

Love – Week 1 – What is Love?

Connect and review	
<p>Make sure everyone shares their name and a brief introduction about themselves.</p>	<p>Refer to any previous courses offered e.g., Alpha. Indicate the length and format of the sessions and give an indication of what will be covered in the following weeks. Explain the topic for today and distribute notes.</p>
Inspire and engage	
<p>There is no set way to present this material, just go with the way that suits you. Try to use most of the Bible verses.</p>	<p>New Testament is written in Greek. Greek uses 2 different words which are translated into English as “love”. *PHILEO = tender affection e.g., love of the Father for His Son, Jesus (John 3:35) or for believers (John 14:21): David and Jonathan are further examples. * AGAPAO = the very nature, or essence of God (1John 4:8) and which is seen in the action it prompts (John 3:16). It is a major characteristic of Christianity, or distinguishing feature. It seeks the welfare of others (Romans 12:10). * Other Greek words can also be translated love, the most well-known of which is EROS = sexual attraction. * There is a sharp contrast between love as portrayed in films and on TV and that which is to be shown by believers. Worldly love often relates to sexual attraction i.e., a person seeks pleasure from another. Christian love, on the other hand, seeks to give, i.e., the person is more concerned about pleasing their partner than being pleased themselves. * Furthermore, the love demonstrated often in Hollywood films is slushy and sentimental designed to provoke an emotional response e.g., crying, sympathy, support, etc. Love in real life can be like this, but usually is more practical – being seen in what we do as much as in what we say. * When we talk about “God is love” believers need to understand what is meant/implied. For example: - He does not choose to love, He simply loves. - His love is unconditional. He Loves us no matter what we think, say, or do. - Thus, He distinguishes between us and our behaviour. He always loves us, but often is unhappy with our behaviour. In the same way parents seek to love their children no matter what, but often discipline their behaviour. - His love is always constant - it does not change, go up or down or vary from day to day. - He loves everyone no matter their age, gender, race, ethnicity, education, etc. He loves Christians and non-Christians.</p>
Explore and apply	
<p>Attempt one exercise at a time and only use them all if time allows. Try to encourage Q & A and discussion but avoid personal/private answers.</p>	<p>Explore 1 Samuel 20:17 The relationship between David and Jonathan.</p> <p>Why did David support Jonathan rather than his father Saul? Possibly – 1 He knew David was right 2 He knew David had been anointed as the next King of Israel 3 He realised that God’s hand was on David 4 David was of a similar age and attitude 5 He was grateful for a friend</p> <p>How can we recognise God’s love? See Romans 5:8 How can we be sure God loves us? See John 3:16</p> <p>Apply. In what ways can we show our love for others is based on helping them and not pleasing ourselves?</p>
Reflect and review	
<p>This helps to show what has been learned and what may need to be reinforced.</p>	<p><i>Personal reflection:</i></p> <p>1 What is the most important thing you have learned today? How will it affect your daily life from now on? 2 What surprised you most about what you have been shown today? 3 What inspired you the most?</p> <p><i>Suggested activity:</i> How much do you know about love? Are you aware of any differences in Christian love and worldly love?</p>

