



What is Love?

In 1993, a Trinidad-born, German artist named Haddaway, reached #1 on the Billboard charts with his song titled, "What is love?" In the refrain the answer comes in the form of a picture: "Baby don't hurt me, don't hurt me no more." What is love? He asks. He answers, it is when we are not being hurt by the one who loves us.

It is Valentine's day, and many are celebrating this cold, icy, snowy day with the warmth of a loved one. Maybe that loved one is a spouse or partner, maybe that loved one is a child or a parent, maybe that loved one is a close friend. There are many ways to celebrate love in our life. Take a moment to reflect on the question, "What is love?" How do you answer that question with the one you are with today? _____

Open your Bible to 1st Corinthians 13

This passage is often associated with weddings. Though St. Paul was not writing about romantic love in this passage. He was describing the fullness of God's love. Certainly God's love is found in our romantic love, with our life-long partner. God's love is also found in our familial love. God's love is also found in the self-sacrificial love of our Savior going to the cross, showing us how to die to live for others.

St. Paul tells us that without love he is what?

(1:1) _____
 (1:2) _____
 (1:3) _____

Finish these sentences from verses 4 to 8

Love is _____
 Love is _____
 Love is not _____ or _____ or _____
 Love does not insist on _____
 Love is not _____ or _____
 Love does not rejoice in _____
 Love bears _____; believes _____
 Hopes _____; endures _____
 Love never _____

(I used the NRSV, if you have a different translation, you may have slightly different phrasing.)

Open your Bible to 1st John 4, this is the letter 1st John, not the Gospel of John

Beginning in verse 7, we have a section which echoes John's themes about love that are found in the Gospel, but which are spelled out a little more clearly here.

Complete these verses:

Beloved, let us _____ one another, because _____ is from _____; everyone who _____ is born of _____ and knows _____.
 Whoever does not _____ does not know _____, for _____ is _____.
 God's _____ was revealed among us in this way: God sent his _____ into the world so that we might _____ through him.
 In this is _____, not that we loved _____ but that he _____ us and sent his _____ to be the atoning _____ for our sins.
 Beloved, since God _____ us so much, we ought to _____ one another. No one has ever seen _____; if we _____ one another, _____ lives within us, and his _____ is perfected in us.

(Again, I used the NRSV, if your translation is a bit different, you should still be able to figure out the words to fill this in.)