

Love

Love is....

What is love? If you were to ask 100 people that question you may receive 100 different answers. Music, movies, and pop culture give us images and ideas about love. In this season the Hallmark channel has a 24-7 reel of people falling in love. Relationships with friends and family are often at the forefront of our thoughts this time of year.

When you think about what love is, what comes to mind?

A few things that come to mind for me are:

Love is patient, kind, does not hold grudges

.Love is wonderful.

Love is hard work.

God is love.

Love is a gift, not an investment -Jay Reinke, The Overnighters Documentary

Love is messy.

How would you define love? (Journal or discuss together what love is)

Here are just a few Bible verses about love. Keep in mind this is not an exhaustive list and that the Bible is the story of God who loves his creation.

Ephesians 2:4-6

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

1 John 3:1-3

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

Hebrews 12:4-13

“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.” It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed.

Romans 8:31-39

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be [i] against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all the day long;
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Along with the Bible verses about Love here is a quote from C.S. Lewis:

“To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything and your heart will be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact you must give it to no one, not even an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements. Lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket, safe, dark, motionless, airless, it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. To love is to be vulnerable.”

Journal or discuss:

What does this quote and these tell us about love? (If you are reading as a family you may want to define the word vulnerable for them)

Additional readings for the week

Luke 10:25-37 The Good Samaritan

I've noticed something while reading the gospels. When Jesus was strolling around and ministering to people he was asked a lot of questions. An overwhelming number of the questions he receives he gives himself as the answer.

The story of the Good Samaritan was the response Jesus gave to a lawyer asking Jesus questions about how he can have eternal life. The lawyer was certain he had kept the law perfectly. Can you imagine? Telling Jesus about all the wonderful things YOU have done. But it's something we do. We try to justify our actions or prove ourselves to God and to the people around us. We want people to see all the things we are doing instead of all Christ has done.

The story of the Good Samaritan is a picture story of the love Christ has for us and what He does for us. He picks us up out of the ditch. He bandages our wounds. He provides a place for us. He ensures our debts are paid. He is coming back for us.

Read Luke 10:25-37

The lawyer wants to justify himself and asks the question 'Who is my neighbor?'. How do we do the same thing? How do we attempt to justify ourselves?

The lawyer speaking to Jesus was a student of the laws. He knew them inside and out. He would have had the utmost respect for the priest and the levite. The ones who passed by the dying man. He would not have had respect for the Samaritan. The one who picked up the dying man.

Why would Jesus choose to tell the story in this way, with the hero and savior of the story being an unliked and not respected person?

Read verses 34 and 35 again. How does Jesus do the same things for us?

Binds our wounds. Psalm 147:3; 1 Peter 2:24; Isaiah 53:3

Pouring of Oil Psalm 23; 1 Peter 2:9 ;

(Keynote: Kings were anointed with oil throughout the old testament. This verse is telling us we also have been anointed.)

Pouring of Wine Mark 14:22-25

Carried him Matthew 11:28-30

Pays for his stay 1 John 2:1-2

Promises to come back Rev 21:4

How do we love? Galatians 5

We have the assurances of Christ's love and that he has fulfilled and the assurance that he will fulfill his promises of coming back for us. What does that leave us to do?

Galatians tells us we are forgiven therefore we are free!

Martin Luther summed up what we are to do with our freedom when he said:

"God does not need your good works but your neighbor does."

We are free from trying to please God. What we are left with is serving and loving our neighbor.

Read Galatians 5

Christ has set us free. We are no longer slaves to the law but sons and daughters of Jesus, the light, the living word. We fall off of the path Christ has for us when we forget all he has done for us.

What does Paul tell the Galatians in 5:7-11?

Why is he concerned for them?

What are they relying on?

What does verse 13-15 tell us we get to use our freedom for?

Where do the fruits of the Spirit come from?

What are some of the ways the fruits of the spirit play out in our lives? Where have you seen love, joy, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control?

Activity:

Listen to this song by Walker Hayes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Da0g7a7tPN8>

Who does Craig point the song writer to?

Here is a link to coloring sheets for Galatians

<https://www.visualfaithmin.org/new-testament-bible-margins/galatians-3-5-margins-by-pat-meier?rq=Galatians%205>

*If you are looking for more days and things to do I encourage you to check out The Four Loves by CS Lewis from your local library, pick up a copy online, or download one on your e-reader.

For Adults or parents with older kids:

For a little more read the introductory chapter to The Four Loves by C.S Lewis this week.

Perhaps you will get on a roll and read the whole thing together. Read it out loud or read it individually and chat about it. It would be a great book to read as a couple too!