

TITLE AND NUMBER: 156. What is love?

REFERENCE AND KEY VERSE(S): Matthew 22: 37-39

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbour as yourself."



LOOKING FURTHER: Matthew 22:34-40; Isaiah 49:16; 1 John 4:10.

What does this Bible passage tell us?

What do you think of when you think of 'love'? Is it a warm feeling towards someone you really like...or a romantic feeling for someone you find physically attractive? Is it only a feeling, or is it something more?

The love Jesus is talking about is not only a feeling. Jesus uses a special word: agape - God's unconditional, sacrificial love. It does not depend on our brains or looks or talents or being likeable. It is more about caring deeply about a person. God loved His people, and He still does. That includes us. The Bible says that He has our names written on the palms of His hands (Isaiah 49:16).

Jesus came and showed people how to love one another. He cared about everyone He met. In the end, He cared so much, He died for them - and us.

God's big commandments are that we should love Him and love one another.

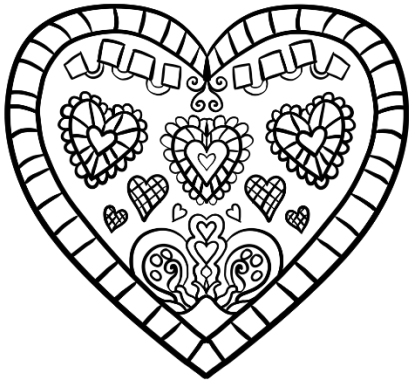
That can be tricky, can't it? What about the person who let me down or 'had it in for me'?

The good news is that agape is not just a feeling. We can decide to care about someone, try and understand them and listen to them. God will help us care if we ask Him. The love - agape - all comes from Him.

Reflections:

- How does it make you feel knowing that God the Father loves you personally?
- Think of someone you find it hard to love. What do you think Jesus thinks of them?
- How have other people shown that they care about you? What meant the most to you?
- How can we show people that we care about them in practical ways?

Write or draw something you read in this Bible Study that stood out to you.



Do you have any questions about this week's Bible Study?



How does this week's message apply to your life?



What can we learn about God from this week's passage?



What would you like to ask God this week?



Has God responded to your prayers this week in the way you had hoped for? It's okay to talk to God about this.

