

GOD'S LOVE

NOTE: This teaching on *God's Love* is to be used by National and Area Leaders during yearly Leadership Development events. Feel free to make copies. Make the teaching personal and relevant for your leaders.

I John 4:8b "God is love."

When you think of love, what comes to mind? Your boyfriend? Your girlfriend? Your spouse? Your first born? How about your grandchildren?

What about the things listed in I Corinthians 13 about love? Do those virtues come to mind? Love is patient. Love is kind. Love is not envious. Love is not full of pride. Love does not rejoice in evil. Love rejoices in truth. Love bears all things. Love hopes all things. Love believes the best about things. Love endures all things. Love never, ever, ever, ever fails.

I Corinthians 14:1 compels us to pursue love. And if God is love, then we must pursue Him. Love is the essence of God's nature. Not only does He love, He *is* love. He is the source of love. His love is unchanging, free, spontaneous, and undeserved.

In the New Testament, the word *agape* was used for the word love. It foretold of a new way to love. Agape love always seeks the highest good of others, no matter what they do. Agape love makes the choice to love. It is an act of the will and not of the emotions. It is a self-giving love that gives freely, and does not ask for anything in return.

Doesn't that sound just like God? He always seeks the highest good for us, no matter what we have done. The Bible even tells us that the reason we love Him is because He so lavishly loved us first. (I John 4:19) How could we not respond to His great, selfless love?

A LIGHTHOUSE OF LOVE IN THE DARKNESS

On the horizon I see the sun coming up. And the darkness can't even flee because it is being consumed by the sun. "The lights of the darkness," says the Lord, "are going to be consumed by the love of My Spirit. The fire of Aglow is going to spread."

I saw a lighthouse in every city, in every state, in every country on the whole planet. I saw the beam of that light going around and connecting with the lighthouses around it. It became a wall of pure light that surrounded the whole world. And that light illuminated the darkness and the name of Jesus was glorified...and the power of God was brought down out of the heavens....

PORTION OF A PROPHETIC WORD TO AGLOW IN 2006

As the days of the end times grow darker, the love of God shining through us towards others will bring a radiant expression of who God is into the earth that will cause the hearts of men and women to turn towards Him. Our selfless actions demonstrating unchanging kindness, patience, and love will turn even the hardest of hearts.

Allow the words *God is love – slow to anger, seeking out the best for me* to begin to stir in your own heart. Embrace them. Meditate upon them. Allow the same kind of love flowing from Him to you to flow to others. Love is His nature and as His child, love is also our nature.

John 13:34 “A new commandment I give to you that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” We cannot help but return His love and lavish it freely upon others. If one tries to keep God’s love for himself, it will cease to be the love of God. His love was meant to be shared.

SELFLESS LOVE

In Hosea 3:1 God gives a great example of how we should love. “Then the Lord said to me, ‘Go again, love a woman who is loved by a lover and is committing adultery just like the love of the Lord for the children of Israel who looks to other gods and loves the raisin cakes of the pagans.’” What a selfless love! What a love of great commitment! What a love without constraint. What a love that is free from judgment.

Hear the Lord say to you “Go, love a world that loves another and has turned its back upon Me. Let Me love her though you.” Our world needs this God kind of love. It waits for us to see this aspect of God that will, first, change us forever and, then cause us to love freely, like Hosea, expecting nothing in return.

We must bring God’s love into the world. We must love them before they love Him. They will know we are Christians by our love. I John 3:16-18 “By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.”

OVERWHELMING LOVE

In Graham Cooke’s book, *The Languages of Love – Hearing and Speaking the Language of God*, he wrote, “The sad truth about many longtime Christians is that they have never understood

the magnitude of God's love. Some have served Him for decades and not known His passion for them. But I believe He is going to make up that lost time. We need to receive this love with a childlike simplicity, not overanalyzing it or trying to strive for it."

"God is going to come to us in this next season of time, and His love will be almost beyond our capacity to bear. It will be the stuff of dreams, an unimaginable, monumental, incredible, astonishing, marvelous, outrageous love. This will change the way we think about everything."

Graham went on to say, "His love will overwhelm us, leading us past logic, reason, and intellect into a place where our hearts will be touched as they have never been touched before. This is a season of wonder for us, and we will learn to live like much-loved children."

In Evangeline Weiner's book, *The Calling of a Generation*, she shares the testimony of Kamron who was born in a Muslim nation. Kamron had this to say about love, "If we will use love for the foundation of what we do every day, then our lives will be simpler and filled with peace and joy. When love (God's love) is not our foundation, we can easily fall into depression, confusion, frustration, and fear. Seek love, follow love, desire love, learn to love, build with love, use love as a weapon, drink love, get fed by love, feed others with love, think through with love, see through love, speak with love – love (God's love) is the answer."

This is what we are about today. We want to allow time for God's goodness, His faithfulness, and His love to overwhelm us and carry us to places we have never been before. We want Him to be for us in this season what He could not be for us in the last season. Like Moses, we long for a glimpse of Him that changes everything.

Expect and interpret everything through the new lens of God's love. Prepare to live there for the remainder of your days. This is our destiny.

EXERCISE: Handout 3 God's Love

Download 2-3 of the following songs or as many as time allows. These songs contain a message of God's love. Allow a time of quiet, meditative worship on God's love while the songs are playing. Be prepared that some may cry, sing, dance, etc while experiencing a wave of God's love in a higher degree than they have ever experienced. It would be good if this could close out a session; for example, before lunch or at the end of the day.

It would be great if those attending had time to reflect on the scriptures that are on the Handout. At the end of the songs, distribute the Handout on God's Love to be used during their private devotional time. Encourage each attendee to journal what they sense the Holy Spirit is revealing to them personally about the love of God.

The following songs can be downloaded from I-tunes:

- When I Look at the Blood Godfrey Birtill
- God so Loved Godfrey Birtill
- Love Never Fails Brandon Heath
- You Have Ravished My Heart Brian and Jenn Johnson
- A Little Longer Brian and Jenn Johnson
- Song for the Bride Brian Doerksen
- He is Here Brian Doerksen
- Your Love Will Find Me Brian Doerksen
- Love Came Down Brian Johnson
- Your Love Never Fails Chris Quilala
- Pour My Love on You Kees Kraayenoord
- How He Loves Kim Walker
- Sing My Love Kim Walker

CD: My Heart Stands in Awe of Your Word – Jane Hansen Hoyt – purchase from Aglow Int'l

After this exercise has been done individually and love is being awakened in each heart, allow the attendees to come together as teams, boards, Lighthouse or Candlelight groups and begin to brainstorm new ideas that allow the love of God to flow through them into their communities and towns. If time allows, let each group give 1 to 2 thoughts they had on how to share God's love with others. Emphasize that they should look for ways that are 'outside the box' and 'outside the monthly meeting setting.'

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HANDOUT 3

During your next quiet or devotional time, read quietly through these scriptures. Journal any thoughts or revelations you sense while you are reading. Mark those scriptures that you see in a new way. Perhaps take one each quiet time and allow the Holy Spirit to expand the beautiful, overwhelming, radiating love that God not only has, but is and gives.

- **Jeremiah 31:3b** “Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you”
- **Zephaniah 3:17** “The Lord your God in your midst, the Mighty One will save. He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love. He will rejoice over you with singing”
- **Romans 5:8** “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us”
- **2 Corinthians 13:11** “Finally brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.
- **2 Thessalonians 3:5** “Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.”
- **1 John 3:1a** “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called the children of God”
- **1 John 4:7-8** “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for *God is love.*”