

SERIES: DARE TO LOVE

"Truth or Dare?"

SERIES FOCUS: Love is the foundation of our relationship with God and others. We must learn to love as Christ loves.

LESSON FOCUS: After reviewing what Godly love is and what it is not, tonight we end this series by going just a little deeper into the life application of love.

Scripture Passage: 1 Corinthians 16:14 (ESV) – "Let all that you do be done in love."

- A. Truth or Dare – the game of the bravest children! When you were young, you played this game – the idea was someone would challenge you to either speak the truth (as if lying was a natural alternative), or they would challenge you to some crazy, slightly wild and dangerous dare – to do something only the brave would do – you know...like lick a toilet seat or stick your hand in an anthill!
 - a. Well, tonight, we are going to play that game together – I challenge every one of you to a game of Truth or Dare!
 - b. Since you're not all here in person to give me your answer, this is how we will play. There's only one of two options for you to pick and I will challenge you to both.
 - c. You will either accept the challenge to the truth...
 - d. Or you will accept the challenge to be dared...
 - e. How will you choose?
- B. If you choose to be challenged to truth, then here's the challenge: **After having learned what it means to love as Christ loves – to love Him and to love others – I challenge every believer to speak the truth of God's love!**
 - a. **What is the truth of God's love?** Let's phrase these as questions:
 - b. Is it true that God's love is the greatest attribute and portion of His existence and being?

- i. The answer is YES – this is true! We must never forget that God is love. Everything that flows from God flows from love! It is the greatest part of who He is.
 - ii. **1 John 4:8 (ESV)** – “Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.”
- c. Is it true that Godly love is a necessary manifestation in our lives, in order for people to know that we are Christians?
 - i. The answer is YES – this is true! The world around us will never know that we are the children of God, until we begin to start allowing Godly love to be manifested outwardly.
 - ii. **John 13:35 (ESV)** – “35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”
- d. Is it true that in order to claim that we love God, we must demonstrate love to others?
 - i. The answer is YES – this is true! We’ve got to let our love be genuine for one another and stop pretending to love. It needs to be real. If we have anger, disdain, or even hatred for others then we have no love for even Christ!
 - ii. **1 John 4:20-21 (ESV)** – “20 If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. 21 And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.”
- e. Is it true that Godly love empowers us to forgive those who have wronged us?
 - i. The answer is YES – this is true! In order to experience Christ’s love in its fulness, we must embrace His forgiveness of our sins. Likewise, when we experience His forgiveness, we must be willing to lay down our feelings of hurt, and anger towards those who have wronged and hurt us. We must forgive!

- ii. **1 Peter 4:8 (ESV)** – “Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.”
- f. Is it true that love will cause us to place others before ourselves? That love will put us in a position of service and humility?
 - i. The answer is YES – this is true! When you love, you give! You give of your time, your talent, and your treasure. You think of others before you think of yourself. You place others’ interest above your own. You maintain a posture of humility and service, without expectation of reward!
 - ii. **John 15:13 (ESV)** – “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.”
- g. Is it true that Godly love is the foundation of our faith? That without it, nothing else we do for Christ matters?
 - i. The answer is YES – this is true! If you do not love God and love people, then everything you do for Christ is in vain!
 - ii. **Mark 12:29-31 (ESV)** – “Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”
- h. Is it true that the key to overcoming fear and anxiousness is rooted in knowing God’s love?
 - i. The answer is YES – this is true! The more intimate our relationship is with Christ, the more security and peace of mind we have in Him. Because of Christ’s unending, unwavering love, I have peace that casts away my fears.
 - ii. **1 John 4:18 (ESV)** – “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.”

- i. Is it true that Godly Love is what creates a spirit of unity?
 - i. The answer is YES – this is true! There cannot be unity in God’s church, in your home, or in your relationships without Godly love. Love binds us together in one mind, driven towards one purpose.
 - ii. **Colossians 3:14 (ESV)** – “And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.”
 - j. All of these are true. Here’s the ultimate truth about Godly love – **it’s non-negotiable**. It’s essential. You cannot live without it. The beautiful part is that it’s a gift and always available.
 - k. Will it cost you something? To be a recipient-of – no, God’s love is for everyone. To be a giver-of – **absolutely it will cost you**. It will cost you your pride, your justified anger, your time, your heart, your treasure, your feelings, your talents. It will cost you many things – but the reward is not little. The reward is seeing souls saved – seeing your family living for God, seeing your friends come to church, seeing your children baptized! The reward will be living in a state of happiness – having peace of mind amidst chaos – finding fulfillment and purpose in God’s kingdom – walking in the power of God’s Spirit, displaying the fruit of the Spirit.
 - l. These are the truths of Godly love. As believers we must strive to maintain it. We must strive to share it. We must strive to live it!
 - m. So this takes us to those of you, who chose the “Dare” option in our game tonight.
- C. If you chose to be challenged to dare, then here is the challenge: **I DARE YOU TO LOVE WITH GODLY LOVE, ALL THE TIME, EVERYWHERE AND WITH EVERYONE! I DARE YOU TO LOVE.**
- a. I dare you to decide right here and right now today to *forgive*.
 - i. Forgive yourself – you’re not the evil, bad, mess up, failure person that the enemy has been trying to get you to believe you are.

