



BEREAN
SMALL GROUPS

FOR THE GOSPEL
ROMANS 1:16

True Love

1 John 4:7-21

Read 1 John 4:7-21 together:

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.

Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides

in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

Agape (ag - ah' - pay) love:
affection or benevolence; specially (plural) a love-feast: — (feast of) charity (-ably), dear, love. — Greek Strong's Dictionary

The Anatomy of Love

- ? What type of love should define the Christian? How is that different from the love you have for your jelly donut? Are they different? Why or why not?
- ? What is the difference between self-full love and selfless love?
- ? Why is the divorce rate among Christians similar to those who do not profess Christ?
- ? What does it mean to self-sacrifice oneself for another? How does that apply to everyday relationships?
- ? Read 1 Corinthians 13 in your Small Group. Is this standard of love even possible? If so, how?
- ? What's the difference between puppy love and agape love?

*Love is sacrificial self-giving
for the sake of another.*

1. The Source of Love

The Church is not made up of natural friends. It is made up of natural enemies. What binds us together is not common education, race, income levels, politics, accents, nationality, or anything of the sort. Christians come together, not naturally, but because they have all been saved by Jesus Christ and owe him a common allegiance . . . we love one another for Jesus' sake!

– D.A. Carson, *Love in Hard Places*, p. 61

- ? Does self-sacrifice come naturally or does one need to be changed by Christ first? Can an unbeliever experience agape love without being changed by Christ? Why or why not?
- ? There are 3 different words for love in the Greek language. What's the difference between philia and agape love? How is this lived out in a strong friendship or in a marriage? Are all three kinds of love necessary for a successful marriage? Why or why not?
 - Philia – a friendship bond
 - Eros – a romantic, attractional love
 - Agape – unconditional love
- ? Love is the overflow of God's love. What does that mean?
- ? Have you ever been hurt by a Christian? Why does it seem, at times, that agape love is hard to find?

2. The Standard of Love

- ? Consider the statement, “*God does not only have love; He is love.*” What does this mean? Why would a loving God allow painful, horrific events to take place on this earth?
- ? Read Romans 5:6-8. What does this passage say about agape love?
- ? What does it mean that there is no fear in love, yet we are to fear God? (See Proverbs 9:10).

3. The Sacrifice of Love

- ? Sacrifice is the essence of agape love. How does one know whether or not one is exercising agape love?
- ? When many people say, “*I love you,*” they mean, “*I love me, and I want you.*” How could this devastate a marriage relationship? Agape love chooses to love. There is a will to love. How could changing the way you love save a marriage?
- ? Can one be a believer and not exercise agape love?

“It is no disparagement to a garden to say that it will not fence and weed itself, nor prune its own fruit trees, nor cut its own lawn. A garden is a good thing, but it will remain a garden only if someone does all these things to it.”

– C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves*