

## Relational Awareness ~ Lesson 1 ~ Love Defined

Read all parts of the lesson (in black print) aloud in the group. Don't read answers in red unless there are no other appropriate answers given by group members. Start with question numbers circled in red.

In this lesson we will learn that **God wants every person to be treated with honor and respect**, including in their own home. We will learn what it means to love and to be loved. Sadly, domestic abuse is an epidemic in the world. According to the CDC, 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men in the USA have experienced severe physical abuse from an intimate partner.<sup>1</sup> (Statistics from hospitals and police departments also confirm the epidemic.)

1. What do you think is God's answer to the problem of domestic abuse?  
*For all people to consistently show love and kindness to everyone*
2. Read Matthew 22:34-40. What are the two most important commandments?  
*Love God; love others*
3. Read 1 John 4:7-8. Do we really love God if we don't love others? *No*  
(How we treat each person in our lives reveals whether we truly love God.)

4. Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 to see what God's love looks like.  
Guess which Greek word is used for the word love:  
 philia (brotherly)          eros (physical passion)          **agape (sacrificial)**  
 storge (parental)          pragma (practical)          philautia (self)

What's an example of God's sacrificial love?

*Jesus coming to earth; dying for us; taking on the role of a servant*

5. What's the point made in verses 1-3?  
*Love is better than spiritual gifts; doing great things for God is pointless if motivated by selfish reasons*
6. Use other words (including various Bible translations) to describe Paul's definition of agape love and explain ways to put each description into action.

<u>Word:</u>	<u>Other words:</u>	<u>Ways to practice it:</u>
v4) Patient	<i>Long suffering</i>	<i>Relax and take deep breaths</i>
v4) Kind	<i>Gentle</i>	<i>Smile at everyone</i>
v4) Not jealous	<i>Not envious</i>	<i>Be happy about the good things that others have</i>
v4) Not proud	<i>Not boastful</i>	<i>Spend time listening to others</i>
v4) Not arrogant	<i>Not puffed up</i>	<i>Admit when you're wrong</i>
v5) Doesn't act unbecomingly	<i>Not rude</i>	<i>Be polite</i>
v5) Doesn't seek its own	<i>Doesn't demand its own way</i>	<i>Let others decide what to do</i>

<sup>1</sup> National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, United States, 2011. MMWR 2014; 63(SS-8): 1-18

**Word:****Other words:****Ways to practice it:**

v5) Not easily provoked	<i>Not overly sensitive</i>	<i>Don't blame others for my feelings</i>
v5) Doesn't count wrongs	<i>Doesn't keep score</i>	<i>Don't bring up old offenses</i>
v6) Doesn't delight in unrighteousness	<i>Doesn't enjoy the calamity of others</i>	<i>Seek God's perspective in situations</i>
v6) Delights in the truth	<i>Happy about what is true</i>	<i>Speak the truth in love</i>
v7) Bears all things	<i>Covers</i>	<i>Be supportive of others</i>
v7) Believes all things	<i>Not cynical</i>	<i>Trust that all things work together for good</i>
v7) Hopes all things	<i>Always hopeful</i>	<i>Keep a positive attitude</i>
v7) Endures all things	<i>Perseveres</i>	<i>Never give up</i>
v8) Love never fails	<i>Love never comes to an end</i>	<i>Trust God's love to do miracles</i>

7. Commit (for at least one week) to praying over one of the concepts listed above (your biggest challenge). Ask God to replace the negative quality: \_\_\_\_\_ with the positive quality: \_\_\_\_\_. *Anyone want to share?*
8. Examine all the relationships in your home or in your family. Do they exemplify God's love? Is each person treated with consistent kindness? If not, what can you do?  
*Anyone want to share?*
9. What one thing will you do this week to practice the attributes of love and improve your relationships?  
*Anyone want to share? Next week I will ask how you did with your assignment.*

**Verse 13** - Only faith, hope, and love will last - and the greatest of these three is: **LOVE**.  
So maybe we should learn most about (and try the hardest to be) LOVE.

*Read the following:*



**Our church's Domestic Kindness Action Team (DKAT):**

- Equips the whole church with DK instruction in Godly living and
- Connects the oppressed and the repentant controllers to expert help.

*If you can be anything, Choose to Be Kind*