

CULTURE IS_

BUILDING A LIFE THAT LASTS

How to Love Unconditionally

SUMMARY:

During this series, we will be discussing what culture is and the type of culture we want to embody as Christ-followers. Culture is the behaviors of individuals within a family, organization, or church that create accountability and momentum. These Gospel-driven, Holy Spirit-empowered behaviors cultivate unity and empower the vision of the family, organization, or church to flourish individually and collectively. Cultural behaviors are not only good for the family, organization, or church. These behaviors also make the individuals in the organization good.

The second culture trait we will discuss is “Unconditionally Loving.” How do we learn to love unconditionally? By faith in Jesus, we can know the power of the Gospel message, know the power of eternal life, and know the power of cruciformity. When we experience God’s love in this way, the overflow is that we can love ourselves and others as well (upward, inward, outward).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

How is love often depicted in movies, books, and music? Do you think this love is reflective of God’s love found in the Bible? Why or why not?

Read 1 John 3:11-12.

- These verses recall the story of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4:1-16. What made Cain’s deeds evil and Abel’s deeds righteous?
- What is the connection between righteousness and love?

Read 1 John 4:7-11.

- Verse 8 says, “God is love.” What is the difference between God *showing* love and God *being* love?
- In what way did God reveal His love for us?

- What is the implication for us as Christ-followers now that we have received God's love? (Look at verse 11)

Read 1 John 3:13 and Matthew 5:10.

- Why would the world hate us?
- What is the difference between being persecuted for righteousness versus experiencing maltreatment for unrighteousness?

Read 1 John 3:14-15.

- The gift of salvation is eternal life which begins the moment we say yes to Jesus. What is the evidence of this new life?
- What can be difficult about loving others?
- Who is someone you know that models loving others well? How do they show love?
- How did Jesus show love? (Think of examples from His life and the ultimate example on the cross)

Read 1 John 3:16-18.

- Cruciformity means to live in a way that is shaped by the cross of Jesus. That is, to love sacrificially. In what ways can you sacrificially love those around you? Think of people in your life like your family, friends, co-workers, and neighbors.
- What does the Apostle John urge us to do in verse 18? Take a moment to pray for God to bring opportunities to love others in action and in truth.

SOUL TATTOO: Let Jesus love unconditionally through you.

ACTION STEP: Receive the Lord's Supper.

On Sunday, we participated in the Lord's Supper together. You can also do this in your small group. Prepare the elements (some bread or crackers and juice) and read the following verses:

¹⁹ And He took bread, gave thanks, broke it, gave it to them, and said, "This is My body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me."

²⁰ In the same way He also took the cup after supper and said, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is poured out for you."

- Luke 22:19-20 CSB