



**WHAT IS LOVE?  
3-WEEK YOUTH MINISTRY SERIES**

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## **WHAT IS LOVE?**

Week 1 - God's Love is Lasting

Bible: Jeremiah 31:3, Romans 8:38-39, Romans 2:4

Bottom line: God's love for us is unending, ongoing, and everlasting.

### **OPENING GAME: LASTING CHALLENGE**

Supplies:

- Chewing gum
- 4 Jenga games or equal number of blocks
- Package of gum for the members of the winning team.

For this game, four teams will compete in challenges that test some interesting skills!!

Divide the group into four equal teams and explain that there will be four tasks to complete and that teams will be competing against one another.

The team that wins the most challenges will win a gift that will last!! (Well...for a little while it will last)

#### ***Task 1: Longest Lasting Bubble***

Each team sends one contestant from their team to the front of the room.

Give each contestant a piece of bubble gum then tell them that together they will un-wrap, chew, and then 'bubble'.

The person who has their bubble last the longest will win.

Make sure you explain that they get only one chance to blow their lasting bubble and that all contestants have to do it at the same time.

The person with the longest lasting bubble earns their team one point.

#### ***Task 2: Fountain Sculptures***

Explain that each team should choose two contestants who will stand together to make a human water fountain.

The two players should each stand on only one foot and hold hands with their partner.

Tell them to strike their pose when you say go, and the team who holds that pose the longest wins a point for their team.

### ***Task 3: Longest Scream***

Each team sends one contestant to compete in this task.

Contestants will scream as loud and as long as they can without stopping to take a breath.

The contestant left screaming the longest (while everyone else covers their ears!) wins one point for their team.

### ***Task 4: Jenga Leap***

Give each team a Jenga game with the same number of pieces in it and explain:

Each team must build a Jenga tower four tiles wide.

They must use all of the tiles to build their tower.

Now explain that they will choose three people from their team to leap over the tower.

The teams will continue to leap over the towers until only one is left standing (and once any tiles fall....the team is out) or if all of the towers fall on the first leap, then the team with the most tiles still standing wins one point for their team.

### ***Award ceremony***

The team who has the most points from these 'lasting challenges' will earn a package of gum! Here's to making it last as long as possible!

## TEACH

When we hear the word love, many different things may come to our mind.

- How we view boyfriend/girlfriend relationships.
- How we view our parent's relationships with each other.
- How the media exploits love and makes it all about imagery and sex.

The main thought that I want to focus on today is that God's love for us is never ending, ongoing, and everlasting. Sometimes, we only view love as very contractual and conditional.

But I want to make it clear that God's love for us is an unconditional covenant.

As we go through this series in the next few weeks, we are going to break what love means to us.

Today for are focusing on the buzzword - LASTING.

It's very unfortunate that oftentimes our idea of love doesn't include "lasting."

This can happen because things have happened to us personally or we have seen love fade and leave devastating results.

It's very unfortunate that we have seen love as something that one can only grasp at, that it is contractual and sometimes exploited.

First off, I want to let you know that you can experience a real AGAPE LOVE (which means unconditional love that serves regardless of circumstances) that only comes from God, which is not based on how well we perform.

If fact, unconditional love is not based on anything that we do. We cannot earn the right to receive love.

It's very interesting that the (unsaved) world seems to be on a mission to search and find love.

But the cold hard facts are that there is nothing that this world can offer that can fill the void in our hearts like the love of Jesus can.

There's an old saying that maybe you have heard before, "I was searching for love in all the wrong places."

This statement is so true. We can search for love in all the wrong places, and still come up empty.

In the early 60's there was a famous rock band called the "Rolling Stones" that released a hit song that would catapult this band into their stardom, and the song sounded like a broken record.

The song was called "I can't get no satisfaction,"... and the song goes on to say "and I tried, and I tried, and I tried, but I can't get no satisfaction."

This song is so true, and in many different ways that has some very real application for a person who is in search of something to satisfy them.

I personally can relate.

Life has a way of offering us very temporary satisfying counterfeit types of love.

But the facts are, after trying everything else that doesn't seem to work, that doesn't satisfy, we kind of feel ripped off.

Have you ever invested your whole heart and a lot of time into something just to find out that it was the biggest waste of time?

