The Four Loves — and the God Who *Is* Love

Disciple copy · Women's Jail Ministry · Pleasant Springs Church

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Built on: C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (1960) · **More lessons:** ps-church.com/discipleship

One word doing four jobs

"I love tacos. I love that song. I love my sister. I love Jesus." Same word — four different jobs.

C. S. Lewis, who wrote the *Narnia* books, wrote *The Four Loves* while his wife Joy was fighting cancer. She died the year it came out. He wrote: **"To love at all is to be vulnerable."**

> **1 John 4:8 (ESV)** — "Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love."

➤ The whole lesson in one sentence: In the Bible, love is not first a _____. It is something you _____ — for someone.

1 · Affection — the love that grows where you're planted

The love of the _____. You didn't pick them. It grows anyway.

> **Ruth 1:16–17 (ESV)** — "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried."

Ruth never says "I feel close to you." Every line is something she is going to _____.

> **Romans 12:10 (ESV)** — "Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor."

The word for this family affection appears only _____ in the New Testament. The word under "heartless" in 2 Timothy 3:3 means *without* _____.

> **Psalm 27:10 (ESV)** — "For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the LORD will take me in."

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2 · Friendship — side by side

Lovers stand face to face. Friends stand _____ by _____, looking at the same thing.

> **1 Samuel 18:3–4 (ESV)** — "Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his belt."

Jonathan was the _____ son — next in line for the throne. He gave it away.

> **John 15:13, 15 (ESV)** — "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends… No longer do I call you servants… but I have called you friends."
>
> **Proverbs 17:17 (ESV)** — "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity."

The test: when I stand side by side with a friend, what are we _____ at?

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3 · Eros — being in love

> **Song of Solomon 8:7 (ESV)** — "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it."

Jacob worked _____ years for Rachel, and they seemed like "a few days" (Genesis 29:20).

The Greek word *eros* appears in the New Testament _____ times.

➤ A love you turn into a god will turn into a _____.

If someone said "I love you" and then hurt you — that was not love the way the Bible means it.

> **John 4:28–29 (ESV)** — "So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, 'Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did.'"

Five husbands — and the Bible does not tell us _____. Jesus knew everything, and he did not _____ her. Fully known — and not thrown away.

4 · Charity — the love that is God's own

> **1 Corinthians 13:4–7 (ESV)** — "Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

In Paul's language every one of these is a _____. How many? _____.

> **John 13:34 (ESV)** — "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another."

You can't command a _____. You *can* command an _____.

> **John 13:4–5 (ESV)** — "He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet."

Jesus washed _____ feet too.

Loving someone who hurt you never means going back to be hurt again.

God is love — an action, inside a relationship

> **1 John 4:9–10 (ESV)** — "In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

The action word John uses twice: _____.

> **John 17:24 (ESV)** — "Father… you loved me before the foundation of the world."

God has always been Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He made me to bring me into a love that was already _____ _____.

➤ A feeling can change on a bad day. An action that is already _____ cannot be undone.

> **1 John 4:19 (ESV)** — "We love because he first loved us."

Two things to carry out

1. My verb this week (from 1 Corinthians 13): _____ **for:** _____

2. Romans 5:8 with my name in it:

"God shows his love for _____ in that while _____ was still a sinner, Christ died for _____."

Closing prayer

Father, thank you that you are love — not a mood you are in, but who you have always been. Thank you that you did not wait for us to be lovable. You sent your Son. He came. He knelt. He washed feet. He died for us while we were still sinners.

For every woman here who has been hurt by someone who said "I love you" — show her what the real thing looks like. Heal what the counterfeit broke.

Teach us to love with our hands and not only with our words. Give us one verb to live this week, and the strength to do it before we feel it.

In the name of Jesus, **Amen.**

Take it further — more online

ps-church.com/discipleship — more lessons, including *The Cup: How Jesus Took Your Sentence* (ps-church.com/discipleship/jail-ministry/cup-of-wrath).

	Lewis's name	Bible picture	The action
1	**Affection**	Ruth and Naomi	"Where you go I will go"
2	**Friendship**	David and Jonathan	gave his robe and sword
3	**Eros**	Jacob and Rachel; the woman at the well	worked seven years; told the whole town
4	**Charity**	Jesus with the towel	washed their feet — Judas's too

Questions to think about:

1. Which of the four loves has been easiest for you? Which has been hardest?
2. Ruth's promise is all things she would *do*. What would a promise like that sound like in here?
3. What changes if God's love for you is something he already *did*, not a mood he might be in?

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