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Love

1 John 3:11-20

Remember the TV show *Love, American Style* from the seventies? I recall watching reruns of it on the sly as a kid (it was forbidden viewing in my house). In the context of that show “sex” would be the essential definition of *love*.

How about *Love Boat*, an eighties show? Each week it would end with neatly matched pairs—many who had just met in a shipboard romance. In that show love was often connected to initial attraction. Love was something that could happen in the course of a week. “Infatuation” would be another way to describe this emotion.

In the nineties we didn’t have “love,” we had *Friends*. Friends who slept together and dated and broke up—and had children together. The show told us that love comes and goes but friendship endures.

And now we have *Sex in the City*. The relationships come and go at the speed of the designer fashions the characters wear.

GROUP DISCUSSION. What types of love tend to be overlooked by the media?

PERSONAL REFLECTION. In what ways are you vulnerable to the

media's depictions of love?

For a true picture of love in all its facets, the only reliable source is Scripture. *Read 1 John 3:11-20.*

1. What is striking to you about this description of love?

2. What actions and attitudes are contrary to love?

3. What actions and attitudes are signs of love?

4. How does the example of Cain (v. 12) illustrate the effects of jealousy on love between family members?

5. Why would the world hate Christians who show love?

6. How is *love* defined in verse 16?

7. How have you seen Christians either literally or metaphorically “lay down their lives” for one another?

8. Why is loving with actions more important than loving with words (vv. 17-18)?

9. How do our acts of love help strengthen our relationship with God (vv. 19-20)?

10. Whose actions have helped you understand the love of Christ?

11. How can you show someone love through your actions this week?

Ask God to help you grow in your knowledge of him so that love will flow out from you.

Now or Later

Continue your study of love by watching people around you. What can you learn about expressing godly love?