

This guide is designed to help prepare you for your next group discussion.

Quick Review

Look back from your sermon notes – Was there anything that particularly challenged you from this sermon? Anything you didn't understand, agree with or connect with?

Introduction

1. Describe a moment in your life where you experienced an overwhelming sense of love from somebody. What about that circumstance made you sense love in that way?
2. How was love modeled for you growing up? Do you look back on it negatively or positively? Why?

Digging In

Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-8

Brad talked about using our spiritual gifts to impact other people and doing good things for other people, but not basing our actions out of love. Paul says that these actions mean nothing to God. The Corinthians did all these good things but did none out of love. Brad said, we need to understand ***The Importance of Love:***

1. Why do you think most of us view verses 1-6 as a behavioral checklist? Give an example from your own life where you've tried to do one of these behaviors on your own.
2. In your life, when are you the most likely to leave love out and depend on yourself? What is the result?
3. **Read Galatians 5:22-23.** Have you ever noticed that the same characteristics used to describe what Love is are the same as the Fruit of the Spirit? Why do you think God uses the same characteristics to describe both and why is this important as a Christian to understand?

Brad said that this list of characteristics in verses 4-6 cannot just be a list of behaviors or something for us to inspire ourselves to try to do. It must be more than that because this definition of love will seem impossible to us.

The Impossible-ness of Love:

4. **Read verse 7.** Love bears all things – covers an offense. Love believes all things – looks for the good in a person. Love hopes all things – desires the best for a person. Love endures all things – through the good and the bad you stay with a person.
 - a. Why do you think Paul uses these phrases to describe love?

- b. Have you ever been shown this type of love before?
 - c. What typically stops us from loving in these terms?
5. Brad said that in every relationship, there is always a gap between what we PROMISE and what we PRACTICE.
- d. Write down some promises you've made to someone before. Now write down how many times you've failed to keep your promise with your practice.
 - e. Why do you think Paul and Jesus define love in these terms if it seems impossible for us to do on our own?
6. How do you always protect in a relationship? How do you always believe in a relationship? How do you always hope in a relationship? How do you always persevere in a relationship?

The last point Brad made was **Incarnational Love**:

"Before Love becomes a behavior in you, it must become a person to you!"

"Love is to be fully accepted when we are fully known."

7. Discuss these definitions of love. What do they mean and why are they important?
8. **Read 1 John 4:17-18**
Why is it so important that "perfect love casts out all fear?" What does that look like in someone's life?
9. Jesus is the only person who can fully see all of who we are and still love us. True love is a love that is lavished on others without a thought whether they are worthy or not. It proceeds from the nature of God, not from any attractiveness of the person we are trying to love.
- a. How can we reflect this type of love Jesus gives us to our world?

Taking it Home

1. **Read John 14:23-24, John 15:12-23, Romans 5:8, 1 John 3:18, 1 John 4:10-11.** Out of all these ways of demonstrating love, ask God for an opportunity to demonstrate this kind of love towards someone this week.

Praise / Prayer Requests

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