*Tell your students a story of a time that you have wasted. Here is an example.*

I heard about a guy whose passion is working out, and a while back he had finally saved up enough money to purchase an Olympic bench press with real plated weights, not the generic concrete plastic weights.

He called one of his best friends with such excitement to help them put together this amazing piece of equipment that he had been watching for two months at Sears and had finally purchased.

So, when his best friend came over to help him put it together in his garage step by step, following the directions, getting all the necessary tools, they worked for about two hours full of sweat and excitement.

They were finally going to get ripped and buff.

But something was wrong.

There were a few very important items and screws that were missing from the package.

They could not complete the home gymnasium experience... After calling customer service and going to Sears, they finally got the pieces that it would take to give them total enjoyment, but before that moment they were let down.

How many of you know what it feels to be let down, to see your excitement go out the door literally?

Yeah me too... But here is the good thing, when we place our trust in God, He doesn't rip us off, or disappoint us.

Listen to this verse on how much the Lord loves us and how His love is lasting.

### **Jeremiah 31:3**

*The Lord appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness."*

This is what this verse is initially saying to us.

God is telling us that He is showcasing His everlasting love for you and me.

God is pursuing us, and His love is unfailing and kind towards us.

I want you to know that I totally get why most people don't know real love, and it's because we have seen love modeled to us in the wrong way.

We build up walls and barriers, and we are essentially saying by our actions "I have trust issues."

And to be completely honest, having trust issues is perfectly normal when we have been hurt by people who have told us that we can trust them, that we can rely on them, and then they fail us.

I can't tell you the many times that I have been hurt, and it has taken me a good while to trust people again.

I want to tell you the facts today, that you can be and eventually will be let down by people.

Yes, it hurts when that happens.

However, I can tell you this: once I placed my trust in Jesus, I learned that God would never let me down and that I could trust God.

So, what happens if you have been hurt by people who have not loved the way God loves?

Well, I would suggest two things.

We must release people who have failed us.

We must understand that the love God has for us is unconditional.

Before we get into the next scripture, I want to give you some back story on the person who wrote what we are about to read.

The author of Romans is a man named Paul, who in his own words was "the chief of sinners, the worst of the worst."

For many of you who know anything about Paul, he persecuted the church by arresting Christians and even putting many to death. If there was one person searching for love that was not only forgiving but lasting, it was Paul.

We also understand that Paul, after his conversion, was one of the most radical followers of Christ, who would eventually be a church planter, missionary, and an apostle and who would eventually write the majority of the New Testament.

So, as we read this scripture, we must remember why Paul had the assurance of Christ's love.

Listen to how Paul starts this conversation.

## **Romans 8:38-39**

*For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Why do you think Paul was so convinced of this love?

Maybe it was because Paul had experienced the love that came from God, regardless of what type of person Paul was.

If there is one thing that we can learn from what Paul wrote, it is this.

Paul knew what it was like to be the most undeserving person of such love, that God's love ruined him in the best way possible.

If we are to be honest today, it is easy for us to say that we have been the worst sinners.

We have done many things against God.

Yet this is also undeniable: there is an unfathomable feeling that we receive knowing that even though we have missed the mark, that Jesus still pursues us with unfailing kindness and unconditional love that will LAST forever!

That should put a smile on your face because that shows us what grace really is.

Grace is receiving something that we didn't deserve, a love that we didn't earn or even deserve.

For many of you who have brothers or sisters, you were raised to be nice and to share, but something deep within you said, "I won't share what he or she doesn't deserve."

Come on, you know I'm telling the truth. Well, that's the complete opposite of what Jesus did for us.

He shared His love with us while we were least deserving, and He still freely gives us His lasting love.

So, let's recap a few points so that we can apply what we just learned.

We learned that:

- People will fail us due to their un-effectiveness in operating in AGAPE love.
- We must forgive others who have wronged us by hurting us.
- We must get over our trust issues to receive the greatest love ever known.
- There's nothing that will fill our hearts like God's lasting love.
- There's nothing that can separate us from God's love. No matter what.

I want to challenge you to think of how awesome God's love is for you and to be careful not to jump on the "treadmill of performance."

The treadmill of performance will emotionally and spiritually exhaust you.

Don't be fooled into thinking that because you have done X, Y, and Z that God's love has to be earned back.

