

# Distorted

## Love Must Be Earned (Week 1)

### LifeNotes

## TALK IT OVER

### Main Idea

Love like Jesus loves, is not earned.

### Key Scriptures

*"Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: "He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.' "" Matthew 4:5-6*

*Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.' "* Matthew 4:7

*"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you." John 15:12*

*But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8*

*This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 1 John 4:9-10*

*Freedom is what we have—Christ has set us free! Stand, then, as free people, and do not allow yourselves to become slaves again. Galatians 5:1 GNT*

**A lie that is all of a lie can be met with and fought outright; but a lie that is a distorted truth is a harder matter to fight. – Alfred Lord Tennyson**

### If love must be learned:

- Only a few can get it.
- My feelings come first.
- Others are enslaved to my desires.

### The love of Jesus:

- Is given to all.
- Is the result of sacrifice.
- Leads to freedom.

### Start talking.

- How have you experienced someone distorting the truth?
- Why are we so susceptible to "half-truths"?
- How have you experienced the idea that love must be earned?
- In what ways is that kind of thinking destructive?

### Start thinking.

- Read Matthew 4:5-6. What was the distortion in Satan's approach?
- Read Matthew 4:7. How did Jesus respond to Satan's distortion?
- Read John 15:12. How would that have been received by the disciples? How did that challenge their understanding of love?
- Read Romans 5:8. Who did Christ die for?
- Read 1 John 4:9-10. How is Jesus an "atoning sacrifice"? Why was that needed?
- Read Galatians 5:1. How does the concept of "love is earned" end up enslaving us and others?

### Start sharing.

- Which of the "love must be earned" list is most destructive? Explain.
- Read the "love of Jesus" list. How have Christians lived up to those ideals? How have we failed?
- Which point is most difficult for you?

### Start doing.

- Invite the Holy Spirit to evaluate your heart, mind, and motives toward others. As He reveals ways you have not loved like Him, confess them and embrace His love.
- Take the next week, and only post, comment, or share encouraging and positive messages to others.
- Who is one person that thinks, acts, looks, and lives most different from you. Do at least one loving, selfless thing, that would bless them this week.

### Closing prayer.

Lord forgive me for all that ways I allow my self to get sucked in to the idea that love—my love—should be earned. Forgive me for withholding love, and thereby sitting in judgment on others. Help me Jesus to love like you love. Give me the conviction and courage to love all, to sacrifice for others, and to help lead others to the freedom found only in your love.