

We shouldn't seek to act differently; we should seek to be transformed and become a new creation by resting in the presence of God more often.

*Ephesians 3:17 NLT - 17 Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong.*

*Romans 6:4 NLT - 4 For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.*

*In the passages above, what makes us strong in God's love? What do you think is involved in making your heart a home to Christ? For those who were baptized at New Life this weekend, God's resurrection power will enable them to live a life of Holy love.*

### WRAP-UP

We tend to focus on things that are spectacular like the fire, wind and tongues of Pentecost, and forget that Jesus' life was largely an example of love through humility and self-sacrifice. He demonstrated love when he laid down His life for us. Paul reminds us that love trumps the spectacular and doing "good things" that we tend to chase after. We do battle against our natural tendencies and the surrounding culture when we choose to love others as Jesus loved us, with Holy Agape love.

### MEMORY VERSE.

*Ephesians 6:17 NLT - 17 Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

**PRAYER (20 MIN)** Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life

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*Challenge.- Conclude your memorization of Ephesians 6:10-17.*

## **"Holy Love"** **Every Day Holy- #7**

### INTRODUCTION

One of the battles we face every day is a battle to love others. It doesn't sound that difficult, but it is. Why? Because we are naturally drawn in other directions. We tend to do what is easy rather than what is right. We seek out the spectacular or highly desirable, believing they have greater value. But in God's economy, the things we tend to elevate are worthless unless they reflect God's love above all else, because God's Holy love is greater than anything the world has to offer. It is what Paul refers to as a more excellent way to live.

### Ice Breaker

*What is the most self-less or loving act that you have witnessed?*

### Key Passage

*1 Corinthians 13:1-3 NLT - 1 If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing. 3 If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing.*

### STUDY QUESTIONS

#### 1. Holy Love is Greater than the Spectacular

*John 13:34-35 NLT - 34 So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. 35 Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples."*

In 1 Corinthian chapter 13 Paul explains what it means to love like Jesus. In our English language the word love is often applied liberally- I love hot dogs, I love the Giants, I love my spouse... But these verses were written in Greek, and that language has many words that we might translate as love. So, for love of your teammates, we would use "storge". To express brotherly love the word is "philia". And the love between husband and wife is "eros". But none of those are the word used by Paul in this passage. Paul uses the word Agape and that word has a unique meaning.

Here is how one dictionary defines God's Holy Love. *"Agape expresses the deep and constant "love" and interest of a perfect Being towards entirely unworthy objects, producing and fostering a reverential "love" in them towards the Giver, and a practical "love" towards those who are partakers of the same, and a desire to help others to seek the Giver."*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Vine, W. (24 Jun, 1996). Love (Noun and Verb) - Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words.

This is the type of love Jesus has commanded of us.

*In our key passage (1 Cor 13:1-7) what kinds of "spectacular" signs and wonders did Paul reference? What motives might people have for seeking these things? What does Paul say is the value of these, when done apart from God's Holy love?*

*1 John 3:16-18 NKJV - 16 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. 17 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? 18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.*

Our culture chases after the spectacular, and the quick or easy answers. The Holy love defined by Agape demands humility and self-sacrifice. In the passage above, John explains that genuine love was demonstrated when Jesus died for us. His example of us giving up our lives for others involves a situation we may all be able to relate to.

This is the battle we face daily. We have "the world's goods" but when we see someone in need how do we respond? John says our response indicates whether or not God's Holy love is in us. The term "shuts up his heart" indicates this is a choice we make.

*What thoughts or arguments does the enemy use to discourage us from opening our hearts to the needy? How do you think God's Spirit would reply to those arguments (v18)? What is another way, besides sharing money or "worldly goods", that you can open your heart to someone in need and give selflessly to them?*

## **2. Holy Love is more than doing Good Things**

For many of us, Paul's list in 1 Cor 13:1-3 sounds pretty good: Knowledge, prophecy, mountain-moving faith! He is even willing to give everything to the poor. Surely, we should strive to attain those things, they sound so good! But Paul shocks his readers by saying even after doing all this he gains nothing if it is missing genuine love. In contrast, verses 4 – 7 tell us what Holy love is.

*1 Corinthians 13:4-7 NLT - 4 Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud 5 or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. 6 It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. 7 Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.*

Those of us in the church must battle to avoid falling into the trap of thinking that "more" and "bigger" means better and important. One of the places we make this mistake in on social media platforms. We might grow a large following, and gain the approval of the masses, but if our opinions and activism is not Spirit directed, it misses the mark.

*If you want to see how far off target you are, replace the word "love" in this passage with your own name, and read it aloud (even more eye-opening use the name of your favorite social media platform, e.g. Facebook is patient and kind, Instagram is not jealous or boastful or proud, Twitter is not rude...) We will quickly recognize that our actions are far from what God considers loving. However, try replacing the word "love" with the name "Jesus" and it all makes sense again.*

## **3. Holy Love Requires Holy Spirit Transformation**

The change of heart that is needed for us to love others selflessly is the result of daily dependence on the leading of the Holy Spirit. It requires time talking, walking, and listening to God.