Hear me out, there is nothing that we can do that will make Him take away His everlasting love.

Should we be concerned about the things that we do that are displeasing to the Lord?

Absolutely!....

Should we want to be set apart to be challenged to not live in the same lifestyle and choices that we have made since following Jesus? YES!....

I want to close with this scripture for those of you who may have trouble grasping how Lasting God's love is, and maybe you will see His love in a different light.

This is another verse that is written by Paul, who wrestled with doing things that didn't please God (**Romans 7:15-20**), yet he found mercy and grace through the LASTING love that came through Jesus himself.

#### **Romans 2:4**

*Or do you show contempt for the riches of His kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?*

What does this mean?

It's the kindness of God's LASTING love that continues to lead us to repentance. I know for me personally, that something happens to my heart knowing how much Jesus loves me.

His love for me makes me not satisfied with sin.

However, His LASTING love tells me that it covers my sinful nature.

I hope that as we go through this series on what LOVE is, you can truly grasp how BIG God's love is for us all!

Let's pray.



## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Think about the words in **Jeremiah 31:3** that we mentioned in our text earlier. What do you get out of what this scripture is telling you?
2. In what ways do we find that people have failed us in what love truly is?
3. What emotions do you think Paul was feeling when he wrote **Romans 8:38-39**?
4. What comes to your mind when you hear the words “Treadmill of performance” in regards to viewing God’s LASTING love for us.
5. Why do you think we have a hard time receiving God’s love?
6. In what ways has **Romans 8:38-39** helped you understand God’s Lasting love for you?
7. Let’s have a time of reflection about others who may have let you down because of how that have misused love. If you personally have been hurt and you haven’t forgiven the person(s), why not ask God to help you release the person and the hurt that they have caused right now?
8. What do you think about **Romans 2:4**, and how can we relate it to God’s kindness drawing us to repentance?
9. In what ways has this lesson helped you understand God’s Lasting love?

## **WHAT IS LOVE?**

Week 2: God's Love is Overwhelming

Bible: John 15:10-17, Romans 5:6-8, Titus 3:4-7, 1John 4:10, Luke 15:11-32

Bottom Line: Jesus demonstrated what real love looks like, and there will be no other substitute that can ever come close to such an overwhelming, selfless love.

### **OPENING GAME: PRODIGAL MEMES**

Supplies:

- Markers and poster boards (one for each group of 3-4 students)
- One copy of the story of prodigal son - Luke 15:11-32.
- Optional - mobile phones

Divide the youth into groups of 3-4.

Give each group a copy of the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11–32) and have them create a meme (a photo with a quirky saying) on this parable on the poster board.

Give groups ten to fifteen minutes to complete their memes and then show the memes to the group.

*Optional - Allow students to create a meme with their phones instead.*

Use these memes later as you share the story of the prodigal son!

## TEACH

### Supplies:

- Sandals, a robe, and a ring for use at the end of the lesson

Last week we began our three-week series on “What Love is,” and our first buzz word was LASTING.

Today we are going to tackle our next word, which is how OVERWHELMING God’s love is towards us.

I want to begin with this statement today.

### **Religion is man trying to reach God through his good works.**

Christianity is God trying to reach man through the cross and the love of Jesus.

If that statement doesn’t show us God’s OVERWHELMING love, then what does?

I want to make this statement clear, that Jesus came to seek us out as friends first, regardless of how much of a mess that we were.

Jesus saw fit to get messy and do life with us and show us a better way.

Jesus is a relational and overwhelming God!

Without the plan of God, sin would continue to have its power over us, and while we may not have been searching for a way out through Jesus, that still didn’t stop God’s plan, His overwhelming love for us.

We learn the true meaning of love by being overwhelmed by the love that Jesus gives us regardless of whether we were ready to receive it or not.

Jesus was all in whether or not we were.

WOW! That should shake us!

We must get ahold of this thought, that God still saw worth in us.

And that He would do whatever it would take, give whatever it cost, for Him to reconcile us to Himself.

Jesus wasn’t upset at seeing our condition and was not ready to condemn us due to our lack of righteousness.

No, instead listen to this verse packed with overwhelming love.

### **2 Corinthians 5:21(ESV)**

*For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.*

What is that scripture telling us?

