



WEEK TWO • 11.05

UNIFIED AROUND LOVE

INTRODUCTION

Is it possible to disagree politically and love unconditionally? Lurking beneath our interactions with people with different perspectives can often be a relentless drive to win. But the church isn't here to win. Jesus never asked his followers to agree on everything. But he did call his followers to obey a new law to love others in the same way he has loved us. We continue discovering what that means together in week two of our *Not In It to Win It* series.

Remember: As a No Matter church, you likely have people who land across the political spectrum in your group. Don't assume everyone is in the same spot. Before you get started, commit to creating a safe place to process this content together by keeping the main thing the main thing and acknowledging each other's different perspectives and experiences.

DISCUSSION

1. Some of us grew up in homes where everything was an argument. Others of us had homes where conflict was completely avoided. Growing up, how did you learn to engage with conflict?
2. Pastor Chip taught that, "We often try to win the argument instead of winning people. Jesus didn't live like that." Reflect on some of your recent arguments (or just disagreements) with people, no matter how simple. Would you say you felt a need to win in them? Why or why not? And if so, what was the impact?
3. **Revisit and read John 13:34-35.** We've heard of the Golden Rule. But Pastor Chip talked about the "Platinum Rule" – to love others the way Christ has loved you. How hard is it for you to love others like this, on average? What makes it easier or harder for you?
4. The Greek language has four different words to describe our English word for love:
 - *Storge* – love between family, like parent and child
 - *Phileo* – love between friends
 - *Eros* – romantic love
 - *Agape* – unconditional, sacrificial loveThe first three are likely the most familiar or intuitive. Share of a time you've loved someone in terms of the "agape" definition.
5. **Read Colossians 3:1-17.** The early church started with people from all sorts of backgrounds with wildly different opinions. It probably should have ripped itself apart within the first generation. But because of these believers' commitment to unity – keeping the main thing the main thing – the world was forever changed. How can you and your group help grow unity in your church community so you provide a picture of God's love to the world?

APPLICATION

- **Remember what's most important.** Our sincere desire and pursuit of Christian unity provides a picture of God's love for you. It should cause people on the "outside" to want what we have (Jesus).
- **Remember Jesus' examples.**
 - *Kindness & Generosity* – Luke 6:27-36
 - *Wisdom* – Luke 6:46-49
 - *Faith* – Luke 7:1-10
 - *Seeing past people's sin* – Luke 7:36-50
 - *Righteousness (right standing with God)* – Luke 8:1-15
 - *Care & concern of others* – Luke 10:25-37
 - *Priorities* – Luke 10:38-42
 - *Humility* – Luke 14:7-11, Luke 18:9-14
 - *Forgiveness* – Luke 15:11-37
 - *Loving those who are different than you* – Luke 19:1-9
 - *Gentleness* – Luke 22:47-51
- **Remember, it's intentional.** Choosing to live in unity is not our first natural thought. It takes practice and help from the Holy Spirit to engage with people in an "agape" kind of way, especially when we disagree. In your next argument or disagreement, ask and listen for the Holy Spirit's voice to guide you.