



Life Group Notes

Who am I? Our True Identity

Session 2: I am loved

Opening questions (to be used with sensitivity to the situations of your group members)

- What first comes into your head when you hear the word 'love'? Can it mean different things? What images come into your mind? What symbols are used to represent love? Do you have favourite songs which use that word?

NB C.S. Lewis wrote a book called 'The Four Loves' in which he discussed different kinds of love, using Greek words to describe them: familial or affectionate love (storge); friendship (philia); romantic love (eros); and spiritual love (agape). (<https://www.cslewis.com/four-types-of-love/>)

- Think of someone you love. Which of these kinds of relationships is it? How do they know you love them? How do you show it? Do you ever use the words 'I love you'? Do they reciprocate? What does it feel like, when you know someone really loves you? What does it feel like if you're unsure, or let down? (See Psalm 41.9)

Read: 1 John 4. 7-22

- John describes himself in his gospel as 'the disciple Jesus loved.' (See John 13. 21-26; 19. 25-27; 21.7 and 20-21) And he's sometimes called 'the apostle of love'. Yet when Jesus first called him and his brother James to be his disciples, they were nicknamed 'Sons of Thunder'! How might his special closeness to Jesus have changed him, and later affected his teaching in his letters to new Christians?
- Has the love shown you by other Christians been a factor in making you to want to know Jesus? When we were doing 'Lifepath' with children from local primary schools, last week, we knew we were not allowed to 'preach the gospel'. We could answer questions about our faith if children asked, but what we could and did do was to let them feel the love of God for each of them by the way we behaved and treated them.
- Carefully read verses 9-10, and compare them with John 3.16. What was God's motive in sending Jesus? Spend some time sharing your experiences of this and giving thanks.
- From verses 12 and 13, what is the role of the Holy Spirit in helping us experience God's love for us, and share it with other people? See Romans 5.5.
- Look at verses 19-21. There is a sequence of events here. Where does it all start? What is the result for us? What must be the wider outcome? Reflect: Do we need to ask the Holy Spirit to make us more loving?
- Is anything making it difficult for you to believe God loves you with unconditional love? If you are able, share this with your group so that you can pray for one another. Read Matthew 3.17 and imagine God saying to you, 'You are my beloved child'.

There are many songs on this theme. Here are some you might like to play or sing.

'And can it be' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tu2uA6U4Fvg>

'Reckless love' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sc6SSHuZvQE>

'O Lord, I receive your love' / 'Such love' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7a5abPFx7tU>