

Week 1- Why We Love

VERSES

John 13:34-35 (NLT) But I am giving you a new command. You must love each other, just as I have loved you. If you love each other, everyone will know that you are my disciples.

1 John 4:11 (NIV) Since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

1 John 4:20 (GW) People who don't love other believers, whom they have seen, can't love God, whom they have not seen.

1 John 3:14 (GW) We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love other believers.

1 Peter 2:17 (NCV) Love your brothers and sisters in God's family.

Matthew 22:37-39 (NLT) Jesus replied, "'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Quoting from Deuteronomy 6:5, Leviticus 19:18)

1 John 3:11 (TEV) "The message you heard from the very beginning is this: we must love one another."

Romans 5:8 (NLT) But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

Galatians 2:20 (NLT) My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

1 John 4:7-8 (NIV) Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

Ephesians 5:2 (LB) Be full of love for others, following the example of Christ who love you and gave himself to God as a sacrifice to take away your sins.

1 John 2:4-6 (NIV) The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

2 Peter 1:3 (MSG) Everything that goes into a life of pleasing God has been miraculously given to us by getting to know, personally and intimately, the One who invited us to God.

Galatians 5:6 (NIV) The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

Romans 12:10 (GW) Be devoted to each other like a loving family.

Philippians 2:2 (NAS) [Be] of the same mind, maintaining the same love ... intent on one purpose."

John 17:21 (CEV) I want all [my disciples] to be one with each other, just as I am one with you and you are one with me. I also want them to be one with us. Then the people of this world will believe that you sent me.

Ephesians 3:19-20 (NLT) May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God. Now

all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.

1 Peter 1:22 (NLT) You were cleansed from your sins when you obeyed the truth, so now you must show sincere love to each other as brothers and sisters. Love each other deeply with all your heart.

Romans 12:10 (BSB) Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Outdo yourselves in honoring one another.

1 Corinthians 13:1-7, 13 (NLT) If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing. If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing. Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance. Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love.

QUESTIONS

What kind of community are you involved in besides this group? How do/don't different types of community meet your needs? Is there something lacking in your life which could be improved with community?

Do you feel like you have a good grasp on how God loves you — not “people” but you, specifically? Do you feel loved by God? What do you think “God loves me” means, in real terms?

Do you think God is good and trustworthy? Is what he wants for you better than what you want for yourself? Why do you think that?

What are some of the obstacles to community? Does love help to solve any of those problems?

What do you think it means to love your brothers and sisters in Christ?

Do you think you are good at “loving” your brothers and sisters in Christ? If yes, what enables you to do that? If not really, what makes it hard for you? What could your connection group do to help you?

Which of these verses stands out to you? What about it captures your attention? What does it mean to you? How does it challenge you to live out your faith?

PRAYER: Go around the group, and everyone who feels comfortable can say a simple, one-sentence prayer to thank God for how he loves them, or how they specifically feel loved by him.

CHALLENGE: Carry around this idea with you this week: God loves me. Mull it over. What does it mean that God loves ME? That God LOVES me? That GOD loves me? How do I feel his love? Where do I not feel his love? What's the difference between believing that he loves me and feeling loved by him? What can I do to draw closer to him and lean in to his love for me?