



CORNERSTONE REFLECTION GUIDE

SEPTEMBER 8, 2024

Title: Cultivate Love: Three Steps

Preacher: Rev. Matt Tuggle

Scripture: 1 John 4:8; Matthew 22:36-40, 5:44-45

What is love? It's a word we often use, but do we really know what it means? Although the ancient Greeks had several words for love, "agape" is the term that appears 259 times in the New Testament. This word refers to an unconditional, sacrificial kind of love that combines feeling and action. **A classic definition of agape love is to will the good of the other;** it means wanting what is best for another person and actually working for their good. This is much easier said than done!

Like the other Fruit of the Spirit, we cannot force growth in this area, but we can cultivate a life with God that yields love in us and around us. If we are to grow in our ability to love, we must both *know what love is* and *want to love*. Then, through prayer and practice, we can become people for whom loving others becomes second nature.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stuck out to you about this sermon? Was there an idea that was particularly meaningful or challenging for you?
2. Agape love is often described as selfless, sacrificial, and unconditional. What are the potential challenges and difficulties of living out agape love in a world that often prioritizes self-interest?
3. What do you find most difficult about Jesus' command to love your enemies (Matthew 5:44-45)? How can we demonstrate agape love toward those who have harmed us, while still maintaining healthy boundaries?

4. For some people, loving others seems to come naturally. Do you know someone like that? What do you admire most about them?
5. What does it look like practically to will the good of the other? How can we practice this in our relationships (family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, etc.)?

WEEKLY PRACTICE

In September, we are focusing on cultivating a life with God where love can grow within us, and we believe this happens in the context of community. To foster authentic, intentional relationships, we invite you to join an HPUMC Small Group. Our Small Group Launch is happening right now, so it's the perfect time to join a group! Register [here](#) by Sunday, September 15.

Feeling the nudge from the Holy Spirit that it's time for you to start a group of your own instead? Grab a few friends and start a weekly Bible Study! Most people are just waiting for an invitation into deeper community.