

# YEAR OF GROWTH

## LOVE WEEK 1

### EXPLANATION

#### Definitions:

The Greeks used four different words that are translated into English as “love.”

Eros was used for “love” that is actually physical attraction or, sometimes, lust.

Storge referred to natural affection, the kind of love seen in familial bonds.

Phileo was the word for warm, tender affection or friendship. It was usually conditional and not necessarily long-lasting.

Agape was the word for unconditional love. It referred to a desire for what is best for another. Barclay defined it as, “Unconquerable benevolence, undefeatable goodwill.” The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia described it as: “Earnest and anxious desire for and an active and beneficent interest in the well-being of the loved one.”

It is the love described by the word *agape* that God desires for His children to possess. Thus, we need to understand what love is. Then when can begin to grow in this characteristic as God wishes.

#### Day One – Sunday

Reflect on the previous lessons concerning faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, and brotherly kindness. It is in our faith and to our faith that we are to add love. Brotherly kindness is essential, but love goes even deeper. Think upon the definitions of the words that God used to describe love. Pray for wisdom in understanding this characteristic. Pray for strength as you prepare for this study.

#### Day Two – Monday

#### **1 John 4:7-11**

“God is love!” What a simple, yet profound statement. To understand love is to understand God. The more we come to learn about our Heavenly Father, the better we are at comprehending love. Love is foundational to our lives as Christians because it motivates us to become more like God (cf. Matthew 22:36-40). The goal of all Christian life, service, and growth is greater love.

Day Three – Tuesday**1 Corinthians 13:1-3**

Love is also the foundation and motive of all Christian life, service, and growth. Without love, “I am nothing.” Without love, I am profited nothing. Love gives meaning and purpose to our actions. Note that even faith is worthless without love (cf. Hebrews 11:6).

Day Four – Wednesday**1 Corinthians 13:4-8a**

Here, love is defined by description. Take the time to look up the words and phrases used to describe love. It is important to understand what each one means. Ultimately, love never fails.

Day Five – Thursday**1 Corinthians 13:8b-13**

Miraculous gifts were necessary for an immature church. When the church was firmly established and the Gospel was revealed, the time for miracles ended. However, there will never be a time when man outgrows love. It is always needed and necessary. Even in eternity – when faith has become sight and hope has become reality – love will endure. Love is eternal because God is eternal – and He always loves His children.

Day Six – Friday**2 Timothy 3:1-5**

This passage describes those who, among other things, have lost or suppressed natural affection. It seems only natural that a mother would love her child, or that a son would love his father. Yet, when sin hardens the hearts of men, natural affection is replaced with love of self and love of the world. Thus, there is no respect for parents, no gratitude toward God or man, no honesty or dependability in a person’s word, and no humble submission to Jehovah. Sadly, sometimes love can be understood most clearly in its absence.

Day Seven – Saturday**John 3:14-17**

In contrast stands the greatest picture of love known to man. God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son – not to condemn, but to save man. This is love. May we never forget it.