



Is This Normal?

Week 1: ... because this is difficult!

Big Idea

What our culture calls “normal” love is often rooted in self-protection and control—but Jesus invites us into an extraordinary, self-giving love that transforms every relationship.

WARM UP

When relationships feel hard—friendships, marriage, family—what’s the question you tend to ask first:

“What’s wrong with them?” or “Is this normal?” Why do you think that’s your instinct?

VIEW MESSAGE

[Watch the Message from this Week](#)



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VIDEO NOTES

READ ALOUD

Have someone read aloud:

- John 13:34–35
- 1 John 4:19
- Romans 5:5

DISCUSS

1. When “Normal” Isn’t Actually Healthy

The message described what our culture often calls normal love: 50/50, scorekeeping, rules-based, self-protective, and control-driven.



- Which of those descriptions felt uncomfortably familiar to you—and why?
- Where do you most naturally keep score in relationships (words, effort, apologies, time, chores, initiation)?
- Why do you think our culture labels these patterns as “normal” instead of broken?

2. Jesus Redefines Love

Read **John 13:34–35** again. Jesus calls this command *new* and *extraordinary*.

- Why do you think Jesus chose love—not beliefs, rules, or behavior—as the defining marker of His followers?
- How is loving “as Jesus loved” different from simply being kind or nice?
- What feels hardest about loving others the way Jesus loved you?

3. Love Is a Verb, Not a Feeling

Read **2 Corinthians 1:21-22** again.

The message challenged the idea that love is primarily a feeling rather than an action.

- Where have you seen feelings come and go in relationships—but actions still matter?
- Why do you think we’re tempted to wait for the feeling of love before choosing loving actions?
- How does this shift (love as a verb) change how you view conflict, distance, or disappointment?

4. Prideful Hearts & Dirty Feet

Jesus responded to prideful hearts and dirty feet with humble service.



- In relationships, what does a prideful heart usually sound like internally?
- What do “dirty feet” look like today—messy habits, failures, patterns, or wounds?
- Why is serving someone in their mess so much harder than loving them when it’s easy?

5. We Will Always Love—The Question Is What We Love

Read **1 John 4:19** again.

- The message said, “We were made to love—we don’t stop loving; our love just turns.”
- Where do you see love turning inward (self-love, comfort, control) in your own life?
- How does knowing you are deeply loved by God change your capacity to love others?
- What’s the connection between receiving God’s love and giving it away?

6. Love Flows From a Changed Heart

Read **Romans 5:5** aloud.

- Why is it important that God pours His love into us before asking us to live it through us?
- Where are you currently trying to love in your own strength?
- What might change if you stopped trying harder and started receiving more?



APPLY IT

Move from reflection to action. Personal Reflection: Which relationship in your life feels the most “normal”—and what might Jesus want to make extraordinary?

This Week's Step:

Choose one this week:

- **Ask a Better Question**

Once a day, ask: “How can I love like Jesus here?” instead of “Who’s right?”

- **Practice awareness**

Set a daily reminder on your phone: “Holy Spirit, what are You doing in me right now?”

- **Receive Before You Give**

Begin each day with this prayer:

“Jesus, remind me how deeply I am loved—so I can love others from that place.”

