



Love

MAIN IDEA

- **God gives of Himself for the joy of others.**

MEMORY VERSE

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.—John 3:16

SCRIPTURE

- 1) Psalm 103:1-14
- 2) Isaiah 40:11
- 3) Luke 19:1-10
- 4) John 3:16
- 5) John 10:11
- 6) John 15:9, 11
- 7) Romans 5:8
- 8) 1 John 4:11



LESSON SUMMARY

God is love. Maybe more than any other statement, this one has been used to identify God's basic essence. But if we consider God's love apart of the totality of God's nature, our understanding of God will be dangerously skewed. So what does God mean when He says that He is love? Pastor John Piper offers a helpful definition:

Biblical love is the overflow of joy that God has in Himself, spilling out on unworthy people to draw them into the greatest experience in the world, namely knowing, tasting, enjoying, praising, being swept up into the glory of God.¹

This definition may sound unusual to many because it places God, not people, at the center of God's affections. It almost seems prideful or selfish of God. And it would be if God were not truly worthy of all honor and praise. But He is glorious beyond measure, and our happiness can only be realized through Him! Hence, the "God-centeredness" of God becomes an everlasting fountain by which He can freely and continually give of Himself to His people.

In this lesson, we used the illustration of the teacher blowing bubbles for the class to enjoy to help the children comprehend this important distinction of the essence and nature of God's love. We then presented biblical examples in which God demonstrates His love: His beautiful creation, care of the world, provision for our needs, befriending sinners, and most importantly through giving us Jesus. For it is through Jesus alone, freely giving up His life on the cross, that we are able experience God's joyous fullness forever and ever.

PRAYER POINTS

As you review this lesson with your child, pray...

- *that your child would grow in his or her understanding of the scope and depth of God's love.*
- *that the Holy Spirit may make your child's heart tender to receiving the gift of Jesus.*



AS YOU WALK BY THE WAY

- Read and talk about the memory verse from John 3:16. **Why is this the most loving thing God could do for us? Does everybody**

1. Piper, John. "The Pleasure of God in Election." Sermon preached on February 22, 1989, at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis.

"receive" the joy of eternal life? What does God say that you must do to receive this joy? Are you believing in Jesus? In what ways has Jesus shown you His love?

- Give your child an example of how two people can respond to the same offer in very different ways. Do all people respond the same way to God's love? Can you give an example of someone responding joyfully to God's love? What about someone who rejects or ignores God's love? Why might someone choose to reject the lasting happiness that God's love gives? Do you have a heart that gladly receives God's love? Do you know of someone who is ignoring

God's love? How can we pray for them?

- Read Isaiah 40:11 and John 10:11. Talk about how an image of a shepherd caring for his sheep can help us to better understand the special love that God has for His children. **Has there been a time when it felt as if Jesus was holding you in His arms? Are there ways in which you can better experience the love that God has for you? What could you do this week to prepare your heart to be a better "receiver" of God's love?** Be on the look-out for God's love so you will recognize it and thank Him, read the Bible to hear His words of love communicated to you, pray to Him, etc.

ACTION STEP

If you have received God's love, do you think God wants you to be selfish with the joy He has given you? Read and discuss 1 John 4:11. In what ways could you love other people this week? With your parents' help, think a something special you could do this week to show God's love to someone else.

MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY

Find your way through the heart to the cross. Then, look up the verse in your Bible and fill in the blanks.

For God so

_____ the world, that he

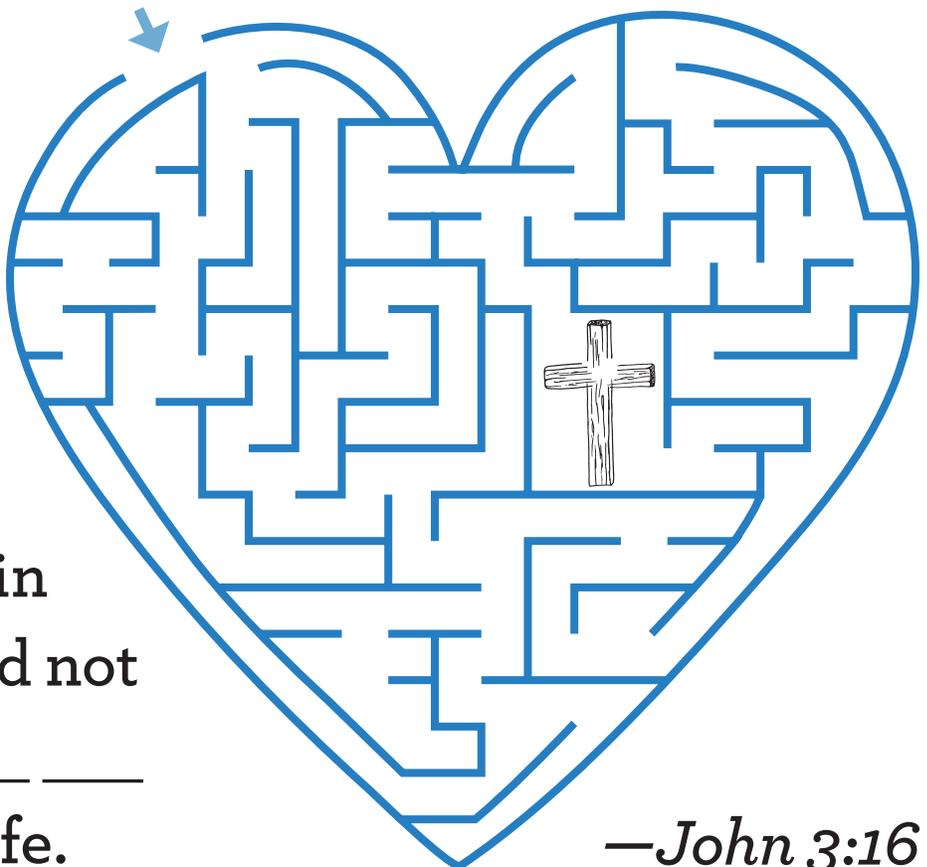
_____ his only

_____, that

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—John 3:16