

SERIES: DARE TO LOVE
“PUTTING LOVE INTO ACTION”

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

LESSON FOCUS: Expressing our love verbally is important – however words are not enough. We must learn to put our love into action.

Scripture Passage: 1 John 3:18 (NLT) – “18 Dear children, let’s not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions.”

A. “Actions speak louder than words.”

- a. You’ve heard this before. You’ve also probably experienced it.
- b. You have those friends, or relatives, who will tell you – “I love you, I’d do anything for you.” But they’ve never done a single thing for you in your life. When you ask them for something they make excuses as to why they cannot, or they may even pretend like they never knew you asked in the first place. Their love is surface-level love – it’s as hollow as their words and intentions.
- c. Then you have those friends, or relatives, who say “I love you” and do not even have to *tell you* that they’d do anything for you. They just do it. Sometimes, you do not even have to go looking or asking, they’re just there. They express their love to you more by what they do than by what they say. The expressed words of their love is bound by the integrity of their actions.
- d. Which friend, or relative, do you love more? Which one get’s the birthday party invite, or the special Christmas gift? Which one holds more value in your heart? The Talker? Or the Doer?
- e. As we strive to love like Christ loves, we must learn to put our love into action.

B. Jesus showed the greatest example of love put into action, by loving us so much that He gave His life for ours.

- a. **John 3:16 (ESV)** – 16 “For God so loved the world, that he **gave** his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”
- b. **John 15:12-13 (ESV)** – “12 “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.”
- c. By Jesus’s example of love put into action, we must strive to show our love through our actions. What actions does love take? Let’s take a closer look at actions of love.

C. Love is patient.

- a. Patience is the ability to deal with a great deal of distress without becoming angry and annoyed.
- b. Patience is vital for deep, intimate, and significant relationships. Understanding and accepting that we are all flawed people with weaknesses, inabilities, and foolish behaviors is the foundation for patience.
- c. Patience is not a natural quality that people are born with. It takes intention, practice, trial and error, and prayer.
- d. A patient person creates the space and acceptance that other people need to blossom and thrive as individuals.
- e. **Patience in The Bible:**
 - a. **Romans 8:25 (ESV)** – “But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.”
 - b. **Isaiah 40:31 (ESV)** – “But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.”
- f. **Life Application:** We must pray and ask the Lord to help us love with patience.

- i. Think about that that person you love who always pushes your buttons or makes your irritated.
- ii. Think about the things that you're hoping to see in your relationships that seem like they will never manifest.
- iii. Think about the moments that you've lost your patience with others, yourself, or even God.
- iv. Write these moments and encounters down and pray about them. Review them introspectively and try to identify how you could have displayed greater patience in those moments. Plan out ways to practice your patience for future encounters.
- v. Maybe it's listening more and talking less.
- vi. Maybe it's giving space even when you don't want to.
- vii. Maybe it's choosing to see the positive in things while you pray for change in the negative things.
- viii. Maybe it's saying nothing at all and just continuing to pray and believe God is working on things you cannot see.

D. Love is kind.

- a. Someone once defined love as "giving until it hurts". This definition of love implies an extreme level of kindness in one's heart, to go even further than the extra mile to show love.
- b. When we show kindness, we give until it hurts. In other words, we keep the other persons feelings and needs at the forefront of our mind and at the heart of our intentions.
- c. Kindness drives us to show someone how much they mean to us. The kinder we love, the greater the impact of our love.
- d. Kindness breaks down walls and barriers, it heals hurts and wounds, it restores relationship and shows mercy.

e. **Kindness in the Bible:**

- i. **Proverbs 15:1** – “A thoughtful, kind word can cause anger to dissolve and allow a relationship to repair.”
- ii. **Ephesians 4:32** – “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”

f. **Life Application:** We must be intentional about showing kindness with our love.

- i. Think about ways that someone you love has shown kindness to you.
- ii. Think about how their kindness has made you feel towards them.
- iii. Think about times where you were prompted by the Holy Spirit to show kindness, but you chose to ignore those feelings. Why did you ignore them?
- iv. Think about how you can show more kindness to those whom you love.
- v. If you're an easily irritable person, or find yourself often angered, you will find it hard to be kind to others. If this is you, then you need to pray for God to take away your anger and help you be kinder to people.
- vi. Pray and ask God to identify people in your life who you could show even greater kindness to. Make a real life plan of how to implement greater kindness in your life.

