

LOVE

Theme: Love 34

Discipleship groups purpose: Each member being transformed into the image of the Son.

Key Truth: God's Love is very different from our human love.

Read: Man's love is of the temporal, the natural world, where God's love is of the eternal, the spiritual realm. Although man's love can be very heroic at times and even look like it's unconditional, it isn't. God's love is the only love that is pure and is given completely without conditions.

God's love is able to love its enemy and even an enemy that has its intent on either serious harm or murder. Man may sacrifice his life for another but the another will always be a person man is for and never who he is against. We see these heroic acts within a family, where a family member may give their life for another or in war, where one will sacrifice their life for the benefit of their fellow soldiers, but this is always in the context of loving the one who is for you. What does it look like to love the one who is against you and is intent on killing you? This is a completely different reality.

This is what sets His love apart from ours. His love isn't based on whether it receives love back, whether it's hated or our behaviour is worthy of love. His love is based upon His own nature where our love is based upon our own nature. This is why it is imperative we receive His new nature and have this new nature, love, perfected within us.

This is the love that was within Stephen and empowered and enabled him to ask God to forgive those who were murdering him and that God would not hold this sin against them.

Acts 7:59-60 *They went on stoning Stephen as he called on the Lord and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" Having said this, he fell asleep.*

Questions:

1. People say the love of a parent (human love) for a child is unconditional. Would you agree or not and why?
2. If you are a parent, how easy have you found it to love your child or children unconditionally all the time?
3. Why is our human love so limited?
4. What is it about the Father's love that makes it unconditional the entire time?

Action: What are you being made aware of through this resource and is there one thing you need to put in place from going through this resource?