- ii. Forgive others – forgive that person who hurt you. If you need to take a trusted friend or mentor with you to confront that person, then do so, but forgive them. It will free you. It will heal you. Even if they do not accept your forgiveness, learn to forgive – love to forgive.
- b. I dare you to make up in your mind right here and now, that from this day forward you will love God with all of your heart, soul and mind – with everything you have!
 - i. God doesn't want part of you. He does want the remnants of your time and devotion. He wants all of you. He wants your whole heart. Stop giving yourself over to other things, other people, and other pursuits that are wasted time – that have no real meaning. Give yourself over to Jesus Christ. Surrender to Him. Embrace His will. Follow His direction. Obey His Word. Love Him with everything you've got!
- c. I dare you to also decide today that you will make an intentional effort to love others better than you ever have before!
 - i. Pray and ask God to give you a passion for others – for your neighbors. Every guest that comes to your church, ask God to give you the compassion and boldness to show love to them.
 - ii. Pray for God to give you a love for your brothers and sisters in the church. Become concerned for one another's lives. Become passionate about doing life with your brethren. Make new friends. Show love to your brothers and sisters in as many ways as you can. Stop arguing, disagreeing, fighting, bickering and gossiping! Love more – love better.
 - iii. Pray for God to give you a love for strangers. Every person you pass daily is a chance to show God's love. No matter how short or small the interaction, no chance to show God's love is insignificant. Smile more – stop “mad-dogging” strangers. Love them, get a burden for their soul.

- iv. Pray for God to give you a love for your family – your spouse, or children, or parents, or siblings. If your family is missing the love of God, then your life will reflect frustration and anger. God’s love is not central to the church building – it’s central location should be your heart. Take God’s love into your home. Love your spouse and express it exuberantly! Love your children, and show it! Love your family – if healing needs to take place, then do what needs to be done. Kill with kindness and love!
 - v. Pray and ask God to give you a love for our community and evangelism! Everyone should be part of soul-winning. Get a passion for your community. Get a passion for church growth. Not for the numbers and benefits of a large congregation, but for the satisfaction and fulfilment of seeing another lost soul pulled from the clutches of Hell’s grasp and gaining another brother or sister in eternity!
- d. I dare you to allow God’s love to change you – to help you develop the fruit of God’s Spirit!
- i. Aren’t you tired of your anger? Aren’t you tired of frowning all of the time? Aren’t you tired of feeling hopeless? Don’t you wish you had more patience and kindness? Aren’t you tired of people always assuming you’ll be angry, irritated or upset? Aren’t you tired of being known as the rude guy or gal?
 - ii. Well, guess what – God is tired of these things too. He wants you to change. He loves you too much to leave you the way you are. He has a better version of yourself for you.
 - iii. Submit to God’s will – become accountable to spiritual leadership – get help...and change! You’ll love better for it, and everyone else will love you better for it!
- e. I dare you to love above and beyond, to the point of giving greater!
- i. I know what you’ve done now, up to this point, is most likely commendable. But can you love better? Can you give more?

- ii. Let your love for God and love for people be so great, that your giving – your service – supersedes everyone’s expectations – even your own!
 - iii. God blesses you so you can be a blessing. If you hoard God’s blessings for yourself you’re sure to soon run out of them. But if you give God’s blessings over and over again, you’re sure to always be overflowing in the blessing.
 - iv. Give because you love. Serve because you love. Get in a ministry team. Stop being a Sunday-morning-attende...become a Dream Team server!
- f. I dare you to be more kind to people – to crucify rudeness.
- i. You’re not always right. Even if you are – be nice about it. Let your speech be seasoned with grace. Talk nicer.
 - ii. Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words **absolutely will hurt me**. Show kindness – show love. Get rid of that angry, mean, bitter spirit that pushes you to “naturally” be rude and impolite.
 - iii. Remember, everywhere you go, you’re a child of God. Talk like one – act like one – love like one. Remember, Jesus said others will identify you as His disciple by your love.
 - iv. Correct yourself when you’re rude and apologize!
- g. I dare you to hope again – to believe in God again!
- i. The enemy of your hope is disbelief and distrust in God. Believe again in Him! Trust in His promises and His Word! They will not return void unto you!
 - ii. Remember that the devil is the father of a lies. If he’s telling you something – he’s lying. You are worth it. There is better things ahead for you. God is on your side! Trust in His Word and believe again – hope again!

h. I dare you to love again!

- i. For some, it's been a long time since you loved – truly. The way God wants you to love. It's been a long time since you allowed God to love on you.
- ii. Your heart doesn't have to be hard and cold. Your situation doesn't have to seem hopeless and fearful. You do not have to be afraid of the unknown.
- iii. You do not have to feel without purpose, or hopeless. You do not have to be stuck in ministry. You do not have to harbor feelings of hurt or distrust. You do not have to think that things will never change.
- iv. You can choose to embrace God's love. It's waiting for you. You just have to believe and have the courage to love!
- v. Either one you picked tonight points you towards the heart and feet of Jesus. Truth – embrace the truth of God's love and express it. Dare – dare to love the Christ wants you to love...and the only way you can dare to love, is to embrace the truth.