

How Can I Be Saved?

Lesson 3: Love in Jesus (Part 2)

Vocabulary:

idol	to empty (oneself)	to resolve (a conflict)	to show up for
possession	to behave	to lay down one's life	overall
to consume	to treat people	attitude	sinful nature
bank account	to resist	community	to reveal
to revere (n. reverence)	temptation	wonders	administration
awe	to drive out (demons)	genuine	to distinguish
curiosity	to impact	mourning (to mourn)	practical
to compete	to work through	victory	
restrictive	meaningful	celebration	

Discussion:

In the last lesson, we talked about how God wants us to respond to the love he has shown us through Jesus. What is love? What does love look like? A popular American book *The Five Love Languages*, by Gary Chapman, describes the different ways that people can feel loved. Through Chapman's study, we learn that we all enjoy being loved the way we want to be loved, not always the way *others* want to love us. Some people feel loved through words of encouragement, hugs and kisses, gifts, spending time with a person, being served or supported, or some other way. Chapman's work shows that the ways we *feel* loved is not the same for everyone, but there are some common ways we can show love.

Think of that last time you felt truly loved. What makes you feel loved by others?

Loving Jesus through Worship

Our hearts are made to worship. Whether we are a follower of Jesus or an atheist, everyone worships someone or something. In the Bible we see people worshipping **idols** made with human hands. We see people worshipping gods other than God the Father, the One God who gave his life as a sacrifice for our sins. Today, people might worship their **possessions**, appearance, relationships, titles and positions, attention or self-honor, money, travel, romance, exercise, movies or videos, games, sports, the news, sleep, alcohol or drugs. Whoever or whatever **consumes** our attention, thoughts, conversations, time, or **bank account**, and wherever we go the most often for peace, rest, or comfort: This is who and what we worship.

Jesus defines who we should worship and how important that worship should be. He says, "Worship the Lord your God and serve him only" (Luke 4:8, NIV). Here Jesus is quoting the Old Testament verse: "Fear the Lord your God; serve him only" (Deuteronomy 6:13), where "fear" can also mean "to **revere**," "to honor," as well as to fear with **reverence**, **awe**, amazement, and deep **curiosity**.¹ Interestingly, Jesus doesn't say that God should be at the top of our worship list. He says that we should worship and serve God *only*. Wow! That's quite a challenge, but Jesus is revealing how our Lord wants to be loved. If we want to show God our love, then we must clear our hearts, minds, lives, and schedules of anything that **competes** with our worship of God.

¹ "3372. yare'," *Thayer's Greek Lexicon*, electronic database (Biblesoft, 2011), <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/3372.htm>.

Think about these questions: Who or what causes you to fear, revere, honor, or feel awe, amazement, or deep curiosity? What consumes your attention, thoughts, conversations, time, or bank account? Where do you go most often for peace, rest, or comfort? While certain parts of our lives do take our time and money – our jobs, families, friends, health, rest, etc. – we can ask ourselves these questions: “Have I given the Lord control over these areas of my life? Am I serving the Lord in these areas or someone else, including myself?” If we want to learn the love language of our Lord, then we must turn our hearts and lives over to worshipping him only.

Think about your life and relationship with God. Do you worship God alone? What else do you worship?

What would worshipping God alone look like in your life? Do you desire this way of life? Explain.

While we may feel that God’s love language is difficult and **restrictive**, the truth is that the more we **empty ourselves** for Jesus, the more God can fill our lives and hearts with his love, joy, and Spirit! Many of us want to be filled with the Holy Spirit, but the first step is to make room in our lives and hearts for his power and love.

Loving Jesus through Action

As we remember from the last lesson, God *is* love. For this reason, we can learn how to love the way God loves by looking at Jesus. Jesus showed love to the Father by obeying his Father’s commands (John 5:19). He depended on his Father through prayer (Mark 1:35) and spoke all that his Father told him to speak (John 14:10). Jesus also loved people from his heart and spent his life helping others to know and love God also. He was the light of God to others through how he spoke, **behaved**, and **treated people**. He loved his enemies, spoke God’s truth to them, and forgave them when they sinned against him (Luke 23:34). He led a pure and sinless life and **resisted temptation** (Hebrew 4:15 Matthew 4:1-11). He gave to the poor, healed the sick, **drove demons out** of people, and prayed powerfully for others in need. He brought people into a relationship with God and made an eternal **impact** on their lives.

Jesus didn’t just teach his followers; he showed them how to live **meaningful** lives by loving one another, serving together, and even healing others. Jesus prayed over his followers (John 17) and healed their family members (Luke 4:38-41, John 11). He showed them how to **work through** problems they had with each other and how to **resolve conflicts** in their relationships (Mark 10:35-44, Matthew 18:15-20). Jesus loved his followers so much that he called them his family and even sacrificed time with his own family to be with them (Matthew 12:48-50). After he showed them how to love, he then sent them out to do the same for others (Matthew 10). In John 15, Jesus describes how he feels loved:

⁹As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love... ¹²My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love has no one than this: to **lay down one’s life** for one’s friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command.

How does Jesus want us to love him? What would loving Jesus look like today?

