

Love for Others

by Virginia L. Folsom

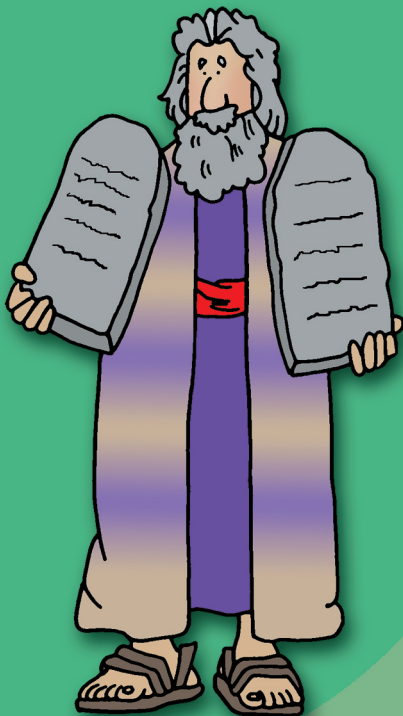
Introduction

What is real love? There are many definitions for love. But the love in this week's study goes beyond the dictionary definition of love. Real love is not love in the sense that the world thinks of it. It is not the type of love portrayed on TV and movies or sung about in secular music. It is not the love written about in romance novels. This love, real love, is characterized by sacrifice and commitment. This love is not selfish or controlling. Real love refers to giving of oneself and what one has in order to serve and help others.

Children learn about love through the loving care of godly parents and family. Children from families where this love is lacking have a much more difficult time understanding what real love is. Spend time with your children this week demonstrating real love. It doesn't take money or presents, it simply takes your focused attention.

This week you will need:

- Tuesday: construction paper and markers
- Wednesday: one slip of paper for each family member and a small container
- Thursday: one roll of bathroom tissue and two coins



MONDAY

READ EXODUS 32:31-32.

In this passage, Moses has just come down from the mountain where he spent time in the presence of God and received the Ten Commandments from Him. When Moses discovered the sin of the Israelites, he returned to the Lord to pray for them. He asked God to forgive their sin and if not, then to take his name out of the book of life. In other words, he offered to sacrifice himself for the people.

- **Did Moses love the people?** (Yes)
- **How do you know?** (He offered to give his own life for them.)
- **Who gave His life for people?** (Jesus)
- **Why did Jesus give His life for us?** (God loves us, and He sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the Cross to save us from sin.)

As you pray today, remember to thank God for sending Jesus to be our Savior. Thank Him for His love for us.

TUESDAY

READ 1 SAMUEL 20:27-42.

David and Jonathan were great friends. Jonathan pledged his loyalty to David. This brought Jonathan into conflict with his father, Saul. When Saul tried to kill David, Jonathan saved David's life. Even Jonathan's life was threatened because of his friendship with David.

Encourage each family member to share answers to the following questions.

- **Who is your best friend?**
- **Why is that person your best friend?**
- **What makes the relationship with your best friend special?**

Use construction paper, markers, and other decorative items to make a card to give your best friend. On the card thank your friend for the friendship and tell why it means so much to you.

Close with prayer. Let each family member say a sentence prayer thanking God for his or her best friend.

WEDNESDAY

READ RUTH 1.

The story of Ruth and her mother-in-law, Naomi, is a beautiful story of family love. After the death of her husband and sons, Naomi was determined to return to her home. She tried to persuade her daughters-in-law to go back to their parents' homes, so they could find new husbands to care for them. Orpah finally agreed to go, but Ruth refused to leave Naomi. Ruth was committed to Naomi, and she acknowledged the God of Israel as her God.

Print the name of each family member on separate slips of paper. Place the names in a container. Let each member draw a name. Make sure everyone gets someone else's name. Encourage

each family member to plan something special for the person whose name they drew. Parents, assist the youngest members of your family with an idea and actual physical help. Encourage everyone to be creative in thinking of different ways to show love to other family members.

Hold hands and form a circle. Pray for each family member by name. Ask God to help your family be loving and kind to each other.

THURSDAY

As you read today's passage have various family members act out the story. Provide a roll of bathroom tissue for bandaging the hurt man and two small coins to give the innkeeper. Encourage each actor to be dramatic and have fun while learning the truth of the story. If necessary, each person can play more than one part.

Read Luke 10:30-37.

Jesus asked the lawyer, "Which of these three men treated this hurt man like a neighbor?" He answered, "Of course, the man who helped him."

■ **Who is our neighbor?** (Anyone in need.)

As a family, think of someone in your church or neighborhood who may need help that your family can provide. Plan a way for your family to help this person. Share God's love by showing love to your "neighbor."

In your prayer time, thank God for the privilege of helping someone who needs help. Ask Him to show you other ways to be a neighbor to someone.

FRIDAY

READ MATTHEW 26:6-13.

The woman in our scripture reading today performed a beautiful and extravagant act of love and worship to Jesus. She anointed His body before death instead of waiting until after He died. She gave the greatest gift she could, her love and devotion to Him.

What are we giving to Jesus? Do we give Him our love, our time, our abilities, our money? Jesus told the disciples that the poor would always be with them, so they could do kind deeds for them later. But He was going to be leaving them, and this woman recognized the need to worship Him in the present.

What can your family do to worship Jesus this week? Can you spend some time in quiet prayer and Bible study? Can you plan a retreat where you go someplace and talk with Him? As a family, plan a special way to worship Jesus this week. Let it be an extravagant, beautiful act of worship.

Close by singing a song of praise to Jesus.

WEEKEND

READ PHILEMON.

This week we have been talking about real love. We began with Moses' love for his people; then we had the love between friends, the love for family, the love of neighbors, and love for Jesus. Today, we are talking about a love that intercedes on behalf of another.

This passage is an example of Christian love and forgiveness. Paul urges Philemon to set aside his prejudices and accept Onesimus as a Christian brother. Paul doesn't order him to do it, but he appeals to Philemon's sense of Christian love.

Think about your opinions and preconceived ideas about others. How can you reach out to people who are different from you with love and forgiveness? Look for ways to reach out to those you may not associate with on a daily basis.

Pray that God will help you reach out with love and compassion to people who need help. Ask God to show you where you have feelings of unfairness and turn over those feelings to Him. Pray for someone who needs to be reconciled to the family of God.

Unit Bible Verse

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

John 13:34

