



Brown Community Group Discussion Guide

“Character of God” Series Lesson 14 – November 6, 2016

Communicable Attribute of Love

I. **Lesson Starters:**

Last lesson we looked at the Communicable attribute of Goodness. *The goodness of God means that God is the final standard of good, and that all that God is and does is worthy of approval.*

Today we will continue our review of Communicable Attributes with Love.

II. **Attribute of Love**

God’s love means that God eternally gives of himself to others. It is the definition of self-giving for the benefit of others. It is part of His nature to give of himself in order to bring about blessing or good for others.

- “God is love” as John tells us in 1 John 4:8
- Love was present before the creation in the Trinity. Jesus tells us “my glory which you have given me in your love for me and a giving of honor from the Father to the Son from all eternity. (John 17:24)
- “The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into his hand” (John 3:35)

John 14:31

31 I do as the Father has commended me, so that the world may know that I love the Father.

- Love characterizes the relationship in the Trinity
- This love makes heaven a place of love and joy with each person of the Trinity seeking to bring joy and happiness to the other two
- Trinity is characterized by self-giving

1 John 4:8-12

⁸ Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

- Shows an awareness of directly personal application of Christ’s love to individual sinners
- Love is God’s nature and it is eternal
- If we do not love others, then we do not have God’s love in us!

III. **Imitation of this Communicable Attribute called Love**

Matthew 22:37-38

37 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind... you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

1 John 5:1-4

1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. ² By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. ³ For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. ⁴ For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

1 John 2:15-17

15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

- We first imitate God's attribute of love, by loving God in return
- Second we love others in imitation of the way God loves us
- If we love God, then we will follow His commandments, which is pleasing to God
- We must be able to spiritually differentiate between God's love and love of the world

Isaiah 62:5

5 For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.

- In return for God first loving us, when we give and love others, it brings joy to God's heart
- "By this all men will know you are my disciples"
 - (John 13:35; Romans 13:10; 1 Cor. 13:4-7; Heb. 10:24)

Matthew 5:43-47

⁴³ "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. ⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?"

- Anyone can love their family
- Even the unsaved world will know us by our Love
- The true sign of following God's love can be seen by all through our love of those who no one else would love
- Only through God's love can we truly learn to love our enemies or those we do not know

IV. Group Questions:

1. Do you believe that a Christian's "love" for family is different than a non-Christian? Explain your position?
2. With respect to Christians having the indwelling of the Holy Spirit after salvation, do you believe that this changes the "type, kind or depth" of love we feel or experience with others compared to a non-Christian?
3. Let the definition of God's love sink in "eternally giving of himself to others". Why do we woefully fall short of this so many times?
4. In Matthew 22:37-38, what is the key to being able to love your neighbor? What must come first?
5. Are we capable of loving our enemies or others without the infusion of the Holy Spirit?
6. How can we practically apply Matthew 5:43-47 concerning loving others like ourselves?