

LOVE (LARGE GROUP)

Lesson 3: Love with no limits

Objective: Students will learn that God is the source of love. If they cannot love, then they do not know God



SCRIPTURE: 1 John 4:7-12

GAME/ACTIVITY:

Shuffle Your Buns

Materials -Chairs

Arrange enough chairs in a circle with an additional empty seat. Have students sit in chairs with one student in the center of the circle. That student will attempt to sit in the empty seat. As that happens, the remaining students "shuffle their buns" to sit in the once empty seat. When the student in the center manages to get a seat, the person whose seat was taken is now in the middle.

Death Ball <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X58X5d4BCI0> (How to play video)

Materials:

Chairs & Ball

Same set up as shuffle your buns.

Train Wreck <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llu6OIziCU> (How to play video)

Same set up as previous games.

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION:

Suppose your mom gets shot. In the head. You have to pay for the surgery. How much will you be willing to pay? This is what Trevor Noah is talking about. Check it out. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yphxh5L8YbQ> You can watch up until 6:45 and it will make the point.

In the sketch, Trevor Noah rushed to the hospital to be at his mother's side. He finds out that she has no medical aid. No insurance. He is going to have to pay. Did you hear what he said when the nurse came to talk to him about the issue? "It's my mom. Of course I will pay. Take my credit card. Pay it from there." But what happened when the number got higher? Once the number got up into the 500,00 rand (South African currency) The face he made and the long sigh. Trevor Noah implied there is a limit. I know there are moments in my life that I feel like cutting off the flow for unlovely people. I will love you up until this point. After that, you are on your own.

Read 1 John 4:7-12

The Bible helps here. We know that Love is a determined action, an intentional choice, to bring you the best no matter the cost. The Bible defines love slightly differently. Listen again to V7. "*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.*" There is no doubt that Trevor Noah loves his mom. I am sure you love your mom and the rest of your family, I hope. Why is that possible? What is the source of this love? The source of love is God because God equals love. The reason you can love your mom, your friend, your sister is because God is the source of that love. That love should have an effect on people around you. God is the source of love and it flows into us and out to

other people are correctly connected to God Himself. We should be like a phone charger according to this verse. (Hold up a phone charger.) The charger is not the source of energy. It is merely a channel or conduit for the energy to flow through to the device that needs it. That could be a TV, a toaster, or cell phone. If we are connected to God spiritually, then we can and should love others. What happens when I disconnect the charger from the outlet? Nothing. It is not being used as intended. The charger is worthless on its own. That is what we are like spiritually when we disconnect ourselves from God.

John elaborates with the opposite thought in verse 8. "Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love." Most of us are thinking, "I don't hate anyone. I might not like some people but I don't hate them. I am not killing anyone or robbing them." I want to push back on that thought for a moment. The opposite of love is not hate, it is apathy. Apathy when I could care less; when I leave you on your own and say, "whatever, good luck with your life." If I see you in a car accident and don't rush to your aid, then no one would tell me that I was loving you in that moment. I didn't wish the accident on you but I did nothing to help. If I was a parent and I let you live any which way you chose. Who would call me a loving parent? No one. Someone would call me an unfit parent. Love is action. Inaction is apathy. Apathy is the opposite of love.

The Bible elaborates the thought in the next verse. *"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."* Manifest is a big word that means to make apparent or real. In other words, Jesus came to live in the neighborhood. Jesus left Heaven and came to live among us (John 1:14) How does this show love? The world is a mess. The inhabitants of this planet are selfish, rebellious, mean, hurtful and toxic. Just watch the news or stroll through Twitter or Instagram. The things people say and do are ridiculous. Loving is the last word we can use to describe our world. Jesus stepped into the mess with us. Jesus didn't say "Good luck and be good." He came to live in this messed up sinful world BECAUSE He loved us! He didn't show apathy. He took action and LOVED. As a matter of fact, God showed love by sending His Son AND Jesus showed love by moving into the hood. Jesus lived a life that none of us were capable of living. He treated people with kindness, He fought for the oppressed, He hung out with the outsiders, He was completely dependent on His Father, He stood for righteousness. . . He LOVED.

We don't and can't live that way. We have moments but we are sooo inconsistent. We are our own boss; we do things on our own because we feel like it. That independence from God is known as sin. God hates it. It separates us from Him and has an eternal effect. We are separated from God and it brings with it a penalty, a payment we cannot afford. God knew that we would have insufficient funds when the bill came due. What action did God take?

His ultimate act of love was shown on a cross 2000 years ago. The next verse helps explain, *"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."* Propitiation is not a word you hear every day. What does it mean? It is a sacrifice that turns away God's wrath and anger against sin and turns it to favor and acceptance. This is what happened at the cross. Jesus was the sacrifice that satisfied God. Jesus was the shield that took the hammer strike against sin so we did not have to. He was the secret service agent taking the bullet of God's wrath against the rebellion in our hearts. Jesus was our substitute. Make no mistake, we were supposed to die on that cross because of our desire to be independent from God. Jesus took action and He LOVED. Because of Jesus' love, God looks on us, those who trust and believe in Him, with favor. No more anger and wrath because it was all spent on Jesus. God is pleased with you because He was satisfied with what Jesus DID for you and for me. He took determined action. He made an intentional choice with ongoing benefits to those who believe.

What action will you take? Do you see what the Bible says about people? In our hearts, we are not loving. We are apathetic. We don't care for God or reach out to Him. We could care less about a relationship with Him. We take no action in His direction in any way. God, on the other hand, takes action and demonstrates love. He moves towards us EVEN when we are disinterested, apathetic, and busy doing what we want. God takes the initiative. . .FIRST. He always does.

So, can you admit that you are messed up and in need of being loved the right way by God? Do you believe that Jesus took your punishment... that He took your place? Do you trust that God's anger is no longer directed towards you because Jesus took it all for you? If you believe that in your heart, then you can NOW truly love because God is the source of love that can now flow through you like a channel to drench the unloving people in your life with God's redeeming love.



Here in verse 11 is our challenge. *"Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."* Remember Trevor Noah's reaction at hearing how much his mom's operation may possibly cost and his strong hesitancy to having to pay it? Dude is funny because we think like him sometimes. We are supposed to love people like God loved us. No limit on how much it will cost. We should have a blank check when it comes to loving people. I know your friend who said that thing about you on Insta was dead wrong but will you love them anyway? If you do, then you are loving them the way God loved and loves you. Loving with no limit takes time and intentional practice. The last verse wraps it up, *"No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us."* Sometimes, It is harder to love the person you live with and can see than it is to love a God you can't see. If you keep loving with no limits then God abides (lives inside of) you if you have trusted Jesus AND His love is perfected in you. Love with no limits. Jesus never paused, never took a gulp indicating some hesitancy when it came to pay your debt. We should not pause or take a step back when it comes to dealing with an unlovely person in our lives. Debt is normally a bad thing in the real world but spiritually we should ALWAYS be in debt. We owe people love. Check this out, *"Owe no one anything, except to love one another, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law."* That was in Romans 13:8 You owe everyone love with no limits.

Pray

