



## Elementary Bible Study

# Love Changes Hateful Hearts

### LESSON TRUTH:

God loves when we love others.

### BIBLE VERSE:

The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outside of a person. But the LORD looks at what is in the heart.

- 1 Samuel 16:7 NIV

### Materials Needed

- A Bible
- Activity sheet: God Loves When We Love Others
- Option #1: If possible, have students bring in a baby picture prior to the lesson.
- Option #2: Have a few of your photos available to show differences with aging.

### OPENING PRAYER:

Dear God our Father, thank You for loving us. We know You are powerful and strong and can change mean hearts to kind hearts. Help us trust You and show Your love to others. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

### FOCUS:

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider how handsome or tall he is. I have not chosen him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outside of a person. But the LORD looks at what is in the heart."

-1 Samuel 16:7 NIV



### OPENING THOUGHTS:

Can people change? Our outside appearance definitely changes as we get older; just look at the way we change from year to year.

Do you look the same as when you were a baby?

[If students brought in photos, discuss physical changes.]

How do you look different from when you were a baby?

[If using your photos, discuss physical changes.]

When we say a person had changed, we usually mean they look different—more grown up. But the Bible verse for today says God can see what we are like on the inside. For example, God knows if we are kind to others. God knows if we think nice things. God knows if we love Him.

God knows if we show love to others.

### Read Bible Verse: 1 Samuel 16:7

God doesn't worry about what we look like on the outside; He is more concerned about our hearts and our attitudes. God sees us for who we truly are and wants us to show love to others. Listen closely to this story.

### DISCUSSION:

Imagine it is the first day of school and your class has gone outside for recess or lunch. There is a new student in your school who comes outside and tries to join a group sitting in the shade. It takes him a while to walk to the picnic table area because he has a disability. He looks for a place to sit, but no one moves over to make room for him. Finally, he finds a tree close by and stands alone. As everyone is walking back into school, some of the students mimic the way he walks; others giggle at him. Even though the new classmate doesn't say anything, you can tell from the look on his face that his feelings are hurt.

- Do you think something like this could happen at your school?
- Have you ever seen something like this in your neighborhood or out somewhere?
- How did it make you feel to see someone being mean to another person?
- What does the word "attitude" mean?
- Do you think the students in the story need to change their attitude?
- Why are people sometimes mean to those who have disabilities?

It is hard to deal with people who have hateful hearts. It is frustrating and hurtful. But God can turn a hateful heart into a loving heart. God is that strong! Let's find an example of this in the Bible.



**MESSAGE: Saul Learns to Love (Acts 9:1-19)**

Saul's heart was full of hate for Christians. He arrested, punished, and sometimes killed people who believed in Jesus.

**Read Acts 9:1-2**

Saul thought he was doing the right thing, but one day Jesus spoke to Saul as he traveled on the road to Damascus. Jesus confronted Saul about his sin and changed his heart.

**Read Acts 9:3-6**

What did Jesus say to Saul? What does persecute mean?

**Read Acts 9:7-8**

What happened to Saul's eyesight?

**Read Acts 9:9**

What did Saul do for three days? What do you think he might have been thinking about?

**Read Acts 9:10-12**

Who was Ananias? What did God tell Ananias to do?

**Read Acts 9:13-14**

Was Ananias worried? Why?

**Read Acts 9:15-16**

What did God say about Saul? Who was he going to be?

**Read Acts 9:17**

Why did Saul's heart change? Saul's heart was changed when he learned the truth about Jesus. His attitude changed. **His heart was filled with the Holy Spirit.**

**Read Acts 9:18-19**

What happened after Saul's heart was filled with the Holy Spirit?

We may think our hearts don't need to change; after all we're not as bad as Saul. We haven't killed anyone! But even though we know we shouldn't hurt others or make fun of them, the truth is we all sin. We all have had mean thoughts, and many of us have been unkind.



The good news is God loves us so much He sent His Son Jesus to save us from our sins. Jesus died on the cross and rose from death so we can be forgiven by God. That is the best love ever! It is the kind of love that can change hearts and attitudes. It is the kind of love that can bring us true joy. It is the kind of love God wants us to share with others. God loves when we love others!

### ACTIVITY:

#### God Loves When We Love Others

**Directions:** Think about the story we heard earlier. Rewrite or illustrate the story so the students show God's love to a new student.

### PRAYER:

Dear God our Father, we know You can change hateful hearts to loving hearts. Give us strength when others are mean to us and forgive us when we are unkind. Help us show Your love to others. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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