

# LOVING ONE ANOTHER

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: 1 JOHN 3:9-24



*The Gospel is our motive to love.*

## The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

### Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

**True love flows from the gospel.** Love in our culture is motivated by selfish gain. We tend to love in order to get love. When our love is selfishly motivated, we withdraw it the moment we stop getting what we want. Love in God's kingdom is inspired and motivated by the example of unselfish love we see in the gospel. John is moving in his discussion on love to this point: "This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (1 John 3:10).

When our love flows from grace and is motivated by a desire to glorify God by following Christ's example, we will continue to love no matter what people do to us. Husbands love their wives as Christ loved, whether their wives respect them or not. Wives persevere in love and respect for their husbands in obedience to God regardless of whether their husbands return the love and care. The same is true for every relationship, even with our enemies!

**True love marks our conversion.** Love motivated by the example of Christ's love in the gospel should mark every Christian. This kind of love is a product of our conversion. We know we have passed from death into life if we have this love; it is a key evidence of our conversion. That does not mean gospel-motivated love is automatic. If it were automatic, John would have no need to encourage his hearers toward it.

Unbelievers are incapable of this love; they are slaves to sin. But we who know "the love the Father has lavished on us" should live and must live gospel-inspired, love-filled lives. The person who consistently demonstrates God's kind of love has confidence in his salvation. The person who won't forgive, or who can't find motivation in the cross to love others, should doubt the sincerity of his or her conversion.

**True love demands action.** Gospel-motivated love is practical. Because our example is Christ, who laid down his life for us, we know love is about giving, sacrifice, and action. James said it this way: "Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, 'Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead" (James 2:15-17). John tells us not to love with words but with deeds.

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### WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?

*Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.*

We obey in faith not in works. We obey because we have salvation in Christ; we do not obey in order to earn salvation in Christ. We love others because He first loved us. Once again we see the gospel clearly outlined in Scripture. Verse 16 tells us that the ultimate example of love is Jesus laying down His life for us. Jesus did just what John is exhorting us to do. He saw that we were "in need" (verse 17) and gave up His life for us. Jesus' sacrifice motivates us to love one another. Our motivation for loving someone is grounded upon what Jesus did for us, not upon what others have done for us. This is how we can find the grace to love even our enemies.

### ON THE ROAD TO EMMANUS

**Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.**

**Bible Passage: Psalm 35:19,20**

#### **Connecting the passage to Christ:**

Jesus connects this passage to himself in John 15:24,25 when he informed His disciples that they would be persecuted just as He was. The enemies of Jesus hated Him for no reason. Jesus told his disciples that they would be persecuted because they follow Him. John echoes this in his letter when he tells us, "Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you" (1 John 3:13).

#### **Questions for reflection:**

- What was Jesus' response to those who were His enemies? (Jesus did not defend Himself on the road to the cross, where He willingly gave up His life for us.)
- What should our response be to those who hate and persecute us? (Jesus said, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.")

### SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

**BE A DOER OF THE WORD**

*Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.*

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### ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

*Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?*

#### MEMORIZE THIS PASSAGE

**Supplies:**

White board and markers

This is one of the four "3:16" passages that are wonderful to memorize.

Take time to review each one, especially John 3:16. The others are Colossians 3:16 and 2 Timothy 3:16.

- What do John 3:16 and 1 John 3:16 have in common?
- What do Colossians 3:16 and 2 Timothy 3:16 have in common?

Memorize 1 John 3:16 by placing the entire verse on the board and then taking away one key word at a time until your class has it memorized.

If you have time you can come back to the memorization going through your whole class each time asking for a different volunteer to recite it. Pick boy, girl, boy, girl and make it a competition. The side with the most successful attempts is the winner.



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### LOVE SKIT

**Supplies:**

- wide masking tape
- 15 ft. of rope
- a chair
- You will also need one adult helper

Use this to demonstrate the importance of action in gospel motivated love.

Prior to class tie up your helper in the chair and tape over his or her mouth. (Use masking tape as it is not too sticky. If you first place the tape on your clothing and then pull it off, it will pull up some of the nap of your clothing and make it less tacky. That way it won't hurt your volunteer.)

When the class arrives pretend that you don't have any concerns about the volunteer being taped up. Tell the class to greet him. Say that someone must have tied him up, express your sympathy to him and how it must be uncomfortable and then continue on with the class.

Your volunteer should look surprised and mumble and motion for you to untie him. Instead of loosing his ropes you reprimand him for interrupting and then again express your sympathy. Then continue with the class.

Go through this at least twice more, each time become a little angrier until finally you ask if anyone in the class would like to untie him.

Use this as an introduction to gospel centered love and how our love must be demonstrated by action.



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### ALL THE THINGS I LOVE

#### Supplies:

- ice cream
- chocolate sauce topping
- whipped cream
- sprinkles
- M & M candies
- mustard in a squeeze bottle
- a bowl
- ice cream scoop
- spoon

The object of this lesson is to show just how quickly we can change our minds when love is motivated by our feelings.

You will need a helper for this illustration. The helper should come to your class with all the items in a bag. He or she should announce that he wanted to bless you by giving you a surprise. He should say that he polled all your friends and asked them this question: What does \_\_\_\_\_ (your name) love?

