

Basics of Love, 1John4:7-21

40 Days of Love #0

◇ **Intro:** Welcome to the 40 Days of Love Kick off. So, love. We use the term a lot of ways. Surprisingly, children will say “I love you” to parents that beat them. Parents say “I love you” to children they hardly talk to. A young man thinks that because she makes his socks roll up and down when she walks by that he’s “in love”. Apparently love is something like a ditch because people say they fall into it, like its a trap. We also say we love Krispy Kreems donuts, but surely this is different from say, loving our spouse! Just what is love and why talk about it? I’m glad you asked. God has a lot to say about love, as you might imagine. (Just a few quick points because we’re only going to spend half our worship time here. The other half we’ll spend in groups at tables to get a little flavor for the study groups we will provide for this series. We encourage everyone to sign up for a weekly study group for the next 6 weeks.)

◇ **1. We love because God loves us.** v19

◇ A. Lets think about it. Why didn’t God just create us and then whisk us off to heaven? Huh? I mean, why sit here 60, 70, 80 years in a broken world full of suffering, cancer, problems and politics?

◇ 1) Well, maybe he put us here to work for God. But the Bible says he’s self-sufficient and owns everything.

◇ 2) Maybe he put us here to try and earn eternal life. But heaven is the free gift of God earned for us by Christ’s death for our sins! **v9-10**

◇ 3) Maybe God leaves us here to save others, make more Christians before we go to heaven. But Jesus himself said God could make followers, children of Abraham out of any stone lying around in the dust.

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◇ So what's the real main thing? Why did God make us and leave us here? It's like asking "What's the highest aim of a human being?" or "What's the main thing we should do?" or "What is the greatest commandment?" Is it coming to you now?

◇ *"Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?" Jesus replied, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the other commandments and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments."*
Matthew 22:36-40, NLT.

◇ B. Listen people, I've shared this before, and I'm going to keep telling you this as long as God calls me to preach; God made you in order to love you.

◇ He does not need you. He is not lonely without you. You are never going to become him, ie, become a god. You do not complete him. He can do everything you're doing faster himself. And yet he made you!

◇ So stop beating yourself up, or avoid praying to him because you think you don't measure up, or being down on yourself thinking you're not getting anything of significance done on his earth. It's no news to him! It's nothing new to him that you're a guilty, sinful person! But he didn't make you primarily to be good, or correct, or achieving. So why are you and I around.

He has love overflowing himself. **v8, 16**

◇ C. And a consequence of this is, as he fills us up, we tip over and pour out his love on someone else. He is the water supply. We are the sprinklers.—Think about it? How does any human experience the

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love of a God? Perhaps the primary way is through another human.

v7a, 12

◇ So why are we here? To experience and respond to, and give expression to the love of God in the world. Human life is about producing this character of God we call love.

◇ *"Let love be your greatest aim." 1Cor.14:1*

◇ At the end of your life, when you sit in a nursing home somewhere and eat strained peas like everybody else, guess what –none of the people around you care how much money you made, or if you have a cottage, or whether you were on TV, or if you invented something special that everyone uses today. All they will even notice is if you're a loving person. If you are and were, there will be people who come see you!

◇ **2. Love is a Choice and a commitment**

◇ It's important to think about because a lot of people believe myths about love. They think it should be effortless, a chemistry thing. They think loving people is like loving beer or chocolate: something in it makes you happy. That's not love.

◇ **A.** Real love is a choice to be compassionate or caring regardless of the object of your compassion. It's easy to love people who love you. It's easy to love people who smell good, look good, talk nice. But that's not christian love, its not God-type love.

◇ *"If you love only those who love you, what good is that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that." Matthew 5:46, 47, NLT.*

◇ What about irritable people? Different people? Difficult people? Complainers? Two verses earlier Jesus said this...

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- ◇ "But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous." Matthew 5:44, 45, NIV.
- ◇ You see, love is an action we can choose even when we feel opposing emotions. For example, you'll wipe your kids nose no problem, but the other kid? Well, that's really... their family... issue, isn't it? The kid will surely survive until his parents show up!
- ◇ **B.** Christ-like love is agape love. Its the choice to give oneself that has nothing to do with the person you give it to. Philip Watson said, *"It is neither kindled by the attractiveness, nor quenched by the unattractiveness of it's object. It is seen most clearly in God's love for sinners."*
 - ◇ A wife stays with an alcoholic husband even though her erotic love is all but vanished. She loves him with the will to do him good even with no return on her investment. This is God-style love. Commitment. Covenants are broken, says Smedes, because people live by eros alone and turn their back on the power of agape.
- ◇ **3. I can become more loving than I am.**
- ◇ **A.** In other words, love is a skill you can learn. Yes folks, you too can become a master lover in just 6 simple steps. Seriously, did you ever notice that God actually wants you to become a highly skilled lover?
 - ◇ Know how you learn it? by hanging around with God because that's who he is. You find out about how he feels about you. How much he thinks about you. How much he loves you by name. He's the spring from which love flows. You can learn to feel it.

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- ◇ "If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him."
1 John 4:15, 16, NIV.
- ◇ Think of someone in your life who is always belly-aching or judging or pointing out how wrong other people are. Or think of someone who is sarcastic, or self-righteous – basically not loving.
 - ◇ Let me tell you something about that person you're thinking of. They are like that because they don't feel loved. They don't feel good about themselves. They don't feel forgiven. They don't feel grace.
 - ◇ It can stem from all kinds of things in this fallen world: being abused as a child, being abandoned, being lonely, being betrayed, being neglected, being rejected. Being shamed, being constantly criticized.
 - ◇ They might feel guilt, or like they have to do more to measure up; work longer, sleep less, impress more, play more skillfully, be more godly. Some of them are *angrily* trying to be *happy* christians. People who feel bad about themselves also feel bad about everyone around them.
- ◇ People are like a toothpaste tube. What's in there is what comes out when you squeeze it.
 - ◇ When you squeeze the heart of a human, whatever's inside comes out. *If unloving things are coming out, it's because they don't feel love inside. You cannot give to others something you don't possess. Unlovely people are unloved people. It is hurt people that hurt people.*

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◇ Unloving people need to get near love, ie. they need to get near God. That's also why we worship weekly. That's why we meet in small groups. We want the love of God to rub off on us!

◇ **Conclusion:** *You know what makes Christianity different from other faiths? Its love-based. Our creation was for the purpose of being loved. Our salvations was a gift of love we didn't earn. Our sanctification is living a life of love in giving to others as we have been given.* The key to becoming a more loving person is letting Jesus Christ love through you. Pray for that!

◇ I hope in these 40 days you will let the Holy Spirit do some healing surgery on your soul. You are loved. I hope you will commit yourself to 1) worshipping Jesus here on Sundays & listening to the messages (also on web) 2) get together with a few friends weekly to take it further.

◇ Dear Jesus, I want to be more loving. I want to work on my relationships. I want to learn to love you with all of my heart. And I want to learn to love everybody else. Lord, I've got hurts in my heart that need to be healed. I need to be filled with your love. I need to feel forgiven. I need to experience your grace. I need to know your love so it can overflow out of my life into others. Replace my fears with your love. Replace my hurts with your peace. I want to learn to know you and love you, Jesus Christ.."

Children

What is like love?

How do you know someone loves you? Your brother or your sister?

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If someone loves you and you get new shoes what do they do.?

If someone... and you trip and skin your knee...?

If someone... and is far away...?

If someone... and it's your birthday?