



November 21-22, 2009, Week 2



Big Idea: How many truly authentic relationships do you have in your life?

Opening question.

What kind of person irritates you the most? Why?

Agape: Undeserved Affection

“Agape” is the rare kind of love referred to in 1 Corinthians 13 that means “to have a deep affection and concern for someone who doesn’t deserve your affection and most likely isn’t going to return your affection.” When have you given or received this kind of love? Explain.

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Read this passage in 2-3 different translations. These verses highlight 15 ways to “walk the talk” when it comes to living authentic, agape-filled relationships. List all the “walking” points from this passage and define them in your own words and experiences.

What’s your agape quotient?

Take a few minutes and rate yourself on a scale of 1-10 in each of these agape response areas (1=Easy Response, 10=Difficult Response). Share which areas you rate the best and worst. Why did you give yourself these ratings?

___ **Patience**

___ **Kindness**

___ **No Envy**

___ **No Pride**

___ **No Rudeness**

___ **No Selfishness**

___ **No Temper Tantrums**

___ **No Keeping Score**

___ **No “Told You So” Arrogance**

___ **Glad for Others’ Good Fortune**

___ **Protecting**

___ **Trusting**

___ **Believing**

___ **Enduring**

___ **Never Giving Up**

Love...Picture it

While we share a common goal of expressing the love of Christ, we have personally seen, experienced and expressed it in different ways. What's the first picture that comes to your mind when you think of undeserved affection?

Compare and Contrast

How do "agape" relationships outlined in 1 Corinthians 13 compare and contrast with popular culture's view of authentic relationships?

Long-Suffering

"The first word here, markothimeo – the word that is often translated as 'patient' – does not mean patient with your circumstances, like being patient while standing in a long line or patiently waiting to buy something until you have the money. This word means 'putting up with people who drive you nuts.' It is a relational word; it is sometimes translated 'long-suffering' as in 'suffering in your relationship with someone for a long time.' This word is often found in the Old Testament to speak of God when he holds back on whacking the Jews when they clearly deserve to be whacked. The point: we are to be patient, long-suffering, even towards people who drive us crazy...people who probably won't return our goodness towards them."

Tim Ayers

Read Jonah 3:10-4:11

- How did Jonah respond?
- How did God respond?
- What does it tell you about long-suffering?

Pray for each other.

Go back to the area you rated worst in your "Agape Quotient." Pray for God to give you guidance in how to love better in this area. Pray for God to give you His Spirit of long-suffering, enduring patience to love the "hard-to-love" for the long haul.



**"Love cares more for others than for self...
Puts up with anything... never dies. "
1 Corinthians 13:5,7,8 (the Message)**