The helper should then pull out your favorite flavor of Ice cream. You say I love \_\_\_\_\_ ice cream. Then the helper puts on the chocolate sauce, whipped cream, sprinkles, and M&M candy. After each of these you say that you love each item. Then close your eyes and begin to imagine digging into the ice cream (share your thoughts out loud.). While you are in your dreaming state, the helper pulls out the mustard opens the cap while saying, "And finally the thing everybody told me you love most and put on everything. . . . mustard!" Then he liberally coats the ice cream with the mustard. When you hear the word mustard you turn and yell, "No o o o!"

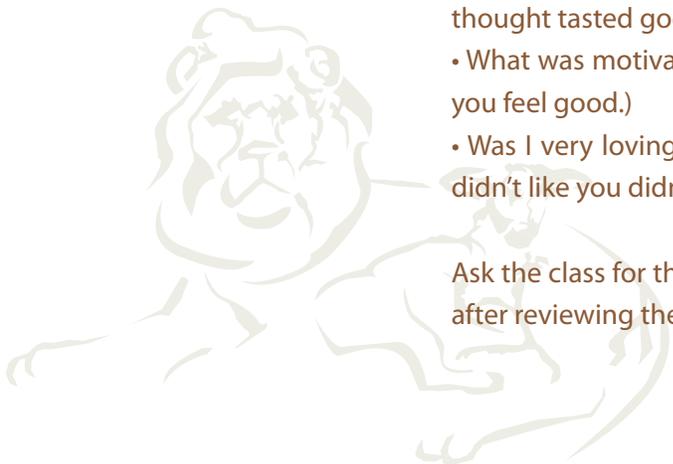
When the helper then turns and hands you the dessert, you refuse, saying that it is disgusting. He reviews each item and asks if you love it again. You say "Yes but I hate that and ask him to take it out of here."

The skit ends with the helper leaving the room all disappointed, taking everything with him.

Ask the class the following questions and then review the scripture.

- What was my love based on in this skit? (Your love was based on what you felt or thought tasted good)
- What was motivating my love? (Your love was motivated selfishly by what made you feel good.)
- Was I very loving to my friend? (No, even though he made something that you didn't like you didn't need to treat him harshly.)

Ask the class for their definition of love and write it on the board. See if it changes after reviewing the Bible passage.



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### PRAYER

Pick several children to pray based on the day's scripture passages.

### IN CLASS PROJECT

Draw a picture of the cross of Christ on a hill with the crosses of the thieves to the left and right. Then write the words, "This is love" across the top of your page.

### FOR THE OLDER GRADES

#### WORLDLY LOVE VS. GOSPEL MOTIVATED LOVE SKITS

Read through the Bible passage for today and teach the students about gospel motivated love then, divide the class up into groups of six to act out one of the following skits.

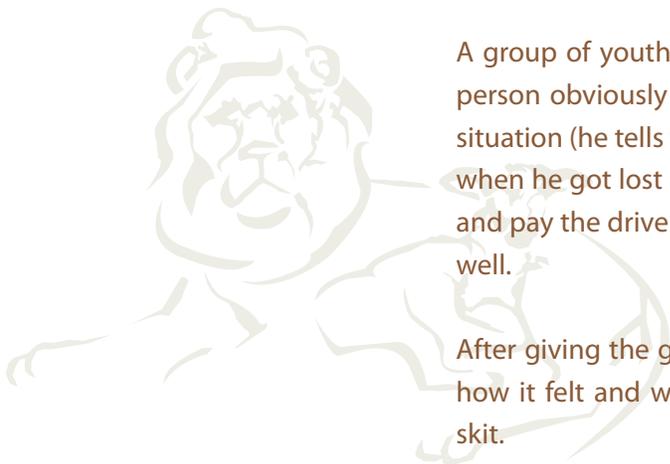
A group of youth conversing about all the different things they love. The object of this skit is to show just how many things we say we love.

A group of youth conversing about different passages in the Bible which have deeply affected them.

A group of youth, on their way to buy some ice cream, come across a homeless person obviously hurt in the street and say kind things to him but then are afraid to get involved.

A group of youth, on their way to buy some ice cream, come across a homeless person obviously hurt in the street and help him sit up, draw him out about his situation (he tells them that he is not homeless but was visiting his granddaughter when he got lost and then was mugged.) The youth ask for the address, call a taxi and pay the driver to take the man home. They give him an invitation to church as well.

After giving the groups time to work on their skit, watch all four skits. Talk about how it felt and what thoughts went through their minds as they prepared their skit.



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### A LITTLE BIT MORE

**The book of 1 John** - John's letter was addressed and written to Christians in general but does not mention any specific group of Christians by name. It is likely a letter meant to circulate among the churches. Historians place John in Ephesus during much of his last years of ministry, prior to being exiled. These same historians attribute this letter to John. The letter itself does not indicate who its author was. This letter contains similar phrases to John's Gospel and begins in a very similar fashion. The Gospel of John begins, "In the beginning was the Word," while 1 John begins, "That which was from the beginning."

