)

All that God creates Satan counterfeits.

Eros Love was created by God to enjoy the intimacy of a marriage relationship.

Satan **counterfeited it into Erotica** to distort God’s plan with:

1. Promoting Immorality

Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s."

1 Corinthians 6:18-20 (NKJV)

2. Objectifying Individuals

3. Pornography and Lust

4. Devaluing Marriage

Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge."

Hebrews 13:4 (NKJV)

5. Distorting Identity

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APPLICATION

The Body of Christ Confuses Agape and Phila love.

We expect the congregation to become our buddies instead of our co-warriors.

Walking in Love means reflecting God

God says,

If you love Me, keep My commandments.

John 14:15 (NKJV)

He does not say, “Make me feel good at church on Sundays and if you don’t wave hello, I’m going to another church.”

To walk in Love – God’s love – you must elevate your understanding of what love is beyond what we currently understand and have experienced in the natural realm.

Agape Love is to **“be imitators of God”** by loving others selflessly, without expecting anything in return.

EX: Years ago, Leah was at altar ministering with a group of other women. It was heavy intercession as people fell out in the spirit, receiving baptism of holy spirit and coming to Christ.

In that moment, she realized she did not personally like the women.

They didn’t hang out and she never had or would visit with them on a friendship level.

But, she never once hesitated to go into spiritual warfare with them.

That’s when the difference between sacrificial and conditional love clicked for her.

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

John 3:16-17 (NKJV)

I’m glad Jesus did not make our salvation conditional based upon whether He liked us or not.

We are on assignment and orders from God to:

Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, “‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Matthew 22:36-40 (NKJV)

God’s character of love is not based upon like, approval, attraction.

It starts with Obedience!

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APPLICATION

Setting God's Love in Action

1. Self-Compassion

For you were bought at a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

1 Corinthians 6:20 (NKJV)

- Accept God's love for you - many and mostly men - Do not know how to Receive love. We can learn - Renew Our Minds.

Average adult man has 0 to 1 friend - We can do better!

- Extend grace to yourself

2. Daily Choices

Let all that you do be done with love.

1 Corinthians 16:14 (NKJV)

- Choose kindness in small moments
- Practice empathy before judgment
- Respond with patience

3. Vulnerable Love

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up.

1 Corinthians 13:4 (NKJV)

- Risk being misunderstood
- Keep loving despite rejection
- Stay open-hearted

The Challenge of Love

Love isn't always comfortable. It means:

- Forgiving when it's hard
- Serving without recognition
- Loving those who can't or won't love back

Reflection Questions

1. Who is God calling you to love sacrificially this week?

2. What practical step can you take today to walk in love?

3. How has God's unconditional love changed your life?

4. Where do you need courage to love vulnerably?

Weekly Challenge

Choose one person who is difficult to love and commit to:

- Pray for them daily
- Perform one unexpected act of kindness
- Look for opportunities to show Christ's love

Love is not about perfection, but progression.

Each small step of obedience matters in our journey of becoming more like Christ.