

Life Matters

Worksheet 8



Is there anything greater in life than love? We all love to love and to be loved. We sing and listen to love songs, we read love stories, we watch love on our screens, we daydream and think about love, we have pictures depicting love as art on our walls. 'Love is all around us, it's everywhere I go', to quote Wet, Wet, Wet!

The Beatles may not be technically right when they sang 'All you need is love', but it certainly makes life far better and worth living.

The love of a couple who've been married for 60 years or more is wonderful to see. Their friendship, their knowledge of each other, their commitment can be a real blessing to their friends and family. The love of a parent for a child. The look in the parent's eye the first time that they see their newborn baby. These things warm our hearts.

QUESTIONS:

- **Why is love so wonderful?**
- **If you had to draw love, what would the picture look like?**

How do we explain and rationalize love? Why is there a chemical reaction in our stomach's when we see someone that we love and long to spend time with? Is love just a chemical reaction in our brain? Is that all love is? Can we really reduce real, genuine love to this? Surely there is more to love than a hormone or two!

Where does real love come from? The bible is very clear in its explanation of the reality of love. We are told that God is love and as we have been made in the image of God that we know what it is to love. When we talk of being made in the image of God, we are not thinking of physical appearance. You may have met some children who look physically nothing like their parents but spend some time with them and you know with no doubt whose children they are. That is because they show you the same characteristics. They share the same thoughts, they speak in the same way, they display the same mannerisms. They may not look like their parents, but in what they do and say it is obvious.

God has made us like him in that we live and think and communicate and have wisdom and many other things including love! We love because God has made us to love. Love has come to us from God. God is love.

QUESTIONS:

• How can you explain the existence of love without God?

When we start to think about love and try to explain it. We need to evaluate what love looks like. What really is love? The song by Haddaway, 'What is love?' offers no answer! Whoever wrote the lyrics for this song clearly had no way of answering. After the question 'what is love' comes 'oh baby don't hurt me, no more'. I'm sure that all of us have experienced hurt from those people that we love. Hurt is not the answer to the question 'what is love' though, is it!

Trying to define love is not an easy task. It is easier to say that we know it when we see it. When someone is truly in love, then we know because of what people say, and what people do. Talk and action show whether someone loves someone or not. These two must go together. Someone may say that they really love you but then their actions show you that they are not telling the truth. Someone may act as if they love you but their words show the real reason why they are acting as they are.

When it comes to love, words and actions are vital. When John writes his gospel, his good news, he knows that Jesus really loved him. John is known as the 'beloved disciple'. John knew the love of Jesus for him. As we read the gospel of John, we see that John knows the real importance of love.

QUESTIONS:

• How do you show others that you love them?

In John chapter 15 verse 13, Jesus tells us what great love looks like. "Greater love has no one than this; to lay down one's life for one's friends." Jesus is saying there is no greater expression of love than being willing to sacrifice yourself for others. We marvel with wet eyes when people are willing to give a kidney or something for a loved one. Jesus sets the bar higher. He is talking about being willing to die so that someone else can live. That is the ultimate sacrifice, that is what Jesus not only talks about but does. He willingly goes to the cross for us. He willingly dies so that you and I can have eternal life. That is real, authentic love.

Towards the end of his life, John writes three letters to Christians that he knows. The big theme of his first letter is love. With our lack of confidence, we can often feel that no-one really loves us. John begs to differ. He tells us of the amazing love that God has for us. In chapter 3 of 1John we read, "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God". John is not telling us about a small amount of love or something inconsequential. No, this love is 'lavished' on us. I love the word 'lavish' when it comes to putting cream on scones. It indicates more than is necessary, it is decadent. That is the love that God has for people He calls His 'children'.

QUESTION:

• Why doesn't Thomas believe like the others do?

The following Sunday, Jesus again appears to the disciples and this time Thomas is there. Jesus offers to show Thomas the marks upon his body. He is showing the 'war wounds' that he has suffered on the cross. Jesus is not angry with Thomas, even though he doubted him. The first words of Jesus are remarkable, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.'" What a gracious man Jesus is.

We see here the call of Jesus to Thomas to believe. The call is to stop doubting and to believe. Thomas should have believed what the other disciples had told him. They had seen Jesus with their own eyes and had kept on telling Thomas about this. Why doesn't he trust what they say? We spend most of our lives believing what other people tell us. We are constantly told to 'eat 5 a day' and so we try to. We believe the message that we have been given without even investigating the claim. We believe because we trust the messenger. There are times that we don't believe the messenger, so we don't believe the message. Think about the politicians that align with our political views and beliefs. We generally trust what they say but don't trust the 'other lot'. We often trust medical Doctors, but when the message is not what we want to hear, then often we ask for a second opinion. Do we mistrust the message or the messenger at that point?

It is not just Jesus, God the Son, who loves. It is God the Father as well. We have previously seen this in John chapter 3 verse 16. This is the most famous verse in the bible and is wonderful news for you. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life". This is ultimate love for the world. God so loves us, that He is willing to give the Son that He really, really loves to us. We see here that words and actions go together to show immense, real love. This is God the Father and God the Son, both showing their love for you.

QUESTIONS:

- **Do you realise how much God loves you?**
- **What difference should someone loving you make to your life?**

When we carefully look at the life of Jesus, one of the things that we see is a man who loved people. Time and time again, we see Jesus going out of his way to heal the sick, to make the blind see, to raise the dead. You see His real love for people in action. Jesus is not someone who does anything grudgingly or because He has to. There is not even a hint of hypocrisy with Jesus. He talks about love but also demonstrates it at all times. How many of us can say that?

QUESTION:

- **If love really is the greatest thing in the world, then have you experienced the love that God the Father and Jesus has for you?**

How would you like to explore this life in Jesus Christ that John wants you to know? This is your opportunity and invitation to do that. There are currently millions of people around the world who have experienced what life in Jesus Christ is really like. Why not commit to spend some time for the next few weeks exploring this for yourself? These videos and studies will be appearing twice a week and we will attempt to answer any questions you have via our email address info@lfec.org

In the next video and study, we will be looking at what Jesus teaches us about God. Look out for these on YouTube, Facebook or on our website: www.lfec.org