

Sunday Sermon Notes

"Tough Love"

The Principle of Christ-like love:

Love is not based on our feelings
Love is expressed through our behavior

Sometime it's hard to know how to love:

When bad decisions are being made
When past efforts have not worked
When consequences are severe
When fear of failure is overwhelming

Two ways of loving that almost never work:

Love that enables: "safety-net love"
Love that controls: "gerbil cage love"

Tough love comes in two forms:

Love that intervenes: Hebrews 12:5-6

Compassionate confrontation
Definite plan of action
Clarity of consequences
Willingness to follow through

Love that lets go: Luke 15:11-32

Clarifying the reality of love
Opening up the cage door
Letting consequences happen
Wait for the chance to love

Why is tough love so tough?

It is tough on the person being loved.
It is tough on the person who loves.

Why is tough love so important?

Strategy: It is my best chance of success

Tough love requires God's help for

Wisdom to know what to do
Courage to follow through

Digging Deeper

Notes for Individual Meditation and Small Group Discussion

Reviewing the Sermon:

What have you learned about "tough love" that you had not thought about before?

Why do you think we are so often guilty of using the two ways of loving that don't work rather than implement tough love?

Which type of tough love have you found to be the most difficult to use?

If you can, share with your group a situation in which you have or now need to use tough love. What is the most difficult part of tough love for you in this situation?

Note to leaders: It is possible that the discussion in your group about "tough love" will use up all your time for your meeting. If this happens, be sure to take time to pray with each other for "wisdom" and "courage." The Bible study below is optional for groups who do not take a lot of time discussing the sermon.

Bible Study: 1 Corinthians 13:1-12

Discussion Questions

(Remember that not all questions must be used)

This Bible study is intended to be a summarization of the principles we have been studying through this sermon series on "loving like Jesus." This passage may be divided into three sections: The necessity of love (vss. 1-3), The character of love (vss.4-7) The blessings of love (vss. 8-13)

Based on what you read in verses 1-3, how would you characterize Paul's teaching about the necessity of love? How have you seen Christians place an emphasis on something other than love? What happens to these other things when love is present in a person's life?

Read verses 4-7. What characteristic of love most stands out to you? Which of these characteristics do you find the most difficult to live out? Which of these characteristics have you found to be the most important in receiving love?

What do you think is the meaning of verse 6? Why is it an important principle for us to apply to our Christian lives?

Verse 7 lists four things love "always" does. When do you think these characteristics become the most important to us?

Read verses 8-12. How do you think these verses apply to the subject of love? What do you think is meant by "when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears"?

What do you think are the "childish ways" Paul says he has put behind him?

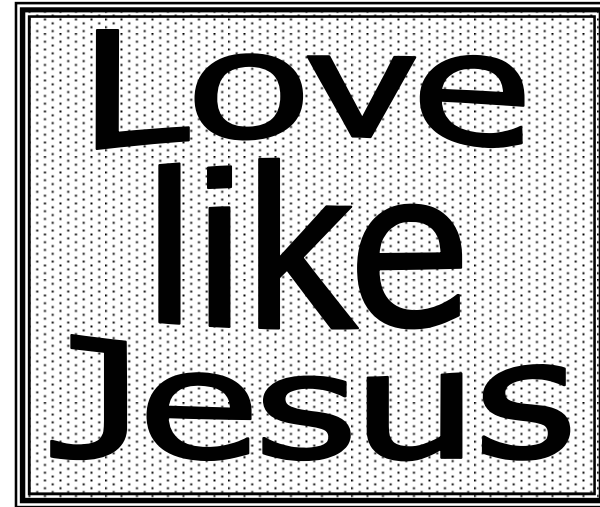
When do you think we will be able to see "face to face" and "know fully, even as I am fully known"?

Paul lists three things that remain: faith, hope, and love. Why do you think he says that the "greatest of these is love"?

What have you learned about love during the last four weeks that has helped you the most to love like Jesus loves?

Prayer Time:

If your group is ready, have each member share their greatest struggle with love. Close with praying for each other individually.



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Luke 15:11-32

"Tough Love"

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Master copy of notes and audio version of the sermon at
www.middletownnaz.com