It's simply saying that we had no hope unless He would become sin for our sake, so that in HIM we might become the righteousness of God.

It was the only way for us to be in right standing because we as humans kept missing the mark of being righteous.

Jesus came to fulfil the law with His overwhelming grace and love that would seek us out to give us another chance to be redeemed.

You see, we just kept messing up, and the Ten Commandments were beating us in every way.

The law was the righteous and holy standard, yet Jesus was the only one that could fulfil the law.

He was what we needed to fulfill the law.

If we were to take a moment of honesty, we all have transgressed and broken the law.

None of us were found worthy, not even the rich young ruler who claimed that he had kept all the commandments.

Instead of choosing to forsake it all and to follow Jesus, the Bible says that he walked away sadly because he was a man of great wealth. (**Mark 10:17-27**).

Listen to what the word of the Lord is instructing us today.

### **Romans 5:6-8**

*You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

This verse should clearly overwhelm us every time we read it because God's overwhelming love is so clear.

That God would demonstrate His overwhelming love for us even though we were in the state of mind to reject such a perfect and overwhelming love.

### **YET GOD SAID WATCH WHAT I'M ABOUT TO DO FOR YOU!!**

God was going to put His love on the line for us at the cost of His very own son.

That is an unfathomable act by an overwhelming love!

I said earlier that Jesus came to planet earth to seek us out as friends, not for us to serve Him like any other king.

Instead Jesus taught us the value of serving one another in love, as Jesus would come to serve us and not to be served. Who does that??

Who would come to earth, get messy with our mistakes, give Himself as a ransom for many, and then give us the greatest message of love?

Jesus would and did.

Listen to this next scripture that explains to us in full detail just how important we are to Jesus. This again shows us an overwhelming love.

### **John 15:10-17**

*If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in His love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: Love each other.*

Jesus was explaining how we need to look at Him with a different lens, to scope out His friendship.

If we were to unpack this scripture, this is what it is telling us.

Keep His commands and remain in His love.

Love one another with the overwhelming love that He has demonstrated to us.

Our friendship was worth Jesus giving His life for.

He chose and appointed us for great works and to bear fruit.

To never forget to love each other the way that He has overwhelmingly loved us.

The thing that should continue to stick out to us is this: I never deserved this love.

**BUT, YET HE SAW ME WORTH IT, THAT HE WOULD GIVE LOVE SO FREELY....**

You see we did nothing to deserve this love.

None of us can boast about our salvation, and the reason why is that we did nothing to earn or deserve it, yet it's ours.

But when the kindness of the Lord saw that, our future lives would be justified by this major act of overwhelming love.

He qualified us to be heirs according to the HOPE of eternal life. Today His mercy still washes you and me.

Listen to this next scripture.

### **Titus 3:4-7 (NASB)**

*But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to*

*His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

We have been overwhelmingly justified by Grace & Love.

He gave us an inheritance that we didn't work for, yet He offered His kingdom to us.

Jesus showed this world what real love looks like, and there will be no other substitute that even come close to such an overwhelming, selfless love.

I think for me personally, I can say that His love sought me and it bought me.

The major revelation that I have received is that I wasn't searching for the Love of God, but that didn't stop the Love of God from searching for me.

**Read 1 John 4:10. (NASB)**

*This is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

There's an old hymn that your grandparents used to sing that tells the story of God's overwhelming love so perfectly, and the song is called "Victory in Jesus."

I heard an old, old story,  
How a Savior came from glory,  
How He gave His life on Calvary  
To save a wretch like me;  
I heard about His groaning,  
Of His precious blood's atoning,  
Then I repented of my sins  
And won the victory.

**Chorus:**

O victory in Jesus,  
My Savior, forever.  
He sought me and bought me  
With His redeeming blood;  
He loved me ere I knew Him  
And all my love is due Him,  
He plunged me to victory,  
Beneath the cleansing flood.

He gave me a hope and a reason to live, due to His overwhelming love, that He would be in search of me, seeking me out, and purchasing me at the cross of Calvary. \

*Get out the props listed at the beginning of the lesson for this activity and show each as it is mentioned below.*

### **This is Luke 15:11-32 (Paraphrased)**

In closing, I want to explain a story of the redemption of a son that received this overwhelming love that we have been talking about.

Many people have heard the story of the Prodigal Son.

