

Taking it Home:

- On the path of loving others we have discovered two easy traps to fall into: sentimentalism and self-righteousness. Both evidence an insincere “love.” Sentimentalism is marked by empty words said to make you and the other person feel better for a moment. Often the words are sappy and quaint. Self-righteousness is rooted in control; it is posturing to set oneself up to be superior to the other. Often the words are condescending in tone and motive. Between these two traps, which is more often the pattern you follow? How does this lesson invite you to a better path?

- Read Ephesians 4:15-16. Notice that Paul declares that through truth spoken in love the church will be built up in love. Who is someone that you can build up this week through truth spoken in love?

- Return to the list you made from John 13 of how Jesus loved His disciples. Pick one or two of these patterns and invite God to work through you this week to give evidence that you love Him by the way you love others. Remember that it is God’s love in you that works through you.

Recommended Resources

- *The Mark of a Christian* by Francis Schaeffer
- *The Five Love Languages* by Gary Chapman

Follow Me
The Mark of a Christian
James 2:8

Dr. Matthew St. John
Bethel Church
October 5, 2014

The Mark of a Christian

Notes:

For a restatement of Pastor Matthew’s sermon points, visit pastormatthew.net and click on the “Write This Down” tab.

For more information about Growth Groups, the At Home Study Guide, and a podcast of sermons with study guide, visit www.bethelc.com.

At Home Study Guide

For the week of October 5, 2014

James 2:8

Quick Review: All of us want to be loved. We learned last week the God who created us in His image loves us with an unconditional love. We also saw in the story of the Sons of Sceva that some people try to operate with only the evidence of love apart from experience the essence of love. In other words, there are people today who depend on their religion (evidence) having not experienced a relationship (essence) with Jesus. Settled that we are loved by God through the person of Jesus and the work of the Holy Spirit we are then set free to love others. Our love for God and our love for others is a necessary response to God's love for us. This week's study invites you to a life style of dependence upon the Holy Spirit as He works through you to love others.

My Story:

- Where did you see evidence of God's love this week?
- Gary Chapman popularized an understanding of the variety of ways love is expressed in his book, *The Five Love Languages*. He found that people receive love through: Words of Affirmation, Physical Touch, Receiving Gifts, Acts of Service and Quality Time. Which is your preferred way to receive love?
- What activity or evidence do people today give when trying to demonstrate they love God?

Growing Deeper:

- Read John 13 giving special attention to 13:34-35. According to verse 35, the evidence of God's love in you is your love for others. Jesus says that you and I are to love one another just as we have been loved by Him. Create a list of the ways Jesus loved His disciples (and us) in John 13.
- Compare Matthew 22:34-40 to 1 John 4:19. Last week we saw that we love because we are loved by God. How does the love you receive from God empower you to respond in love for God and neighbor?
- Read James 2:1-13 and then read Matthew 5:43-6:1. What characteristics of a self-righteous person do you notice in these two passages? What does James say is the royal command of God?
- Read John 17:12-26 and notice that Jesus is praying for YOU. What stands out about the love of God in vv 23 and 26? How does the love of Jesus' followers for one another impact the spread of the good news according to vv 21 and 23?