

"LOVE" - What is it?

What are some of the ways people use the word "love" (whether good or bad)?

(Write your answers in the space to the *right* of the numbers. Do not limit the list to ways *you* use the word.)

1.	_____
2.	_____
3.	_____
4.	_____
5.	_____
6.	_____
7.	_____
8.	_____

The type of love which must influence everything we do is described in _____

1. First priority:	_____	See also:	_____
2. Second priority:	_____	See also:	_____
3. A "fact of life":	_____	See also:	_____

Examine the types of "love" you listed above. Based on what Jesus says in the Matthew passage, write one of the following in the space provided, to the *left* of the numbers:

- **"Good"** - if it is good to have this type of love as a part of one's life.
- **"Evil"** - if it is not compatible with what Jesus said, and must be avoided.
- **"Depends"** - if other factors would determine whether it was good or evil. (In this case, what are the other factors?)

How do *you* interact with other people? Which types of "love" could be used to describe the things *you* do? Which types of love could *not* be used to describe you?

- Based on what Jesus says in the above verses, are there some *changes* you must make in your life? Are there some *improvements* you could make, in the way you show love to others? On the back of this paper, list some things that you could do differently, and begin to work on making these changes. [You may need to explore the Word of God further, to better understand the types of changes you need to make. And you will *definitely* need to rely on God, if you want those changes to be permanent and life-changing!]

Remember that love is to be expressed *even toward "enemies."* (See Matthew 5:43-47.)

"TEACHER'S NOTES" for the Worksheet: "Love" - What is it?

This worksheet was written to encourage people (such as in a Bible study or youth group) to make personal evaluations of their lives. Since different groups have different needs, you may need to modify some of the questions on the worksheet to fit your own situation.

THE FIRST SECTION (Ways people use the word "love.")

The goal of this section is to have people write down both good and bad ways that people use the word "love" - both the legitimate uses of the word, as well as abuses of the word. These will then be evaluated as "good" (if the definition refers to something that the Bible always encourages us to have), "evil" (if the Bible says it is sin), or "depends" (if the Bible says that it is good only in certain contexts or situations in life).

In some groups (especially younger groups), people may be hesitant to write down bad uses of the word "love." They may be fully aware of how the word is often abused, but may be embarrassed or uncertain how others in the group may react (laughter, etc.). You will need to adjust the study to accommodate this tendency, if it exists.

THE SECOND SECTION - ANSWERS (The Bible defines "love.")

A. *The type of love which must influence everything we do is described in Matthew 22:37-40.*

[The reference is to be written in the space provided on the worksheet.]

The Bible DOES mention other types of love (example: the "friendship" or "brotherly" type of love, seen in Romans 12:10 and 2 Peter 1:7), but the type of love described in Matthew 22:37-40 is the foundation on which all other legitimate types of love are built. The Bible also mentions many of the "evil" types of love (the improper ways that many people in the world use the term), but it uses other terms - the *proper* terms - to describe those concepts (example: "lust").

B. Three "Priorities"

The "See also" section, at the end of each line, is intended for listing other passages that you may wish to include, which give additional information for that specific topic (or priority). Some suggested verses are given below.

1. First priority: Love for God

Verses for the "See also" Section: Examples of verses about "Love for God" include the following:

- 1 John 4:10 - God's love for us is the basis of our love.
- 1 John 5:3 - Our love for God is shown by our desire to obey him.
- 1 John 4:20 - Our love for God is inseparable from our love for "neighbor." (You can't love God if you hate your "brother.")

NOTE:

- "Love for God" is an important topic. You may want to have the group do some research to see what they can discover about love for God. (They can look in concordances, write down verses they may have learned in the past, etc.)

2. Second priority: Love for Neighbor

Verses for the "See also" Section: Examples of verses about "Love for Neighbor" include the following:

- 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a -What love is/does.
- Matthew 5:43-47 - We must love not only friends, but also our enemies.

NOTE: The idea of "Love for Enemies" should be stressed, because:

- This type of love distinguishes between those who are "sons (or daughters) of your Father in heaven" and those who are not. Such a love, if genuine and from the heart, is only possible through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- If we succeed in having this type of love - which is the most difficult type, we will be able to succeed in having (and expressing) the less-difficult types of love. [The term "enemy" could include anyone we have constant problems getting along with.]

3. A "fact of life": You already DO love yourself.

Verses for the "See also" Section: Examples of verses about "Love for Self" include the following:

- Ephesians 5:33 - Another verse that says we love ourselves.
- 2 Timothy 3:2 - "Self love" used in a bad sense.
- Proverbs 19:8 - "Loving one's soul" used in a good sense.

NOTES:

- In the Bible, "self love," and other related concepts, are normally described in one of the following ways:
 1. As a fact of life (if the focus is on the fact that we take care of ourselves). There is a sense in which "self love" is good (example: Proverbs 19:8).
 2. As a sinful characteristic (if our focus on "self" is greater than our focus on God and neighbor). People tend to think too highly of themselves, to love themselves more than they love God or neighbor.
- Many popular psychologists would claim that people sometimes "hate" themselves - even to the point that they would commit suicide. The Bible takes issue with such claims. There are much deeper roots, than the "surface issues" that we tend to focus on. People are preoccupied with themselves. They love themselves so much that they don't think they deserve the bad circumstances and situations they find themselves in. They want what they don't have; they are not content with what they have. Nor do they trust God to use their bad circumstances to accomplish good - something he has guaranteed to do for those who love him (Romans 8:28-30). (There may also be additional factors, such as delusions caused by the devil, etc.)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

[The back side of the worksheet needs to be kept blank (or extra paper provided), so the answers for this section can be written down.]

These questions may need to be handled differently with each group. In some groups, people may be uncomfortable in sharing insights about changes they need to make in their own lives. It may be necessary to deal with these issues by focusing on general principles, and then encouraging each individual to spend time in self-reflection, to discover specific applications for himself. In other groups, people may feel free to be more open and personal.

The goal is for each person to honestly evaluate himself, and to develop an awareness of any changes he may need to make in his life. Attitude or perspective changes, if needed, should be encouraged. Encourage the group to not merely to talk (or think) about making changes, but to *do* something about them! (See James 1:22-25.)