



4Love Series (Week 1)

Heartless: Becoming More Affectionate People

2 Tim 3:1-5; Rom 1:29-31

OPEN

We begin a new sermon series and study focus these next four weeks on the theme of *LOVE*. As we enter into this series, take a moment and describe how our culture thinks of love. What are the themes, messages, understandings...of love from the variety of channels in our culture today?

What do you think of the cultural definitions of love?

DISCUSS

Reflect for a moment on these quotes from the weekend message. What are your reactions and thoughts?

"The primary importance and enduring greatness of love derives from the fact that **"God is love"** (1 John 4:8). Let me underline what I am and am NOT saying there. GOD is love; but LOVE isn't God...As C.S. Lewis observes, "when love become a god," it's only a matter of time before "it becomes a demon." How many times in history has human devotion or passion become untethered from the true God's guidance and wrought terrible damage, as U2 sings, *"in the name of love?"*

- Where has love gone wrong in our culture?

What is the evidence of an authentic Christian life? [Consider 1 John 4:8, 16; Mark 12:28-31; 1 Cor 12:31ff; Gal 5:22 (first fruit)]

- Are there areas in your life where you need to love more intentionally? How so?

We have looked at culture several times in this study. We are not strangers to humanity's dilemma to love well. What do you think about this Scripture and quote for the weekend message?

"Many centuries ago, the Apostle Paul looked out a world that seemed to be in such terrible moral, spiritual, and social crisis that he was convinced that he must be living in the last days of human history. I know that many of you look out at our times and wonder the same thing too. Listen to how Paul described these conditions, first in one of his letters to his protégé, a young pastor named Timothy: "*Mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, WITHOUT LOVE...*" (2 Tim 3:1-5). Pay particular attention to that phrase "without love."

- Read also Rom 1:29-31. What is missing that results in all these sinful acts and patterns of life?

BRAINSTORM:

- Name some areas in your life and in our culture, that are in need of greater love?
- What could you envision happening if you, and God's people (the church), loved well in these places?

NEXT STEPS

- If you had to appear in court, being charged for the *crime of love*, would there be enough evidence to convict you? Think about it.
- Think about and commit to prayer the opportunities (and people in your path right now) that you need to love more intentionally.
- How well do you receive love from God? From others?

ⁱ U2, "Pride (In the Name of Love)," *Unforgettable Fire* album (1984).