

In healthcare for Gods Service-Distinctive in Love

Part 2

(Suitable for use within a group over approximately one hour, or for an individual's personal Bible reading)

Thinking about your life as a student in healthcare

1. In your own words - define love.
2. Think of a close non Christian colleague. What terms would they use to define 'love'? Are there differing influences which inform your colleague's definition compared to your own?
3. Identify two people you would describe as 'loving' in your work place. What is it about these two people that makes you describe them as loving?
4. In the busyness of treating patients, preparing for clinics and tutorials and studying for exams.... do you have time to love God at uni?

What does God have to say?

Read and consider 1 John 4:7-12.

1 John is a letter written by the Apostle John to believers everywhere to reassure them of their faith and counter false teaching. In 1 John 4:7-12, the Apostle defines the source of love (v 7-8), and love itself (explained to be that which God directs to us through Christ, rather than that which we direct to God; v 9-10). From this, he goes on to direct believers to love one another (v11).

NOTE - Atoning sacrifice refers to Jesus as the one who dealt with our problem of sin (by bearing the punishment for it on the cross), and so the one who brings us into right relationship with God.

1. Describe the character of God's love towards people (you, your non Christian colleague) by identifying 5 characteristics of His love from verses 9 & 10.
2. Describe the consequences of God's love toward people (v10, 12). What are the ramifications for a close non Christian colleague not receiving God's love?
3. Think again about the definition of love you gave earlier. How does the definition of love given by John clarify/illuminate your definition of love?

Putting it into practice

A close non Christian colleague expresses problems they are having with their boyfriend/girlfriend. Your friend describes several incidents where their emotions have been hurt and mentions a time when their boy/girl friend told them that the "feeling they once had - has gone". As they confide in you, you recall verses 9 & 10 - God's definition and demonstration of love.

1. In conversation how could you appropriately share the reality of God's love for them? Think concretely about what you could actually say.

(If you are stuck, a possible starting point is to consider the character of God's love (v9 & 10) versus the 'love'/lack of love, demonstrated by your friend's boy/girl friend.

Alternatively ask your friend how they would define 'perfect love' in a concrete way.)

2. By God's Spirit, you are given an opportunity to explicitly explain to your friend the love of God as defined by John. While they respond well, they ask you, 'If God is love and so loving – why is there suffering – and why am *I* suffering in *my* relationship?' How would you respond to these real, potential flow-on questions? (Leaders Appendix: See Apologetics; An Apologetic on God and the Question of Suffering).

John directs Christians to love one another –for love comes from God (v7) and because God so loved us (v11).

3. List 3 practical ways that you could love other Christians who study with you. Consider the character of God's love and how this directs you to love.
4. List three ways that Christians with whom you work and study can be difficult to love?
5. What might be a consequence of fellow Christians who study together NOT loving one another? Consider firstly v8 & 12. Consider also any consequences you have seen from your own experience.

In Mark 12:29-30, in answer to a question from one of the experts in Old Testament Law, Jesus defines the greatest command that God has given man as loving God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. That is, You are to love God with your whole being, with **all your faculties** - and in **every aspect of your life**.

But what practically does this command mean? And more significantly what does it mean to love God in this way as a carer and curer of people's health?

6. To consider this far reaching question further, identify:
 - a. The faculties/abilities God has given you;
 - b. The areas of your life God has given you to use these faculties (many of these areas will be in health care simply due to the quantity of time you spend in health care as a student);
 - c. Actions and motivations in these 'life' areas that would be consistent with loving God. Tabulating your findings for future reference may be helpful.

When I look realistically at the command God has given you and me – I can become discouraged – for if I am realistic, I am unable to meet His demands. Yet God does not reject me, but labels me as His child.

7. What does my/your inability to meet God's demands (often due to unwillingness) say about me/say about you?
8. What does God's willingness to call me his child, despite my unwillingness to obey Him, and despite the hurt this causes both to Him and the creation He loves, say about God?

Bible Bites

(Suitable to be completed over approximately 20-25 minutes)

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What does God have to say?

Read and consider 1 John 4:7-12:

⁷Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.'

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