We know that he left too early in life with an inheritance that he blew on things that gave him nothing to show for.

He later ended up in a famine and again found lack in his life.

The prodigal son knew what it was like to be taken care of by his father, yet he chose an alternative route, and when he hit rock bottom, he wanted desperately to be back in his father's house, not as a son but a servant.

The prodigal son comes to his senses, and prays to heaven and repents of the sin towards heaven and towards his father.

Little did the prodigal son know that His father never gave up looking for him.

We read that the father meets his son halfway, saying him who was dead is now alive again.

The father gives his son a pair of sandals, which was a sign that the son was returning home as a son.

Then his father gave his son a robe as a sign that his shame was now clothed by his father.

And the last thing his father gave the son was a ring, which was a sign that his son was being placed in wealth and authority again, even though the son ruined his possessions earlier.

The sandals, robe, and ring were symbols that the father's overwhelming love never ceased. In fact it grew stronger by the moment, as the father anticipated the return of his son.

*Pray to close.*

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the first thing that you think of when you hear the word “Overwhelming?”
2. What does **Romans 5:6-8** tell us about God’s love towards us?
3. In what ways do people generally demonstrate their love for one another? How does the way that Jesus modeled love help change our perspective of love?
4. Read **Titus 3:4-7** again. What does this scripture mean to you personally about who you were and who you are as a Christ follower?
5. When you saw the sandals, robe, and ring, how did that make you feel? What if you were the prodigal son in the story? What did you learn personally from the video “When God ran?”
6. What was the main thing that stuck with you in today’s lesson about God’s overwhelming love?
7. In what ways can we pass on God’s overwhelming love to others?
8. Read **2Corinthians 5:21**. What do you think this verse is telling you personally?
9. Read **John 15:10-17**. How would have you felt as one of Jesus’s disciples hearing these words at that very moment?
10. In **John 15:10-17**, what do you think Jesus was referring to when He mentioned bearing fruit that will last?



## **WHAT IS LOVE**

Week 3: God's Love is Valuable

Bible: Galatians 3:13-15, Ephesians 2:4-9, Colossians 1:13-14, 1Corinthians 6:19-20

Bottom Line: Not only is God's love valuable to us, but we are also valuable to Him.

### **OPENING GAME: THRIFY MAKEOVER RELAY**

Supplies:

- Many very ugly outfits you might find at a thrift store or garage sale.

Before your meeting purchase items for the game.

Get items that are not too size restrictive and that are very ugly.

Try to find enough shirts, pants (large), belts or scarfs, vests, hats, and accessories for two teams to have a relay with equal number of items to put on.

Set up 2 (or 3 if your group is large) suitcases or trunks with an "outfit" in each trunk, each with an equal number of pieces.

When it's time to play, explain that this relay is not just a relay but a fashion makeover and that you have carefully tried to create true fashion statements for each team to wear.

Divide the group into two (or three) equal teams.

Have them line up about ten feet or more from the suitcases.

One at a time relay style, a youth from each team will run to the suitcase and put on all of the items, run back to their team, turn around and run back to the suitcase, take off the items for the next person, and run one last time to their team to tag the next person to go.

Whichever team has each person finish their fashion run first wins.

The prizes are they get to choose one item from your amazing wardrobe choices!!

## TEACH

This is our third week of our three-week series on “What Is Love.” We have already learned two buzz words - Lasting and Overwhelming.

Today our buzzword is - God’s love is VALUABLE.

I want to see if any of you can finish this sentence, “You get what you...”

*(Pay for)*

Yes, you get what you pay for....

I want you to get an idea of who’s in the room today by raising your hands after you hear a few group polling questions.

Are you ready?

Raise your hand if...

- you like to shop at thrift stores?
- you like to stop at every yard sale on Saturday?
- you will shop out of town to make sure you are the only one wearing your outfit?
- you will spend hours trying on clothing and walk out not purchasing anything?
- you love to shop online on sites like Amazon, and you must read every review before purchasing the item.
- you have ever purchased a \$19.99 “as seen on TV item,” like you literally own a SHAMWOW!!

Ok, I just wanted to see who my audience was today.

I happen to be a gadget, gizmo, and electronic enthusiast.

I love Apple products, but I will not wait in line for hours to get the latest item the day it debuts and I will NEVER shop on black Friday.

