

Week Two
Your Love Life



Day One
Defining Love

Day Two
Finding Yourself in the Center of God's Love

Day Three
His Strength in Your Weakness

Day Four
Love Through Forgiveness

Day Five
Called to be a Blessing



Key Verse:

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.
John 13:34-35

Day One: Defining Love

We walk through life with a host of concepts that create our picture of what it means to love and be loved. As a kid, I watched a lot of old movies. I lost count of how many times Rock Hudson lied, or Tony Curtis schmoozed something out of a girl (depending on the movie it was either affection, moola or both). John Wayne even spanked his wife in one movie (which in context was actually kinda funny--but the reality of it wouldn't be that humorous). The portrayal of love on the big screen leaves a lot to be desired--in both old and newer films. Even Disney movies depict love in some ways that aren't that great for kids. Did you ever notice that all the Disney princesses find their Prince Charming and ditch their parents when they are like 16??!! Well, enough with the movie tangent! Think on some of the positive and negative influences that have formed your concept of the various forms of love. Probably your parents relationship, friends, family, and church family have all played into this picture of love for you. Journal the words you might use to describe the feelings, actions and thoughts of love and then where you got that impression:

Romantic love

Platonic/ Friendship love

Parental love

I like to actually write these thoughts out on paper--when I do it makes me see them with greater clarity and take responsibility for them!

In Greek (which the New Testament was mostly written in) there are a variety of words that all translate into our English word love. Where many languages use three or four terms for “love,” we have one. So I love my puppy and my cat, I love tacos and guacamole, I love my sisters and I love my husband...love all the way around with no linguistic distinction between the different scenarios. In Greek, however, there are distinctions between the words you would use in each of those situations. In the New Testament there are two primary forms of the word love used--*agapao* and *phileo*. *Agapao* is a moral love that puts the needs of the other person before the one giving the love. It is a love that sacrifices for the good of others. *Phileo* is a warm, fuzzy, affectionate love. One that is based in and expressed through the emotions. The fruit of the spirit passage (Galatians 5:22-24) which we are studying uses the agape form of the word.

Now, let’s dig into some of the ways God defines love. Read the following verses and journal the main idea of each. Next to each of the verses I wrote *agape* or *phileo* next to the reference to give you an extra sense of the way God defines love in each situation.

General love

John 13:34-35 (agape)

Romans 5:8 (agape)

1 Corinthians 8:1 (agape)

1 Peter 4:8 (agape)

1 John 4:18 (agape)

Romantic love

Proverbs 5 (if you have teens--this is a great passage to discuss with them because it shows God's heart for us to enjoy romantic love)

Ephesians 5:25 (agape)

Titus 2:4 (phileo)

Friendship love

Proverbs 17:17

John 15:13-14 (agape)

John 13:35 (agape)

Romans 12:10-11 (mentions both kinds of love)

Philippians 2:1-2 (agape--the context is church relationships)

1 Thessalonians 4:9-10 (mentions both forms of love)

Parental love

Psalm 27:10

Isaiah 49:15-16

Ephesians 1:4-5 (agape)

If you were to rate how you have been loving on those around you (based on the Scriptural definition), on a scale of one (being the lowest) to ten (being the highest) where would you fall? Circle the level you would rate some of the closest relationships to your heart and write the name of the person (or their initials) next to the circled number.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Write some of the verses from today's study on your Scripture prayer cards and spend some time dialoging with the Lord about His definition of love and His vision for how He wants you to live His love out loud in your life for everyone to see.

Day Two: Finding yourself in the center of God's love

Today's topic is one of my most favorite Bible study topics! It is the one topic that changed my life the most--and an area where God is still working on me! We are going to dive into Scriptures that reveal God's heart of love for us, how He sees us and how all that completely changes our lives!

Pull out your "Who I am in Christ" list and begin by reading through those Scriptures. Which attributes are hard to identify with? Why?

Now read and personalize the following verses:

Psalm 45:11

Psalm 138:8

Psalm 139:14

Song of Solomon 2:14

Isaiah 43:1-4

Isaiah 62:3-5

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Jeremiah 31:3-4 (note--God had referred to the people of Israel earlier in the book as spiritual harlots because of the way they loved and chased after other gods. Based on this verse, how does God see us and our sin when we have repented from our waywardness?)

Zephaniah 3:17

When I have my identity rooted in God's love for me, His love flows through me to others more readily. When I am rooted in His love, I am emotionally secure. I don't walk around with an empty emotional cup looking for someone to fill it, because my Lord already has! That sense of security frees me up to love others--and it frees me from the wounds others have inflicted on my heart. (We will talk more about how wounds get in the way of loving others in more depth on days four and five.)

Write some more Scripture prayers from the verses you looked up today. Spend some time dialoging with the Lord over His love for you!

Day Three: His Strength in my Weakness

Every week of this study we will devote one day to studying the character of God as it relates to the topic of the week. We will focus on His strength and ask for Him to come into our particular area of weakness with His power and ability. In relation to loving others--it is a real stretch for us to lavishly love the difficult or hurtful people in our lives. But with God's strength and His wisdom we can learn how to love people in healthy, fruitful ways regardless of how they treat us.

Read the following verses and write the main idea of each one:

Psalm 36:6

Psalm 63:3

Nehemiah 9:17

John 3:13

Romans 5:8

Romans 8:38-39

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Titus 3:4

1 John 3:1

1 John 3:16

1 John 4:16

When I was being discipled I learned a great habit. When you're tripping over yourself (like I do, constantly!) it is good to write down what specific issues you are tripping over. Is it that your mouth shoots off, are you struggling to forgive, does being critical come too easily for you, etc. Take a piece of paper and make two columns. On one side write out your junk. Then use a concordance and look up verses that describe God's character as the very opposite of the quality your struggling with. Write the verse in the other column. Confess your uglies to God and ask His strength to fill that nasty hole in you. Ask Him to make you keenly aware of the issue in you and, if you're willing, ask Him to make you just as sick over that particular sin in you as it makes Him. He always answers that last part for me with such swiftness and faithfulness! But truly, do we want to be women to cling to our sins or chuck 'em over board and cling to our Lord? God's taken some mighty interesting measures to root sin out of me and I'm thankful for it, even if it wasn't pleasant.

Here's a chart you can use to begin honing in on God's love in place of your weakness:

Your Love Weakness	God's Love Filling Strength

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Now read Ephesians 3:16 and make it the start of your prayer time! (Isn't that a great verse?) Use the verses you looked up to form your Scripture prayers asking for His "glorious riches [that] He might strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being!"
