

LESSON 3: HOW DID JESUS SPELL RELATIONSHIP? L-O-V-E

This includes:

- 1. LEADER PREPARATION**
- 2. LESSON GUIDE**

1. LEADER PREPARATION**LESSON OVERVIEW**

Jesus came to earth with a plan to reconcile us to God by freeing us from our sin. After his death and resurrection, Jesus ascended to heaven and took his place at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us. So how will the rest of humanity be reconciled to God? Through us! Jesus tells us to love deeply and to lavish his love on the people he places in our lives.

Sometimes it's hardest to lavish love on those we know best. For example, we know so much about our siblings, down to every annoying detail, that we don't always feel love toward them. Or maybe on a particular day we don't feel they've earned the kind of love God commands us to share with one another. In this lesson, students will learn the importance of sharing Jesus' love with all the friends and family he's placed in our lives.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- 1. WHAT:** Students have the opportunity to lavish the life-changing love of Jesus on those closest to them.
- 2. WHY:** Teenagers who see themselves as agents of Jesus' love can profoundly affect how their family members and friends experience Jesus.
- 3. HOW:** By discovering in Scripture Jesus' desire to love through them, students can grasp their God-given purpose.

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE

John 13:34-35

SECONDARY SCRIPTURE

Mark 12:28-31

TEACHING PREP

**LEADER
TIP**

Use this short overview to prepare for your lesson. While you may not want to convey this information word-for-word with your group, you'll want to absorb it as you prepare to lead.

Read John 13:34-35.

As Jesus prepared himself for the cross, he met with his disciples, washing their feet, and giving them instructions. He included a new commandment—one on which the church would be built.

This commandment would introduce lost people to Jesus, even after his death. Jesus was counting on these disciples to carry out this commandment so that all people, for all time, would be reconciled to him.

In verse 34, Jesus gives the disciples this simple, clear commandment: “Love each other.” This changes everything. It provides grace where grace is needed. It feeds people who are hungry. It forgives people who have sinned against us. It heals broken relationships. Love each other.

Jesus tells his disciples that the one recognizable thing connecting them to him will be their love for each other. If you want the world to know you’re my disciples, he says, “Love each other. Just as I have loved you...” Jesus doesn’t say, “I command you to keep doing miracles in my name.” He doesn’t say, “My new commandment is that you build huge churches in my name.” He doesn’t say, “The world will know you’re my disciples because of your amazing teaching.”

Through love, we give people who don’t yet believe in Jesus a chance to recognize him and invite him to be Lord of their life. In this lesson, students will recognize the power of simply loving each other as Jesus loves us.

THE BEFORE & AFTER [OPTIONAL]

TEXTS OR TWEETS

Send one or both of these messages to your students prior to your meeting. As with the rest of the curriculum, edit these questions to fit the needs of your ministry.

- What did Jesus say will prove to the world that we’re his disciples? Come find out tonight!
- What’s the most recognizable characteristic of a Christian? Let’s talk about it this week.

PARENT EMAIL

Send this email to parents following the lesson to encourage them to continue the conversation at home. Feel free to edit and customize the email to fit your ministry needs.

Dear parents,

We’ve wrapped up our series focusing on the theme “Friends and Family.” Through studying various Scripture passages, students have been learning about their life-giving relationships with other people and with God.

In this third lesson, we read John 13:34-35 and discovered the new commandment Jesus gave his disciples right before he died on the cross. This was a simple commandment: to love each other the way Jesus had loved them.

This week, I encourage you to spend a few minutes talking with your teenager about our lesson. Consider building your conversation around these questions:

- What are some traits of Jesus' love? What does his love offer us that nothing else in this world can offer?
- What obstacles might hinder us from carrying out Jesus' new commandment?
- Think of a time you struggled to love someone close to you. How did you overcome that struggle? What did Jesus' love look like in that moment?

Thanks for all of your prayers for our students and our ministry. Have an amazing week!

LESSON 3: HOW DID JESUS SPELL RELATIONSHIP? L-O-V-E**2. LESSON GUIDE****GETTING THINGS STARTED [OPTIONAL]****LEADER
TIP**

Preview the following video for your group: youtube.com/watch?v=umLUKBlpyoY. You'll need an Internet connection and a computer or tablet to display the video for your participants.