E. **Love protects.**

- a. It is common for people to be fearful of betrayal and hurt. We desire to feel safe and desired when we open our hearts to other people.
- b. When people open their hearts up to us, love will drive us to protect them.

c. We show our willingness to protect someone by bearing their errors in a forgiving manner and by refusing to expose their weaknesses and mistakes to others.

d. **Protecting Others in the Bible:**

- i. **Philippians 2:4 (ESV)** – “Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”
- ii. **Psalm 82:4 (ESV)** – “Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.”

e. **Life Application:**

- i. Think about a time when someone betrayed your confidence and trust, when they failed to protect you. How did that make you feel? Have you done the same to someone else?
- ii. Is it hard to love others sometimes because you have been betrayed, or felt that your love was not protected?
- iii. Has there been times, when you have failed to protect your love with someone to get ahead for yourself?
- iv. Pray and ask the Lord to protect your heart and mind.
- v. Also pray and ask God to give you the ability to remain faithful to protection – to confidence – to helping someone.
- vi. Protection is made possible through honest, open communication on both ends. Protect those whom you love.

F. **Love hopes.**

- a. Hopefulness goes beyond optimism for the believer. Hoping in God is believing by faith.
- b. **Hebrews 11:1 (NLT)** – “Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see.”

- c. When we have faith, we must demonstrate it – otherwise our faith is dead. How do we demonstrate it? We put faith into action – we continue to hope. We continue to pray and believe even when we do not see the desired results. We continue to trust God even when it seems like He is not responding to us.
- d. While maintaining a positive attitude in our relationships is necessary, optimism is not Godly hopefulness and faith. Optimism can quickly be overcome by pessimism in an unhealthy or struggling relationship.
- e. However, faith in God and hopefulness transcends optimism because optimism hopes for the best in people and a situation; faith hopes for the best in God. Faith helps me believe what only God can do.
- f. When we love, we must love with hope and faith.
- g. **Hope in the Bible:**
 - i. **Romans 15:13 (NLT)** – “I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.”
 - ii. **Hebrews 10:23 (NLT)** – “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.”
- h. **Life Application:**
 - i. Romans 10:17 says, “Faith comes by hearing the word of God.”, therefore in order to obtain the hope we need, we must immerse ourselves in God’s Word.
 - ii. How does your love remain hopeful for someone when it seems hopeless? You pray and ask God to help you love as He loves – unconditionally.

- iii. Identify what voices are speaking to your life. Where is the negativity coming from? Where is the pessimism coming from? Silence those voices by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- iv. Choose to infiltrate your heart and mind with positive, encouraging things. Listen to hopeful Christian music, listen to the promises of God by hearing/watching preaching. Surround yourself with friends and loved ones who will speak life into you.
- v. Find ways that you can demonstrate greater hope in your relationships. Intentionally choose and determine in your mind – this is not the end...our story isn't over...there is light at the end of the tunnel...greater things are ahead.

When we gave our life to Christ, we did not merely confess our sins and take a road of repentance from wrongdoing. Yes, that was part of the journey, but our salvation experience was so much more. When we gave our life to Christ, we crucified and buried the "old man". We were buried with Christ in baptism. Likewise, we were raised to new life, as a new creature, and have taken on the name of Jesus as a covering over lives. By taking on that name – we do not only embrace the forgiveness that comes with it, but we embrace and behold the virtues also.

How many born again believers are enjoying the benefits of forgiveness and eternal salvation as a "new man", but still living and loving like their "old man" – after their carnal nature?

Do we say we love people, but not show it through our actions? Are we still holding onto a grudge against someone? Do we let people open up their hearts to us just to turn around and expose it to everyone else? Are we always irritated and annoyed, and blame other people's actions, when in reality it is our own anger issues we refuse to deal with? Do we pretend to be kind when it benefits us, but show our true colors when few spectators are around? Is our love real? Actionable? Or is it hollow and shallow? On the surface?

Christ did not just say "I love the world". He acted upon His words. He *showed* His love by putting it into action.