**1. Motivate**

When have you learned something by watching someone else?

* watching Mom cook
* following Dad as he worked on the car
* the coach showed us how to do a pick and roll
* watching a master wood carver
* watch YouTube videos on how to fix something on a car
* the teacher showed us how to write a computer program
* watched Julia Child cooking a French dish
* watched a football play on TV and duplicated it with our team
* YouTube video on how to do chainsaw carving of a bear

**2. Transition**

We view the love of God for us and follow Jesus’ example

* Love is seen in how we honor others.

A video introduction is available. View it at <https://watch.liberty.edu/media/t/1_q925yvsu> If you have no wi-fi where you teach, best to download to your computer from <https://tinyurl.com/4zf6vcrp>

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 Seek the Best of Others

Listen for attributes Paul encourages.

Romans 12:9-13 (NIV) Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. 11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. 12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. 13 Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

What are some ways Paul identified for how love will manifest itself in relationship to others?

* hate evil, cling to what is good
* devoted to one another
* honor others above self
* spiritual fervor, zeal in service
* joyful in hope
* patient in affliction
* faithful in prayer
* share with those in need
* practice hospitality

What could it practically look like to take the lead in “honor others above self”?

* don’t wait for someone else to act in kindness
* don’t wait to respond
* take the initiative
* act in kindness with no expectation of reciprocity – that’ is agape love

What is the relationship between hope, affliction, and prayer?

* during tribulation or affliction, you have hope (more than just the “I hope our team wins” kind of hope)
* you express that hope by prayer
* hope closely related to faith … you have faith that God will take you through the affliction or tribulation
* communication with God should include listening to Him talk to us (through His Word), not just asking for things
* praise in the midst of problems is another way to express your faith
* you declare God’s power and authority and love to be sufficient for your need

How can a Christian hate evil but not hate the evildoer?

* we dislike the actions they do
* we hate the influence of evil
* Furthermore: God calls us to love the person – He did – *While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* Romans 5:8

Consider three of these commands. How might they be either the easiest or the hardest to obey?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Command | Easiest to Obey | Hardest to Obey |
| Hospitality  Joyful in hope  Praying for each other | * something you do as part of your culture * some people are naturally joyful, optimistic * we do that all the time, pray for physical needs | * some of those people we help are just moochers * it’s a crazy world with masks and social distance * some of those people have *same* boring request every time |

What would your church look like if all members loved each other in the way described in these verses?

* church growth –
* many people attracted to such a joyful and vibrant body of believers
* needs met
* spiritual growth
* miracles start to happen
* lives changed

3.2 Live in Harmony

Listen for more attributes.

Romans 12:14-16 (NIV) Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

If Paul were here today, what do you think he would say about why it is important do relate to others this way … especially within the church?

* we all need encouragement, we all need empathy from others
* more important, this his how Jesus would act
* Jesus would share the joys and sorrows, carry their burdens as an act of love
* true love will rejoice/mourn whether the other person deserves it or not

Suppose you are taking a college course with someone else, and they get a 97% on their test and you get a 71%. What is to be your disposition toward them when they are happy at the result and you are discouraged?

* congratulate them
* don’t be jealous and assume they cheated or complain and tell them they are “too smart”
* praise them
* be excited for them, with them
* maybe ask if you can study with them, you value their understanding of the course

Reverse the scenario … you got the 97% and they got the 71% (or worse). How do you “mourn with those who mourn”?

* listen to their disappointment, don’t make light of it
* express compassion
* offer to study with them
* maybe offer to go through the test and help them understand what they missed
* encourage them, pray with them for next time

What is to be the believer’s attitude and actions toward those of “low position”?

* remember they are people also
* know that they also have joys and sorrows
* keep in mind they may have valuable insights from which you can benefit
* don’t flaunt what you have nor disparage them for what they don’t have
* what you consider “low position” may be only from your viewpoint
* in their culture or society, they may have high standing

How does humility promote harmony in the church?

* no one is thinking or acting like they are better than others
* this tends to do away with negative feelings between believers
* people are more willing to be of help to one another
* differing views which have little to do with major doctrinal issues are tolerated
* cuts down on divisions within the church

3.3 Peaceful Relationships

Listen for a difficult challenge.

Romans 12:17-21 (NIV) Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19 Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. 20 On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

How is this passage counter-cultural to what we see in the world today?

* suit and countersuit
* people don’t want to live at peace, they want to be on the offensive
* if you don’t agree with me, you are *bad!*
* people want revenge
* you don’t treat your enemy nice, you attack

How could having a meal with your “enemy” bring peace to a relationship?

* there is just something about having a meal together that breaks down barriers
* both parties begin to realize the other person is not an ogre
* we start to see some of the good qualities of the other person
* we begin to understand each other’s rationales
* easier to come to a position of agreeing to disagree
* may come to appreciate them for their dedication to what they believe, even if it is different from what we believe
* might even come to realize you are both advocating something very similar, just expressing it differently

Paul says, *Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath*. How is God better equipped for wrath or vengeance that we are?

* He knows their motivation
* He knows their situation, reasons for why they acted the way we thought they did
* He is loving, kind, forgiving … we are not
* He will deal with them in a way that is meant to change them for the good, not just get even

Consider some of the evils that might be threatening to conquer you personally? What are some specific ways to overcome these evils?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Evils | Overcoming Evils |
| * fear * anger * lust * greed | * read about God’s power, authority, love * thank God for not being angry with you, pray for peace * surrender this feeling to God, ask for His strength * daily thank God for all He has given you, as Him to make you generous |

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

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Be humble.

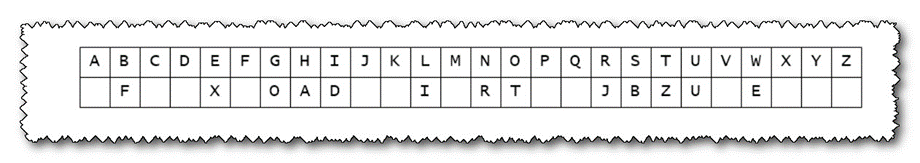
* Consider how the humility of self-forgetfulness might change the way you think and live.
* Pray and ask God to help you be less self-focused so that you can honor and build up others.

Forgive.

* If someone has wronged you, forgive.
* Leave the matter in God’s hands to carry out any justice.
* Ask God to empower you to forgive them and to bless them.

Outdo.

* Write down three practical ways you can “outdo” others in showing honor.
* These actions don’t have to be big gestures.
* In fact, often it’s the small ways we consider others as more important than ourselves that make the biggest difference

A sheet of music

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Cryptogram Puzzle

Whoa … this is an important message from our embassy in Doi Manroesia. The attaché for Friendly Neighborhoods received the key from a local operative and the message from another embassy. Our decoders are at middle school church camp, so you are our only hope. Use the letter under the blank to look up the correct letter for the message. When you finish the decoding, send the message to your discipleship committee chairman. Technical help is available at <https://tinyurl.com/4zf6vcrp> along with other fun Family Activities.