

Sermon Notes

Practical Lessons for Understanding the Word of God



Starved for Love

KEY PASSAGE: 1 John 4:7-11 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 2:8 | 1 John 3:1

SUMMARY

The Lord doesn't want anyone to feel starved for love.

In fact, He's made provisions for us to experience the joy and fulfillment of being loved by Him. Yet many people miss out on a satisfying relationship with Him because they are trying to fill the empty place in their lives with things, money, sex, or prestige. Every human relationship will disappoint, but God's love will never fail.

SERMON POINTS

What does it mean for a person to be starved for love?

Those who feel unloved are likely to display some of the following characteristics:

- **Become involved in immoral situations.** When someone is looking for a satisfying relationship, it's easy to confuse sex with love. In reality, sex is a roadblock to genuine love when it's practiced outside the marriage relationship.
- **Commit crimes.** Some people's deep emotional needs cause them to become desperate for recognition, even if it comes in the form of a crime report on the news.
- **Don't love themselves.** Those who feel unloved have trouble loving themselves, and therefore, cannot love others.
- **Engage in excessive spending.** Some people turn to shopping in an attempt to fill what's lacking in their relationships.
- **Experience loneliness.** Those who are starved for love may feel isolated even when they're with others. They think marriage is the solution, but only Jesus can fill a lonely heart.

- **Become critical of others' relationships.** Although dissatisfied people find fault in others, the truth is that they desire what the other person has—a relationship with someone else.
- **Get angry.** Because of a lack of love, some people develop an angry spirit. They may not be upset with anyone in particular, but are simply frustrated because all their attempts to meet their emotional needs have failed.
- **Become self-absorbed.** A person who doesn't feel genuinely loved could become inwardly focused on his or her longing for a relationship. But self-centeredness only leads to unhappiness.
- **Try to buy love.** Although there is nothing wrong with giving gifts, those whose generosity is motivated by neediness for love in return are actually trying to purchase another's affection.
- **Are overly complimentary.** Some people lavish compliments on others, hoping to receive a response in return which will fill up the emptiness in their hearts.
- **Emphasize being in agreement.** When people don't understand true love, they might make the false assumption that love means always being in agreement.
- **Do what others want.** The desire for a relationship can be so strong that a person may serve someone in an attempt to earn love.
- **Make personal sacrifices to receive love.** Emotional neediness leads people to say, do, or give whatever is necessary to make the other person love them.

Why do people remain starved for love?

God has placed a hunger for love in every human heart, but He's also provided a way for us to have that need met through Him. However, instead of

turning to the Lord, many people remain stuck in a place of emotional deprivation because they try to satisfy their longings with substitutes. Another reason for remaining starved for love is because of past rejection—especially if it occurred in childhood. It manifests as a feeling of unworthiness to receive love and an inability to give it and maintain a healthy relationship.

The Lord is the true source of love.

There is no substitute for the Father's love. The Bible says that God is love—it's His nature. He not only pours His love into our hearts, but He also lets it flow through us to others so we can have genuinely loving relationships.

What is true love?

Love is a commitment to the satisfaction, security, and development of the one loved and a commitment to the fulfillment of their needs—whatever they are—always asking what's best for the other person.

- **Love is a commitment to another person.** It requires faithfulness and is motivated by a desire to see the loved one become who God wants him to be.
- **There is a difference in loving and desiring someone.** Affection and desire are often equated with love, but they are not necessarily the same thing. Sometimes what we're feeling is really a need to be loved, but only God can fill our empty souls with His love.
- **There's only one true, genuine love, and it's born of Almighty God.** He is the source, the fountain from which it flows into our lives. As we abide in Him, His love reaches others.
- **It's an unselfish, sacrificial giving of oneself.** The goal of true love is not to have our needs met, but to seek out ways to meet the needs of the other person.

What is the nature of love?

You'll find that God's love is active and it:

- **Brings healing.** Genuine love heals the hurts and sorrows of life.

- **Builds a sense of self-worth.** Being loved makes us feel valued as God's creation.
- **Produces a feeling of emotional completeness.** When God's love fills us up, we don't require things or people to complete us.
- **Gives a feeling of security.** His love calms our fears and is adequate for whatever we face.
- **Helps us to love those who have wronged us.** It motivates us to forgive.
- **Enables us to be kind toward those who have misunderstood or misjudged us.** In Christ, we have the ability to love others no matter what they say or do.
- **Empowers us to serve others joyfully.** We can share God's love by serving them.
- **Enables us to develop an intimate relationship.** When we have intimacy with Christ, we'll be fulfilled and experience His peace and joy.
- **Enables us to reach other people and share God's love.** His passion in us flows to others.

Where do we begin?

This kind of fulfilling love is only found in a personal relationship with Christ. At the moment of salvation, He plants His love in our hearts. Then as we grow, His love within us matures. He overcomes our negative feelings and enables us to love those we might not naturally like. The deposit of God's love fills the empty places in our hearts.

RESPONSE

- What things have you tried as a substitute for God's genuine love in your life?
- Have you seen the difference between love as a commitment to others compared to that of emotional neediness?
- Can you see the nature of God's love overflowing in your life today?

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