

## Sacred 4-Letter Words: LOVE

Study Guide for Small Group Discussion and Personal Application  
Lynn Haven UMC – March 28, 2021 – Pastor Craig Carter

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In this sermon series we are looking at four-letter words that help us live as God intends us to live. In recent weeks we have been encouraged to be PURE in heart, transform our MIND, surrender our WILL, and care for our BODY. We have also discussed WORK, REST, SINGing, and what it means to be SENT. Today we consider the ultimate 4-letter word, LOVE.

*Three things will last forever – faith, hope, and love – and the greatest of these is love.  
- 1 Corinthians 13:13 NLT*

The Bible speaks of *agape* love, which is much more than a mere feeling of affection. *Agape* is selfless, unconditional love that always acts in others' best interest. That sort of love is hard to comprehend and even harder to live out. Jesus calls us to love God and to love others with a full, selfless commitment.

*Jesus replied, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind...[and] love your neighbor as yourself." - Matthew 22:37, 39 NLT*

*God is love...God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. - 1 John 4:8, 12 NIV*

*We love because [God] first loved us. - 1 John 4:19 NIV*

God's love for us is extraordinary, and when we fully grasp His love for us it changes how we see ourselves, how we relate to the world, and how we are able to love others.

*What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. - Romans 8:31-35, 37-39 NIV*

**LOVE is a sacred 4-letter word because it...**

### **1) CONVINCES us that God is on our side**

Whenever someone genuinely loves us, they are on our side - and that makes all the difference in the world. God has demonstrated His love for us while we were still sinners (Romans 5:8) and Jesus lives to intercede on our behalf (Romans 8:34).

*If God is for us, who can be against us? - Romans 8:31 NIV*

### **2) CONNECTS us to God**

*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? - Romans 8:35 NIV*

When genuine love exists, nothing and no one can keep us from the one we love. Genuine Christian *agape* love stands the test of time and distance. It does not matter where we go or what we do, God's love for us keeps us connected to Him.

### **3) Enables us to be CONQUERORS**

*In all these things (see v. 36) we are more than conquerors! - Romans 8:37 NIV*

Because of God's love for us and our connection to Him as adopted sons and daughters, we are on His team, the winning team that has defeated all enemies. We are not saved from all difficulties, we are conquerors in the midst of difficulties.

### **Conclusion:**

If you have never experienced and received God's LOVE, today can be the day you embrace Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and allow yourself to be adopted into the family of conquerors!

*I pray that...your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God. - Ephesians 3:16-19 NLT*

⇒ How have you experienced the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord?

⇒ What is ONE thing you can do to you show God's love to others?