

Love Redefined

Luke 9:51-54

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Guest Speakers

Reflect

Outline: Recap

Realize

Points to Ponder

Respond

Questions to draw out understanding.

REFLECT

Love is what we all want most - none of us will argue with that. Whether we're looking for someone else's love, wishing we knew how to love ourselves better, or longing for a deeper experience of God's love, our lives revolve around love in so many ways. At the same time, we don't always have a clear picture of what love should be like, or how we can find satisfaction for the deepest desires we encounter in life. So join us this Sunday for a message all about love, as we redefine our understanding with the best definition of love out there: God's.

[LINK to SMALL GROUP VIDEO MATERIALS](#)

REALIZE

1. L - Listen twice as much as you talk.

- **Luke 9:51**
- **Leader Notes**
 - Jesus had courage to do the difficult things God asked of him because he listened to the heart of the Father. Sometimes, even in prayer, we talk more than we listen, and then we don't know how to walk in obedience to him. With God, obedience is how we demonstrate our love, so a lack of listening leads to a lack of love for God.
 - When we listen to God, he shows us how to love himself and others to the best of our abilities. Without listening to other people, we can't love them well either. The two go hand-in-hand.
- **When we take time to listen to God, he gives us the courage to make choices that prioritize love for God and others, even when it's difficult. How are you doing at listening to God? What can you do practically to align your heart with his?**

2. O - Overlook flaws.

- **Luke 9:52**
- **Leader Notes**
 - In this story, the people weren't ready to hear Jesus' message because they couldn't overlook his differences.
 - Because God can speak to us through anyone, we limit God's ability to speak to us when we refuse to give others a chance. We cut off God's ability to speak to us through everyone when we refuse to love others unconditionally.

- Describe a time recently you have struggled to overlook someone else's flaws. Instead of giving advice to that person, how can you listen to and empathize with them right where they're at instead?

3. V - Value their soul.

- **Luke 9:53**
- **Leader Notes**
 - Valuing people based on their soul means to value them simply because they are human beings created in the image of God. Often, we (usually unconsciously) value people for their role, instead of their soul. We value them based on what they do or what they offer us and society.
 - We can do the same thing with God, valuing him because he seems "useful" in some way, rather than because of an inherent love we have for him based on who he is. If we saw God as beautiful instead of just useful, we would see people the same way.
- **As you examine your own heart, do you find that you value people for what they do or offer you, or are you valuing them simply based on their "soul"? What do you need to change or do differently so that you can value people in the way Jesus does?**

4. E - Encourage everyone always.

- **Luke 9:54**
- **Leader Notes**
 - Our world runs on a constant stream of discouragement. So many things in life beat us down, all day and every day. We have a tremendous opportunity to counteract the effects of discouragement on others by proactively encouraging someone.
 - For many, discouragement keeps them from church. Life has worn them down, and discouragement keeps them out of church, whether they've been hurt by a church in the past, or they feel like no one has taken the time to understand them where they're at. We can be a part of helping people join Christ's body, the church, by being forces of encouragement within our circles and among our communities.
- **When was the last time you intentionally encouraged someone? How will you proactively encourage someone this week?**

Optional Follow-up Questions:

- What makes you say that?
- How do you feel about that?
- How would you explain your answer to a non-Christian friend or neighbor?
- Why did God design it to work that way? Why not just do (whatever else) instead?
- What would you say to someone who disagrees with that?
- Why do we really have to do it like that? Why can't we just go (some other route) instead?