Any black Friday shoppers here today?

Now, I would shop online on Cyber Monday easy!

No elbows are thrown, and you get free shipping on most products. I’m just not that CRAZY!

Well it’s true that you get what you pay for.

And if you are willing to pay for what you want, then want what you pay for.

Don’t be that guy or girl who lost interest over their Christmas gift in three days.

That's a good way to drive your parents crazy.

But the saying is true, you do get what you pay for.

Do you know anyone who watches those videos of someone opening a package?

They open something that they purchased online and walk you through what was mailed to them?

That's crazy that they make videos of that!

One of the worst things about purchasing something is having something called "buyer's remorse."

It's like if life was terrible from the moment that you purchased whatever it was you had to have.

You brought it home and then you stare at it as if it's going to get better, but then you say "WHYYYYYY???" Why did I buy this??

Impulse shopping is the worst too.

It's like going grocery shopping when you are hungry.

Not a good idea.

You end up buying like four boxes of cereal plus doughnuts, Sour-Patch Kids, and a Payday candy bar.

You get what you... *Pay for*. Yes, you do.

Well, today we are talking about how God's love is valuable.

Not just how He is valuable to us but also how we are valuable to Him.

One of the facts about our culture is this: people no longer see themselves as valuable.

Maybe it's because people live in remorse of their past mistakes and feel as if they have lost their value because of their poor choices.

Maybe it's because all someone has ever known was someone who would talk down to them, saying things like, "You're not important."

All I know is this: God saw us as valuable, so valuable that Jesus would pay the ultimate price for our redemption so that we could be set free!

We are kind of a BIG DEAL to Jesus!! Listen to the first verse that we are going to unpack today.

It's found in Galatians.

Here is a quick way to find Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians.

Remember this- General, Electric, Power, Company. OR Go, Eat, Pork, Chops!

**Galatians 3:13-14**

*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole." He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.*

I want to give you a newsflash.

If you are a Christian who believes that Jesus Christ is Lord and He has the power to rescue you from your sin, you *have been redeemed*, which is a fancy way of saying that you were purchased.

I want to make something clear to you today, that Jesus not once after purchasing you with His blood had buyer's remorse and said "I want to undo what's been done."

No, He didn't say that.

In fact, I believe that Jesus falls deeper in love with us over and over again because of this.

After we had been given "free will" to do whatever we wanted, we STILL CHOSE HIM!!

The reason free will is such a big deal is that is what sets us apart from being robots. It's when we chose Him over everything else and what sets us free!

I want you to think of your dream car that if money wasn't a problem you would go out today and go purchase.

Think of that vehicle, sports car, whatever it is, and on the count of three scream out loud the car you are going to by today.

You got it...? Ok here we go... 1, 2, 3, \_\_\_\_\_!!!!!!

I want to tell you some sad, sad, news. If you were ever to drive off the car lot with your brand-new car, have buyer's remorse the next minute, and do a U-turn back on to the lot, your vehicle just depreciated in price.

I don't care if you just drove it for five seconds and returned it.

Your vehicle just dropped in value. It depreciated. It's diminished.

I want you to look at me.

Every one of you are *still so valuable* that no matter how much wear and tear or how many miles or how old you are, you are just as valuable to God as the same day that you were purchased on the cross!

You have been redeemed.

The warrantee is still good! Jesus is good on His promises!!

Listen to these verses.

**Ephesians 2:4-9**

*But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages He might show the incomparable riches of His grace, expressed in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.*

We said earlier that you get what you pay for.

And I want to be abundantly clear that you can experience everything that this world wishes you to purchase and it won't add any value to your life unless it is the blood of Jesus that purchases your life.

In this world, you will be one of two things.

Sold out because you've been purchased.

Or for sale, which means that you are on the market to be purchased by the temporary satisfactions in this life.

The question that we must ponder today is this, if you are looking for significant value in your lives, what in this world would be worth us gaining just to forfeit our very own souls in the long run? (**Matthew 16:26**)

You can search high and low, and find nothing in this world that compares to the Valuable Love of Jesus that rescues us out of darkness.

### **Colossians 1:13-14**

*For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

I think it's safe to say that unless we know what we have been redeemed and rescued from, we may not have a clue on how valuable we are to God.

