

Home Group Leader's Notes Week of March 3, 2024

Sermon Series: *You CAN Have It All*, week #9 – “Love”

This is our final episode on what to “add to faith.” Each week has been something that Peter calls us to “make every effort” to happen. There are few exhortations / challenges as this. The promise is astounding: “For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.” This is the goal of every disciple – to become like the Master and live to glorify Him.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE IT?

If a person from another country asked you to define “love,” what would you say?

Love is a misunderstood thing in our culture.

INTRODUCTION TO OUR STUDY

We are walking through a letter in the Bible written to (1) encourage believers to live in the knowledge and grace of God, (2) to be people of holiness and godliness, and (3) to warn them of false teachers, and (4) to be prepared for the difficult days ahead. This letter could be written to the church today. These same challenges and dangers are in our culture and the same grace and knowledge of God is just as needed.

Peter said in chapter one that “His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.” (2 Peter 1:3-4) This is an amazing promise that God fulfills as we obey and trust Him. Each week, we are spotlighting one quality that Peter says to “make every effort” to add to our genuine faith. The sequence looks like this: Add to your faith, goodness (excellence), to goodness add knowledge, to knowledge add self-control, to self-control, add perseverance, to perseverance, add brotherly / sisterly love, and to this add “love” (*agape* love). In sequence, it looks like the following:

Faith – Goodness – Knowledge – Self-control – Perseverance – Godliness - brotherly / sisterly love (*phileo*)– “love” (Greek *agape*).

LISTEN TO GOD IN HIS WORD

While we all have a general idea about the meaning of “love,” the Bible has much to say about love. We learned last week about “brotherly / sisterly” or “family love.” In this case, it means the love that we have for the family of God, love for one another in the church.

Consider the following verses of Scripture about we learn about *agape* love.

Again, my group likes to look at and discuss the verses.

Exodus 34:6-7. (God’s love here is *chesed* = enduring and active love expressed in extreme kindness)

Matthew 22:37-38 (*agape*)

1 John 4:7-8, 19 (God and us)

Romans 5:5 (*agape*)

Galatians 5:22 (*agape*)

Ephesians 3:17-19 (*agape*)

Ephesians 5:1-2, 25 (*agape*)

1 Thessalonians 3:12-13 (*agape*); 4:9-10 (*phileo* then *agape*)

1 Peter 1:22 (*phileo* then *agape*)

Summarize what you learned about love:

APPLY IT THIS WEEK

Have you ever shared with someone about God's love? This week, ask God to give you someone that you can share about His love. Trust the Holy Spirit to work through you in your relationships and open a door for you to listen and share.

DISCUSS TOGETHER

What stood out to you from the sermon on "love?" What moved your heart?

This week's sermon was delivered by Jon Rittenhouse.

How can we appropriate the *agape* love that God has poured into our hearts? (Romans 5:5)

From what you studied, what does God want to happen in and through us as we receive His love?

Since we told to "make every effort" to add "love," how do we do that? How can we help each other to add love?

PLEASE PRAY

- Pray together 1 Thessalonians 3:12.
- Pray for the Elders as they shepherd our family
- Pray for our Care Team as they visit our global workers in Europe

May His love and grace keep you encouraged and motivated to shepherd His family.

Steve