

NOTES

RELATIONSHIP



WEEK 1 | Into Me See - Relationships and the Four Loves

PRAYER

"Lord, as we gather together, we thank You for the love You have shown us through Jesus Christ. Help us to understand and embody your love. May our hearts be shaped by Your love, and may we walk in love that is patient, kind, and enduring. Guide our discussion and open our hearts to see love and relationships through Your eyes. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."

OPENING QUESTION

(OPTIONAL)

"What is one of the most memorable acts of love or friendship you have ever experienced or seen?"



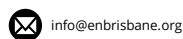
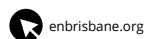
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WORD

"If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends."

[1 Corinthians 13:1-8a \(ESV\)](#)

In 1 Corinthians 13:1-8, Paul describes the essence of true love, placing emphasis on that without love, all other virtues and gifts are meaningless. This passage outlines God's design for love, highlighting its characteristics as patient, kind, humble, and enduring.

C.S. Lewis, in his book "The Four Loves," describes four types of love: Eros (romantic love), Philia (friendship), Storge (familial love - e.g. like the love of a mother to her children), and Agape (unconditional love). Each type of love has its unique attributes and plays a crucial role in our relationships. However, it is Agape—God's unconditional love—that sets the foundation for all other forms of love. Agape is selfless, sacrificial, and seeks the best for others without expecting anything in return. This is the love that Christ exemplified in his life, and his death. He now calls those who follow him to emulate his love as we receive his love.

In today's world, we face numerous challenges in loving and being loved as God intended. Social pressures, misunderstandings, past hurts, and fear of vulnerability can hinder our ability to form deep, meaningful relationships. To overcome these challenges, we need to root ourselves in God's love. By experiencing Christ's love, we can overflow with love towards others, practicing patience, kindness, and forgiveness. This often is prompted through a vulnerability as proximity in relationships of every kind is established. Andy Crouch, in his book "The Life We're Looking For: Reclaiming Relationship in a Technological World" said that "Our individual loneliness, our anxiety, our depression, our broken and disappointed families, our fractured communities, are not what they are because of some choice we could easily unmake or remake... So it is no wonder that the defining condition of our time is a sense of loneliness and alienation.

For if human flourishing requires us to love with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength, what happens when nothing in our lives develops those capacities? With what, exactly, will we love?"

Practical solutions to nurture biblical love in a cultural climate plagued with

loneliness and anxiety would be to dedicate oneself to regular prayer and reflection on Scripture, not just for the task of reading and praying, but to deepen our connection and intimacy of relationship with God. Reading the Bible to meet with the Author, and praying to commune beyond the communication.

All this should be in conjunction with building a community where love is prioritized can transform our relationships and help us grow closer to God and each other. Crouch calls these communities "Households" and says of them: "This is the one thing we need more than any other: a community of recognition. While we must always insist that every human being is a person whether or not they are seen or treated as one by others, we also know that no human being can flourish as a person unless they are seen and treated as one. And for that, the household is the first and best place. We need a place where we cannot hide. We need a place where we cannot get lost." May we be a people who love others well within and even into these "Households", whilst immersing ourselves in the Agape of Jesus Christ.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do you see the four types of love (Eros, Philia, Storge, Agape) operating in your own relationships both in the way you give and receive these loves? If so describe those relationships. If not, why might you think this is?
2. When Crouch mentions the idea of being a part of "households" as communities of recognition where they are seen and treated as one by others, do you feel this is something you are a part of? Why/Why Not? How might you create these environments for others to feel a part of "household" around you?
3. What stands out to you most about the description of love in 1 Corinthians 13:1-8? How can we nurture deeper sense of this description of Christ's love in our every day lives?
4. Consider the different places that you go into every week. Who might God be leading you to show Agape this week, and how might you show this Agape in a practical way? Commit to being led by the Spirit and connecting this week with those God may be leading you to.

"Lord Jesus, we acknowledge You as the source of all true love. We thank You for the love You have shown us and the example You set. We ask for Your help to love deeply and well, guided by Your Spirit. For those who do not yet know You, we pray they open their hearts to receive Your love today. Empower us to walk in love, to build strong relationships, and to reflect Your love to everyone we meet. In Your holy name, we pray. Amen."