

The Anatomy of Love

Community Group Discussion Questions

Opening Question: *Who has loved you to the point that it made a profound difference in your life?*

Tell them: This week Pastor Michael talked about 3 aspects of love using John 11:1-44:

The emotion of love.

The action of love.

The logic of love.

(Note: If you'd like to read through the entire passage again, you can ask everyone to underline all that they see about who God/Jesus is. Then discuss what we learn about Him: He is the resurrection, He loves, He grieves, restores sight, etc.)

1. The Emotion of Love: Tell them: Pastor Michael said that the emotion of love is typically the engine of love. And as Max Muller once said, "A flower cannot blossom without sunshine, and man cannot live without love."

Ask them: *What did you think of that idea? (i.e., emotion is often the start of love.)*

NOTE: This might be a good time to talk about the absence of love if anyone is feeling that. Remind them that God is the source of all our love, and He is always there for us.

Tell them: Pastor Michael pointed out that love doesn't always just produce good feelings, it can cause grief, sorrow and weeping, as we see in the story of Lazarus. When Jesus wept over the death of Lazarus, people recognized how much He loved him.

Tell them: Pastor Michael pointed out that when we primarily define love by how we feel or don't feel, we can find ourselves either blossoming or withering based on the emotion of love.

Ask them: *Does anyone have any experience with the power of the emotion of love?*

Tell them: Pastor Michael said that "our love is most fully on display when the object of our love is taken from us."

Ask them: *What do you think about that idea, especially in light of the year we have lived through?*

2. The Action of Love: Tell them: Next, Pastor Michael moved to the action of love. He said that the early church father Augustine once wrote, "Love, and say it with your life." In other words, the action of love comes through your actions.

Ask them: *How many of you are familiar with The Five Love Languages?*

Tell them: How about I read them, and you raise your hand when I say your love language(s)?

Words of Affirmation

Acts of Service

Quality Time

Gifts

Physical Touch

Tell them: Wasn't it interesting that the only love language/action that was not recorded in the account of Mary anointing Jesus' feet was words of affirmation, even though it's possible they could have been spoken?

Tell them: Shortly after washing the feet of His disciples, Jesus says this in John 13:35, "*Everyone will know by this that you are my disciples. . .*" **Ask them:** *Do you know what "this" He is referring to? (Answer: if you have love for one another.)*

Tell them: The only way people can know of the love we have for one another is by seeing our actions. The action of love is not only about what it does for us, or the object of our love, but for the gospel itself.

3. **The Logic of Love: Tell them:** Unfortunately, the emotion of love doesn't always keep the actions of love happening. But it's #3, the logic of love, that keeps us loving when we lack emotion or don't know what actions of love we need to do. Pastor Michael said that the logic of love is the diagnostic that tells us who to love, what love is and isn't, and how to love and not love. He called the logic of love *the constitution of our heart*, telling us what our rights are and what our philosophy of love will be.

Ask them: *What do you think about this analogy?*

Ask them: *Does your philosophy of love tend to start with emotion or action?*

Tell them: Pastor Michael said that the emotion and action of love should flow out of the logic of love. He said the logic of love is rooted in your understanding of the loved one, or at least the pursuit of that understanding.

Ask them: *What did you think of this idea?*

Tell them: Pastor Michael said that loving God with your all doesn't start and grow from your emotions or actions but from your understanding of who He is and how and why He loves. The same is true for humanity. We love other humans like Jesus loves, with the logic of love, which includes the understanding the of the imperfection of humanity.

Ask them: *How can starting from a position of understanding people's imperfections help you to love them more fully?*

Tell them: Pastor Michael talked about empathy being a huge part of loving. Do you remember reading *To Kill a Mockingbird* in high school? Harper Lee wrote that "you never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view – until you climb inside of his skin and walk around in it."

Ask them: *What do you think about the power of empathy in the act of loving?*

Tell them: Pastor Michael said that if we love from a starting point of either emotion or action, both are bound to fail either instantly or eventually. But if we love our neighbor and our enemy from the logic of love, it means we endeavor to know them, understand them, EMPATHIZE with them. And we do it not out of our own goodness but out of the first and greatest commandment; we endeavor to know and understand them because we know and understand God and his understanding of us. This provides the reminder and the fuel for loving people different from us; that if a perfect God can love an imperfect me, I can love an imperfect you.

Ask them: *How might this idea help us to love the people we disagree with, fear, or stress over?*

Tell them: At the end of Sunday Pastor Michael asked these three questions. I thought we could talk about our answers together:

How can we imitate Jesus in our love and knowledge of the Father?

How can we imitate Jesus in our love and knowledge of our neighbor?

How can letting emotion and action flow from the logic of love lead to a deeper and more selfless love?

Tweetable Quotes and Words to Remember

1. When we primarily define love based on how we feel or don't feel, we can find ourselves either blossoming or withering based on the emotion of love.
2. If a perfect God can love an imperfect me, I can love an imperfect you.
3. If we love from a starting point of either emotion or action, both are bound to fail either instantly or eventually.