

Note:

- Italics used for notes to the speaker
- Regular text for specific discussion points to be brought up in the session
- The option to ask students questions may not be available in larger settings, please feel free to adapt the talk as necessary, while retaining key points

Goal of the talk:

- I. Students would know what real love is
 - II. Students will trust in God because of His love
 - III. Students will not run after unhealthy relationships to satisfy their desire for love
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Love as We Know It – Talk-sheet

Key Points: God is before all creation. God is Love. Therefore, love is the foundation and source of all things. When we know God we know true love.

Discussion Question: When you hear the word love, what do you first think about or feel?

Have you ever googled the word ‘love’?

Well I did, and here’s what I found –

Top on the list – movies and tv series related to couples, relationships, dating etc.

For decades, be it in India or any other country in the world, the film and music industry has continued to produce an unmatched level of content on love and relationships. This in itself is a reflection of how much human beings desire love.

Our responses to the word ‘love’, may or may not be different from Google, but what we can all agree on is that love is a human obsession. It’s as if we were born with a hunger for love.

But what is love?

Is love

- That exciting and scary feeling that takes away your ability to eat or even think about anyone else?
- The hot cup of tea your mother makes for you when you wake up?
- Being hugged by a friend when that’s exactly what you needed?

Love is all of those things, but so much more. It is much more than the human mind can fathom or put words to. It is greater than we will ever know, yet it can be known. It is encapsulated in this statement - “God is love” (1 John 4:8b).

What do you think that means?

It is very different from the statement “God loves.”

God is Love	God Loves
“Love” is a noun	“Love” is a verb
God and love are equated. i.e. the very nature/character/essence of God is love	Love is merely an act that God does
An all-consuming statement – God in His totality is love	A subset of the character of God.

“God is love,” If all He is, is love, then He always loves i.e. all His actions come out of love

Although our tendency might be to think about it the other way around. That is, “love is God.” Even that tiny interchange of words has huge implications.

God is Love	Love is God
Importance placed on God.	Here the importance is placed on love.
Love derives its meaning from God	Our understanding of God is derived from love as we know it

Google is a great depiction of our understanding of love. Our definitions of love often come from popular songs, movies, what we have seen in our parents’ relationship, among family and friends and what we ourselves have experienced.

The problem with understanding love based on our experiences, is that it is expressed by humans who are not perfect. If, on the other hand, our definition begins with God, our understanding of love will be transformed to what it truly is supposed to be.

Eg: Parents are a gift from God and their love is certainly an expression of God’s perfect love. But If we understand love based on what we have seen our parents express, we will attribute to love, our parents’ natural human imperfections.

“Can a mother forget her nursing child? Can she feel no love for the child she has borne? But even if that were possible, I would not forget you!” (Isaiah 49:15, NLT)

If bad experiences we have had with our parents or people we loved, has caused us to question the reality of love, or even the reality of God, it is because we as humans are far from perfect.

If on the other hand, we first begin with God, then the love we will know is a perfect love, a love that heals instead of wounding and blesses instead of cursing.

When we know God, we know the perfect love of God, which will change everything about us - how we love ourselves and how we love those around us.

Let’s look at some characteristics of God

Genesis 1:1 – In the beginning, God –

1. God was before all creation. Therefore, creation came to existence because of love.
2. God is outside of time. Therefore, love is unconditional.
3. God is eternal. Therefore, love is everlasting.

1. **Creation exists, because of love** - Everything that comes from God, comes from love. “There was love even before creation, and there was creation because of love” (Raichur Ashish, Father’s Love). **Ephesians 1:4-5 (Msg)** Long before he laid down earth’s foundations, he had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of his love, to be made whole and holy by his love. Long, long ago he decided to adopt us into his family through Jesus Christ.
God’s love gives life not just physically, but life and wholeness in all areas of our being – emotions, intellect, soul and body
2. **Love is unconditional** - From before we were born, He loved us and wanted to bless us. Before we could do good or bad, He loved us.
1 John 4:10 (NLT) This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.
3. **Love is everlasting** - It is before and beyond time. There is no point at which God starts or stops being love and there is no point at which He starts or stops loving us. God does not change. He doesn’t stop loving us because He is in a bad mood. His love is constant from generation to generation.

No matter what we are facing, even if we are in a season of difficulty, when we know that the character of God is love, we can be confident that He has not stopped loving us, He will love us through the challenges we face and bring us out of them victorious.

John 3:16-17 (NLT) “For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.

Conclusion:

We all hunger for love and we so quickly turn to any means to satisfy that hunger. But anything less than the God kind of love will disappoint you, because it will never meet the longings of your heart, which is to have someone

1. Who will never let you down
2. Who will always want what is best for you even to the point of sacrificing themselves
3. Who will accept you just as you are

I want to encourage you today that there is love which is better than anything we have ever known, so don’t settle for anything less.

References used:

The Father’s Love by Ashish Raichur (<https://apcwo.org/138-the-father-s-love>)