Welcome your students and invite them into your meeting area. Open in prayer, and then play the video clip. Then **ASK**:

- *What's your initial response to this video clip? What might Mary's friends represent?*
- *How might God use these friends in Mary's life to show her his love? What would have to change to make that possible?*
- *How does this misrepresentation of God's love impact the friends' relationships with Mary? How might this exchange impact Mary's thoughts about and feelings toward God?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *This video clip showed a really poor demonstration of friends trying to "love" another friend back into relationship with God. The way Mary sees it, her friends don't know the first thing about love. She feels judged and attacked but certainly not loved. Jesus desires to love us through each other. One of the most honoring ways we can love Jesus is to love other people the way he loves us.*

TEACHING POINTS**LEADER
TIP**

Use the Teaching Points to help students capture the essence of each lesson with more discussion and less lecture-style teaching. Remember: All throughout these lessons, it's up to you to choose (1) how many questions you use and (2) the wording of the main points—keep ours, or change the wording to make it clearer for your audience.

Read John 13:34-35 together as a group. Because this passage is so brief, consider having students read the verses several times, from different translations of the Bible.

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Let's spend a few minutes reading through this powerful Scripture passage, which has transformed many hearts and changed many lives.*

1. LOVE ISN'T JUST BETWEEN YOU AND JESUS

ASK:

- *When have you experienced Jesus' love through a friend or family member? What impact did that have on you and your faith?*
- *When you think about the way Jesus loves you, what is it about his love that makes you want to share it with others?*
- *If someone has had difficulty experiencing and feeling Jesus' love, how might their friends and family be able to actively demonstrate Jesus' love to them?*
- *When you live out Jesus' commandment to love each other, how might that transform your relationships and your own life?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Sometimes we mistake tolerance and acceptance for love. We can tolerate our parents, but that isn't the same thing as loving them. We can accept our friends, but love goes beyond that. Each of us is worth more than mere tolerance or acceptance. Jesus commanded us to love each other so we'd experience the full measure of his love for us. That happens not only in relationship with Jesus but in our relationships with other people.*

2. THE DEEP AND WIDE LOVE OF JESUS

ASK:

- *What is it about Jesus' love that's so life-changing?*
- *How does Jesus' version of love compare to other versions of love?*
- *How does John 13:34-35 demonstrate Jesus' will and desire for each of us?*
- *Verse 35 says our love for one another proves that we're Jesus' disciples; how can the love we have for people around us help others see Jesus in our world today?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Picturing life without Jesus would have been very difficult for the disciples. But he didn't leave them without his Spirit. Jesus is still alive today, and his Spirit lives in us as we share his love with everyone around us.*

3. AND THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT GOES TO...

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *In Mark 12, Jesus is asked which commandment is greatest. In both passages we've read today, Jesus elevates love above everything else in life. The greatest commandment is to love the Lord our God, and the second, equally important commandment is to love our neighbors as ourselves. God made us to love and be loved.*

ASK:

- *How can love redefine your purpose and faith?*
- *How might you share Jesus' love with someone who doesn't claim to have a relationship with him?*

EXTRA DISCUSSION [OPTIONAL]

Ask students to form groups of two or three to discuss these questions.



ASK:

- Read Mark 12:28-31. Why is it equally important to Jesus that we love our neighbors with the same measure and authenticity that we love him?
- Why is it significant that Jesus chooses to love us through other people?

Bring everyone back together, and ask for volunteers to share answers to the previous questions, as time permits.

LIVING IT OUT

ASK:

- Love defines Jesus; it is who he is. What is the difference between following Jesus' command to love and being defined by love?
- What have you pursued with such passion that it has defined you? What steps can you take so love defines you?
- What are some things that hinder your ability to love someone the way Jesus loves them? What might help you overcome those obstacles to loving people that way?

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Jesus wants each of us to know his immeasurable and boundless love. Being on the receiving end of that love is amazing, but there's also the giving end. Jesus gives life to other people through our willingness to share his love with them. That isn't always easy, but we have a helper. The Holy Spirit encourages and guides us as we extend love to others.*

SUMMARY



Provide a quick summary or take-home challenge based on (1) this lesson's content, (2) the dialogue that took place today, (3) your understanding of the issues and struggles your teenagers are facing, and (4) the big picture of your youth ministry and what your leadership team wants accomplished with the teaching and discussion time.

FOR KEEPS [MEMORY VERSE]

Encourage and/or challenge your teenagers to memorize the Scripture below.

"So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other" (John 13:34).