

SERMON NOTES

From *In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley*



Love Lessons

KEY PASSAGE: 1 John 4:7-11 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE: John 3:16

► SUMMARY

Do you believe God loves you?

We are probably all very familiar with John 3:16, which clearly states that because God loved the world, He sent His Son so those who believe in Him would never perish. We usually think of God's love as generally applying to everyone, but maybe not specifically to us personally. However, the Lord wants us to know we're loved by Him and to love Him in return. Only then will we be able to give and receive love in our relationships as He desires.

► SERMON POINTS

To understand how important love is to God, we need only look at His Word. In the Old Testament there are 250 mentions of love, and the New Testament uses love 234 times—and of those, 72 are found in John's gospel and epistles.

In 1 John 4:7-11, the apostle John mentions love in every verse.

- [7] Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.
- [8] The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.
- [9] By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.
- [10] In this is love, not that we 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.

Love Lessons

Since love is such an essential part of our lives, we need to understand what it truly is.

- 1. Love is more than an emotion.** It's a commitment to another person.
- 2. Love is not free.** It actually demands something of us. We can't live for ourselves in isolation and at the same time love someone else.
- 3. Love looks beyond the flesh.** Its focus is the heart and spirit of a person, not the external appearance. The connection is both emotional and cerebral, not merely a physical attraction.
- 4. Lust has nothing to do with genuine love.** Our world has substituted lust for love, and this has become very obvious in the sexual revolution, which is still continuing to this day. Lust is focused on self—what I want or need from the other person. But love is concerned for the loved one—what I can do for him or her.
- 5. Love cannot be bought.** It's a gift that is given freely, and one that is received without cost.
- 6. Love desires to give with no strings attached.** It doesn't demand that the other person be a certain way or do what is desired before love is given. Genuine love is freely bestowed without qualifications or requirements.
- 7. Love is generous and unselfish.** True love is other-centered, not self-centered. It's always looking for ways to give, not ways to get.
- 8. Love is more fulfilled in giving than in receiving.** Those who genuinely love others find great

satisfaction in generously giving to them. They are especially gratified when they can supply what someone else really needs or desires.

- 9. Love is forgiving.** Carrying the weight of anger, resentment, bitterness, or jealousy chokes a person's spirit and hinders the ability to truly love others.
- 10. Love desires to express itself.** Love is demonstrative and must be expressed. When God's love is in us, it flows out in sacrificial giving.
- 11. Love is a happy emotion.** The happiest people are not those who have everything money can buy, but those who know how to love.
- 12. Love enjoys seeing others happy.** That's because the focus is not on getting for self but in sacrificing for others. In seeing the pleasure others experience, there is great enjoyment.
- 13. Love is fulfilling and enables us to feel complete.** When we know how to give and receive love, it gives us a sense of completeness, competence, and worthiness.
- 14. Love hurts when others hurt.** Genuine love is characterized by compassion and mercy expressed either through direct interaction or more distantly through prayer.
- 15. Love does not keep accounts.** There is no record of who did what for whom. Love is not a matter of paying and receiving, but of giving without expectation of return.
- 16. Love may be very painful.** This is especially true if the love isn't mutual. It may require repeated forgiveness.
- 17. Love doesn't require anything in return.** There are no conditions or requirements placed on the other person before love is freely given.
- 18. Love is patient.** It waits until the proper time, whereas lust wants immediate gratification. If ultimatums are given, it's not genuine love.
- 19. Christ's death on the cross is the perfect example of love.** Jesus came into the world He loved to give His life as a ransom for sin, yet few people loved Him in return. When we continue to love unresponsive,

ungrateful people, we are following Christ's example. This is possible because after we accept Him as our Savior and Lord, He pours His love into our hearts, enabling us to love others no matter how ugly they behave toward us.

- 20. Love is its own reward.** Knowing that we are loved by God and being able to love Him in return is an amazing blessing. It sustains us when we feel forsaken and unloved by others. And if loved ones die or leave us, we have a Friend who will never desert us.

Love isn't found in advice from magazines, books, or people. God is the source through Jesus Christ, His Son, and the place to look is the Bible. It begins with accepting the death of Jesus Christ on the cross as the greatest act of love ever shown. He died to pay our sin debt in full. And when we believe in Him and repent of our sins, all the mess we've made of our lives is washed away. Our sins are forgiven, and God will remember them no more.

Now His love is poured out in our hearts, enabling us to love Him in return and to receive and give love to others. If we don't have Christ and His love in us, our lives are empty, and we are poor, needy, and wretched. The only One who can satisfy our longings is the One who died for us on the cross. His love for us is beyond all explanation and human comprehension.

► RESPONSE

- Do you feel loved by God? Why or why not? What does God's Word say about His love for you (See Romans 5:8 and 8:36-39)?
- Are you able to give love, or is something hindering you from expressing it freely to others? What hope do you find in 1 Thessalonians 4:9?

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