### **1 Peter 1:17-21**

*Since you call on a Father who judges each person's work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear.*

*For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*

*He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through Him you believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and glorified Him, and so your faith and hope are in God.*

Is there anything we can come up with to get ourselves out of this mess?

No, nothing. All our works, all our striving, cannot offset our debt of sin.

You cannot buy off God, fool God, or sneak by God into heaven.

You have been redeemed, but as Peter says, “not with perishable things such as silver or gold.”

You see, there is a price that needed to be paid, but we could not pay it.

Someone else had to come along and pay it for us.

That’s what Christ has done for us.

He saw how valuable we are and said, “I will pay the debt.” Yes, Jesus of Nazareth, the man sent by God—indeed, the very Son of God, came down from heaven—He has paid the price for you.

Peter says that you were redeemed **“with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.”**

Peter was talking about how Christ has redeemed us, **“with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death.”**

It took the holy, precious blood of Christ, shed on the cross, to redeem humanity from our futile ways, from all sins, death, and the power of the devil.

Jesus paid this price for all humanity—yes, He willingly went to the cross in our place.

He is the very Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Price paid, forgiveness obtained, and freedom secured.

You have been and now are, redeemed, set free, by the cost of the blood of Christ.

We were and are still today that valuable to Him!

So, what should we do now that we know our value and worth?

Live here on earth as foreigners, spending our time wisely, and reverence the Lord.

We must remember the price that He paid to set us free.

We must honor God with our bodies, as living sacrifices, that the world can see the difference that Jesus has made in our lives, so others may be redeemed as well.

I want to close today’s lesson with this final scripture and thought on the Value of love that God has placed on us. And it’s found in our closing scripture.

### **1 Corinthians 6:19-20**

*Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies.*

We must never forget that we are not our own anymore.

And the way that we honor God is to let the whole world see that we have been bought with a price and that we no longer live the “Empty way of life” (1 Peter 1:18) anymore.

I close with this thought.

Have any of you ever had a good experience at any of the Chuck E. Cheese, Dave & Busters type of entertainment venues?

It seems that for the amount that you pay for the meal and tokens, the tickets that you may or may not get from the games that you play never seem to add up to the value of the prizes you get in exchange for these tickets that you bring to the table.

The cooler, top shelf prizes are out of reach because you didn't even come close to bringing in the amount of tickets required for something remotely valuable, something that you can take home and feel good enough about to brag to your friends.

The fact is this. I always feel ripped off at the end of the day when I go and redeem my bucketful of tickets to exchange them for such a small and worthless prize.

I want you to know today, that at the expense of the blood of Jesus, even though we feel like we are the ones ripping Him off by how worthless that we feel, that He is getting the short end of the deal, the VALUE that He places on us is BIG.

Because He loves us that much.

And the fact is we get a way better deal than we deserve because we know that we miss the mark. Jesus willingly paid the price for us in full.

How can we seriously lose if we have allowed ourselves to be bought?

How does this make sense? We can't even imagine unless we see ourselves as valuable to God.

Well, humanly it doesn't add up, and that is the beauty of Grace.

Grace = God's Righteousness At Christ's Expense.

And, if Jesus didn't have buyer's remorse after the downfall of Peter, who Jesus restored after His resurrection, then think about the same value that Jesus has placed on us to restore us back to Him. WOW!!!

*Close in Prayer.*

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you think are some reasons why people can't see real value in their lives?
2. What does **1Corinthians 6:19-20** mean to you?
3. What do you think is the one thing that people generally sell out to in this world, that they eventually forfeit their souls over?
4. What was one thing that stuck with you from today's message on the Value of God's love?
5. What is one thing that you can teach others about the Value of God's love?
6. Have you ever seen someone walk by a penny on the ground and not pick it up? Why do you think people do that? Have you ever overlooked the worth of just one penny by itself? In what ways are we like that penny? Or do you think that we are more valuable than a penny?
7. What was your greatest take away moment that may have changed your mind about how valuable you are to God?
8. What are some ways that you can help yourself remember how valuable you are to God?
9. In **Galatians 3:13-14**, what do you think it means when we hear the words "curse of the law?"
10. In **Ephesians 2:7**, describe what incomparable riches are and what that portion of the verse means to you.