

LOVE SERIES

Group discussion notes _ Week 3 _ A new way to love

INTRODUCTION

When Jesus taught about and practically lived Love, it wasn't the fuzzy sentimentality often depicted in love songs and movies.

Jesus was describing the essence of the kingdom of God and the culture or way of life that characterises those who live in this kingdom.

Love is at the heart of authentic Christianity.

START THE CONVERSATION

Q.: Do you remember your first experience of "young love" – the first time you were in love? What are the memories that spring to mind? Do you think your understanding of what love was had been realistic and accurate?

GOING DEEPER

READ TOGETHER: 1 John 4:7-9 (ESV)

7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 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.

We "love" many things:

- love pizza
- love our pets
- love vacation

Q.: How is the kind of love described in the scripture above different from this general 'love' for things?

READ TOGETHER: John 8:3-11

3 The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst 4 they said to him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. 5 Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" 6 This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. 7 And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, "**Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.**" 8 And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. 9 But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. 10 Jesus stood up and said to her, "**Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?**" 11 She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "**Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.**"

Drawing from the portion above, let's look at how Love was manifested in a situation where the religious leaders demanded a verdict from Jesus:

JUSTICE: Jesus displayed justice by 'hating the sin but loving the sinner'.

Q.: Have you ever struggled or been at the receiving end of 'harsh justice'? What are your thoughts on how Jesus handled the situation?

GRACE: In verse 11 we read, "Neither do I condemn you...**"**

Q.: How do you think the Grace that Jesus extends to the lady might have given her the boldness and liberty and desire to start following him?

TRUTH: Jesus wanted her to stay clear of sin - verse 11, "...from now on sin no more.**"**

Q.: What are the dangers of extending God's grace to people without urging them to break with sin, in other words, bringing God's truth to the discussion?

PRAY TOGETHER

Ask the Holy Spirit to increasingly reveal the justice, grace and truth of God to you in every situation.
