# Desiring God Lesson 3: Living a Life of Love

## **LESSON OBJECTIVES**

## **Goals**

1. To help the students understand the love God the Father has for us.
2. To help the students understand the importance of loving your neighbors.
3. To teach the students to keep God’s commands and follow them.

## **Topics**

Love, Mercy, Repentance, Righteousness

## **Scripture Memorization**

John 17:25

## **OPENING PRAYER (5 to 10 minutes)**

## **GROUP BUILDING (10 minutes)**

The goal of this game is to make the person who is “it” to smile or laugh.

How you play:

1. Break everyone into groups of 6 (each group can play the game independently). Have everyone sit in a circle.

2. Have one person from each group start by being “it”. The “it” person tries not to smile or laugh throughout the round. The person on the left of the person who is “it” tries to make the person smile or laugh within 15 seconds by only asking questions. Each time the person asks a question, the “it” person can only respond by saying the phrase “Honey, I love you, but I just can’t smile.”

3. If the person succeeds and makes the “it” person smile/laugh, then that person is “it” for the new round. If the person doesn’t succeed, the next person down the line attempts to make the “it” person smile or laugh within 15 seconds. If the “it” person doesn’t smile or laugh throughout all the remaining people, the person wins the game.

## **GETTING STARTED (10 minutes)**

**Read Ephesians 2:4-5 and Matthew 5:7**

**Discussion Questions:**
1. How is Matthew 5:7 similar to Ephesians 2:4-5? (Both mention mercy.)
2. What’s different in these passages? (In Ephesians it is God who is called merciful, in Matthew the inference is that it is us who are called to merciful.)
3. How would you define mercy? (Forgiving, grace, etc.)

We’re going to talk about mercy today. Keep these verses we’ve just read in mind as we consider 1 John 3 together.

## **DIGGING IN (30 minutes)**

Have each student read 1 John 3 on their own.

Have students get back into the groups they played the opening game in. Have them share the following questions.

**Discussion Questions:**
1. What is your impression of the passage? (Allow groups to discuss together.)
2. How does it compare with Matthew 5:7 and Ephesians 2:4-5? (All passages discuss mercy, love, and how we should be like Christ in this way)

Have students break out of their groups and come back together as a class.

Let’s go through the passage again, breaking it apart and looking further into its meaning.

 **Read 1 John 3:1-10**

**Discussion Questions:**
1. What do you think it means to “lavish”? (To give generously or extravagantly.)
2. Is the word ‘lavished’ used here in a physical or metaphorical sense? (This is a tough question, but it’s designed to help students struggle with the idea that God really has literally done this.)
3. How do verses 4-6 help you to understand the importance of repentance? (It’s a reminder not only that we are need of it, but God is ready to offer forgiveness when we do repent.)
4. What does the word ‘righteous’ mean to you? (Doing the right thing, etc.)

**Read 1 John 3:11-24**

**Discussion Questions:**
1. Verse 12 is a shocking example for John to use…why do you think he chooses it? (Because love is that big a deal and Cain is a universal example of the opposite.)
2. Why is loving each other so important in this passage? (Because God loves us…John connects His perfect love with the love we’re called to have.)

**Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.**

**Discussion Questions:**
1. How do the definitions of love compare? (They share an element of patience, mercy, kindness and purity.)
2. How does this help you better understand verses 16-18? (It is doing the right thing. Love is not a feeling but a lifestyle and a posture we have toward others.)
3. How do we know that we belong to the truth? (If we live a life of love, a life of action, a life devoted to God.)

## **MAKING IT REAL (10 minutes)**

**General Discussion:**
• What did you learn about the passage after diving deeper a better understanding? (Right action is how we live out love for God and others)
• What are some similarities between 1 John 3, Matthew 5:7, and Ephesians 2:4-5? (God has shown us great mercy as an example…He calls us to that same thing…we know how we can show that — through love and right action, etc.)

**Read Psalm 89:1-2**

The New Testament word for mercy has its roots in the Old Testament word “hesed” which can be translated roughly as “covenant love” or “loyal love.”

**General Discussion:**
• How does this definition change your view of 1 John 3? (We stand in agreement with God by living a life of love, just as He has had a posture of love toward us.)
• How does mercy relate to love in your life? (We tend to be more merciful to people we love, we tend to feel connection to people who have shown us mercy, etc.)

Give the students some time by themselves to think of ways that they can show love and mercy to others. Then have them think of ways that they can show mercy through love, and vice versa. Invite them back into their groups from the game and earlier discussion and have them share with one another their convictions.

To conclude the lesson, have the students from each group share what they came up with and thought about. Discuss as a group ways that we can be merciful and loving in our everyday lives.

## **CLOSING PRAYER (2 minutes)**

Gather prayer requests and pray for the youth.