Today, Jesus wants us to love him by obeying him and loving others the way he loves them, especially those who are also trying to follow Jesus. Yet even when people hurt us or hate us, Jesus wants us to be love and light to them, forgiving them and showing them love in return, instead of hatred and anger. He

wants us to be his light through our words, actions, and **attitude**, and speak as though we are speaking God's words, not words that the world speaks. He wants us to give to people in need, pray for them, care for them, drive out demons, and heal the sick in his name. Jesus wants us to sacrifice our time and energy to teach people who he is and help others to follow him. He wants us to invite people to be a part of our lives and our families so they can see what it really means to follow him.

In Acts 2, when Jesus's follower Peter taught the people about Jesus, three thousand committed their lives to Jesus and were baptized. Immediately they formed a **community**, which we now call "church." Here's an example of how they loved Jesus, each other, and the world around them:

⁴²The believers spent their time listening to the teaching of the apostles. They shared everything with each other. They ate together [took the Lord's Supper together] and prayed together. ⁴³Many **wonders** and miraculous signs were happening through the apostles, and everyone felt great respect for God. ⁴⁴All the believers stayed together and shared everything. ⁴⁵They sold their land and the things they owned. Then they divided the money and gave it to those who needed it. ⁴⁶The believers shared a common purpose, and every day they spent much of their time together in the Temple area. They also ate together in their homes. They were happy to share their food and ate with joyful hearts. ⁴⁷The believers praised God and were respected by all the people. More and more people were being saved every day, and the Lord was adding them to their group. (Acts 2:42, ERV)

Describe the relationships these believers had with each other. How does it show their **genuine** love for Jesus and for one another?

Describe your closest relationships at church. How are you showing love to them? How could you make new friends and show love to them?

How are you making new friends outside of church? In what ways can you grow in loving them?

Paul also tells us to encourage one another daily, so that we can all stay strong against sin (Hebrews 3:13) and grow in our faith (I Thessalonians 5:11). Encouraging others can be as simple as picking up the phone to say "Hello," praying together, sharing stories of God's power and love, sharing scriptures, studying the Bible together, or just spending time with one another. Maybe someone needs our physical or emotional help, or simply our words of love and encouragement. Maybe someone needs help moving into a new home or practicing English. They might need a meal or someone to babysit their children for a few hours. Maybe they are sick and can't clean their home.

Love encourages others during times of sadness, difficulty, sin, and **mourning**, as well as times of joy, happiness, **victory**, and **celebration**! Love goes beyond just doing activities together: loving is talking, listening, learning a person's life story, and caring about their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. Love goes beyond texting and just **showing up for** church or events. Love meets a friend for coffee or invites someone to dinner. Love is open, honest, and truthful at the right times and places. Love and encouragement can be expressed in many ways! **Overall**, loving Jesus means that we no longer live for ourselves, filling our lives with what we want to do, but living to love him, his followers, and others who don't know him yet. Through your love, many will see Jesus and come to know him in deeper ways.

Imagine a church where people love this way. Describe what that could look like. What can you do to help your church to grow in love?

Loving Jesus through the Spirit

We might be wondering, can I really love this way? I've never loved God or people this way. It's true that we cannot love Jesus or people this way by ourselves because we are sinners. Even as we begin to walk in love, we will face the challenges of our **sinful nature**. Yet, when we place our faith and trust in Jesus as the Lord and Savior of our lives, he does something special for us to show how much he loves us:

¹⁵ If you love me, you will obey my commands. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever – ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth... You know him, for he lives with you and will be in you... ²¹ Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.
(John 14:15-17, NIV)

According to Jesus, how do we receive his Spirit? (vv. 15-16) How will we know if his Spirit is inside us or someone else? (vv. 17, 21)

Jesus doesn't expect us to obey him or understand all that is true about him without his help. When we decide to obey Jesus, he sends his Spirit, the Counselor, to live inside us to help us, guide us, teach us, and remind us of all that he taught. He even gives us special gifts to **reveal** more of his power through us: wisdom, knowledge, faith, **administration**, healing, miraculous powers, prophecy, teaching, serving, **distinguishing** different spirits, speaking in different languages and tongues, and interpreting those languages (I Corinthians 12:7-11; 28-31). Do you remember Isaiah's prophecy about the Son? Isaiah calls the Son "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace." This Wonderful Counselor is the Spirit of Jesus living in us! Jesus places his Spirit inside anyone who wants to obey him.

Have you decided to obey Jesus? Explain. If you have already decided to obey Jesus, then how have you sensed the Holy Spirit in your life?

If you have received the Holy Spirit, what gifts has he given you? How do you see them working in your life?

Do you desire more gifts of the Spirit? Which ones and why? Pray together for these gifts.

Write in your journal:

1. Take time to worship the Lord, and praise him for the ways he loves you and others. Write some **practical** ways that you want to worship the Lord and show Jesus's love to others this month.
2. Praise Jesus for the Holy Spirit and the gifts he's given you. Pray for the gifts you would still like to have in your life!
3. Keep learning about what it means to love Jesus in our next study: *Love in Jesus* (Part 3).