

Weekend Teaching Discussion Guide

True Love – Week 2: Agape (Unconditional Love)

Teaching by Dr. Jim Cress

WARM-UP QUESTION

When you hear the word "love", do you usually think of a feeling, a choice, or an action? Why?

DISCUSS

1. What Agape Love Really Is

Agape love is a selfless, sacrificial decision to seek another person's highest good.

How is this different from the way our culture usually defines love?

How does seeing love as a decision, not just a feeling, change your view of relationships?

2. Vertical Love Before Horizontal Love

Unconditional love must come vertically from God before it can flow horizontally to others.

Read Matthew 22:39.

Why do we often try to get from people what we were designed to receive from God?

Why is healthy self-love important if we are going to love others well?

3. What Blocks Agape Love

Read Genesis 3:7.

Shame was described as:

Self

Hatred

At

My

Expense

How does shame keep people from receiving love from God or others?

What are some “fig leaves” people use today to hide their struggles or insecurities?

4. Broken Cisterns and Distrust of God

Read Jeremiah 2:13.

What are some modern “broken cisterns” people turn to instead of God?

How can believing that God is not good affect the way we live or relate to Him?

5. No Condemnation and the Problem of Shame

Read Romans 7:19 and Romans 8:1.

Why is Paul’s honesty about his struggle encouraging or relatable?

How does the truth that there is no condemnation in Christ challenge shame?

6. The Faces We Put on God

What does the question “Whose face is God wearing in your life?” stir up for you?

What helps you see God more clearly as He truly is?

7. Practicing Agape Love

Read John 13:34–35.

Why does Jesus say love is the primary evidence of His followers?

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4–7.

Which description of Agape love is hardest for you to live out right now?

What is one relationship where you can practice Agape love this week?

8. Nothing Can Separate Us

Read Romans 8:38–39.

Which part of this passage brings you the most comfort?

How would your life change if you genuinely believed nothing could separate you from God's love?

CLOSING REFLECTION

Which statement best describes where you are right now?

- I need to receive God's Agape love instead of trying to earn it.
- I need to deal with something that is blocking my ability to love well.
- God is asking me to practice Agape love in a specific relationship this week.

PRAYER

Thank God for His Agape love that seeks your highest good. Ask Him to reveal and heal anything that blocks your ability to receive His love. Pray for the courage to love yourself well and to practice Agape love toward others, even when it is difficult.