

BELOVED
BE LOVED
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Growing Further Discussion Guide

Be Love

Part 2: How Can I Learn to Love Like Jesus

Pastor Rick Long

"I'm giving you a new commandment: Love each other in the same way that I have loved you."

John 13:34 (GW)

John 13:15 (NLT)

"I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you!"

Until we understand how much God loves us, we cannot fully love him or love others. In order to follow Jesus' example in how to love others, as seen in the two verses above, we must first know how Jesus showed love to those he encountered. Once we see how he did it, we are to apply those lessons in our life to the way we treat others. In this study we will look at how Jesus accepts us, values us, forgives us, and believes in us.

OPEN YOUR GROUP WITH A PRAYER. THIS IS ONLY A GUIDE – SELECT THE POINTS YOU WANT TO DISCUSS.

Pastor Rick shared during the weekend that the most common learning styles are:

- **Verbal – learn best by listening.**
- **Visual – learn best by watching someone.**

Which one describes you?

1. I MUST ACCEPT OTHERS THE WAY JESUS ACCEPTS ME.

How does Jesus treat those that are given to him, according to John 6:37?

- What makes God's acceptance of us amazing in your opinion?

Where can a person who is rejected by their parents go for acceptance, as stated in Psalm 27:10?

- How does God's love compare with a parent's love?

What has Jesus done on our behalf, according to Titus 3:7?

- Describe Jesus' acceptance and why it proves our eternal security.

How should we accept others, as declared in Romans 15:7?

- Name two ways to show acceptance to people.

What does Romans 15:2 say we should think about as we deal with our neighbor?

- How can we help a friend or neighbor who has doubts and fears?

Ministry—We all have things in our lives that make us difficult to love. Jesus showed us acceptance, and now we can show someone else that same acceptance. Who do you know that is hard to love? Find a way to show that person acceptance this week with a small gesture of love.

2. I MUST VALUE OTHERS THE WAY JESUS VALUES ME.

In Luke 12:6–7, describe how God compares pet canaries to a person.

- If the hairs on our heads are each numbered, what does that say about God's attention to detail?

Value depends on who made it.

Read Ephesians 2:10 and describe how God values each of us.

- If our value as individuals derives from who created us, discuss what it means to be "God's workmanship".

Value depends on what someone will pay for it.

According to 1 Peter 1:19, what value did God put on mankind?

- Sometimes we underestimate our own value in the eyes of God. If you were in God's shoes, would you have placed such a high value on yourself or your friends as he did? Why or why not?

According to Isaiah 49:15–16, what does it mean to you that your name is engraved on God's hands?

What way are we to treat everyone we meet according to 1 Peter 2:17?

- What specific ways can we act loving toward others when they are rude to us?

Fellowship—It's often difficult to practice love in the details of our lives, particularly when we're pressed by the pressures of life. In our hurried lifestyles, we often slough off the opportunities to show love to those who are in our way, or who we don't agree with. What can you specifically do this week to practice love by expressing yourself with dignity and love to someone in particular?

3. I MUST FORGIVE OTHERS THE WAY JESUS FORGIVES ME.

Describe God's actions towards us, according to Isaiah 43:25.

- What is God's reason for forgiving us?

Where can we go to escape condemnation, as stated in Romans 8:1?

- How can we be "in" Christ Jesus?

As told in Matthew 26:28, tell what was given to acquire the forgiveness of sins.

- How should forgiveness affect how we perceive ourselves?

What kind of forgiveness are we to extend to others, according to Colossians 3:13?

- Why should we give up our right to hold grudges?

According to Luke 6:37, what are some good reasons not to judge or condemn?

- How does holding a grudge affect the way we love others?

Read Matthew 18:33. What does it state as a reason to forgive others?

- What's the best way to deal with the resistance to forgive others that have wronged us?

Ministry—There is nothing harder than forgiving someone who has hurt us. That is exactly what Jesus did for us. Every time we sin, we hurt Jesus, yet he laid his life down for us. What reason could we have for not forgiving someone? This week, offer forgiveness to someone who has hurt you or is carrying a load of shame and guilt.

4. I MUST BELIEVE IN OTHERS THE WAY JESUS BELIEVES IN ME.

In John 17:8, what did Jesus say about his disciples?

- If you were at a meeting where Jesus was going to speak, and he sent a note telling you to take his place, what would it say about how Jesus felt about you?

Read Matthew 21:21 and discuss Jesus' idea of what's possible for us to accomplish.

- Evaluating what we've accomplished in our lives, what would we say characterizes our lives: faith or doubt?
- Looking to what we dream of accomplishing or being in our lives, describe what we'd have to believe about ourselves (Such as the gifts we would need, the support, the education, the family of God, etc.).

According to John 14:12, what kind of works is the believer able to do?

- Jesus healed the sick, raised the dead, and gave sight to the blind. What greater work is possible to those who simply believe in him?

In Romans 1:12, describe how believers can help each other.

- When we think of helping each other we often think of material needs. List three ways that believers can help each other grow spiritually.
- Would that help be expressed in words or in deeds?

What way are we to help each other, according to Hebrews 10:24?

- To consider means to “think about carefully.” What specific ways could we spur one another to be better Christians?

Fellowship—All around us today people are struggling from low self-esteem. We live in an extremely competitive society which creates rejection in every area of our lives – social, economic, and even in the family. When we express our trust in others around us, it builds them up and gives them hope and encouragement. What can you do to demonstrate your trust in someone this week?

Take a moment to review any assignments/challenges made during the personal application and commitment section of your previous meeting or from last week’s message. Seeing God at work in the lives of those who commit to him is essential for growth.

PERSONAL APPLICATION AND COMMITMENT:

Ephesians 3:18 (TPT)

Then you will be empowered to discover what every holy one experiences—the great magnitude of the astonishing love of Christ in all it’s dimensions. How deeply intimate and far-reaching is his love! How enduring and inclusive it is!

We have seen how Jesus demonstrated love to the people he encountered during his earthly ministry. He is still doing the same for us today. Make it your prayer to truly understand how much God loves you. Once you realize just how much God accepts, values, forgives, and believes in you, then God’s love can flow through you in ways you never thought possible. This week look for opportunities to demonstrate God’s love to people with whom you might not normally interact. Even something as simple as a smile and a greeting can mean a lot to a person that may be feeling rejected or unnoticed. What other ways can you demonstrate love this week? Ask God to open your eyes to see the people he wants to love through you.

Growing Further Discussion Guide Leader Notes

Goals for this Week's Study

- Tell of a time when someone expressed unconditional love to you. How did it make you feel?
- Show the true power we have to build each other up.
- Thank God that we can trust him to provide the love we need to love others.

Preparing to Lead Your Group

✓ **PRAY** for insight as you begin to prepare for leading your group. Ask for God's wisdom, that the Holy Spirit will be the teacher and that you will be God's instrument to lead the group to greater understanding and a willingness to commit to becoming more like God. Prayer should be your primary source of personal preparation for leading your group.

✓ **PLAN** where you want to take your group in the next 60–90 days. Is your group strong in some areas and weak in others? How can you challenge the members to live more balanced Christian lives? Consider God's five purposes for the church: Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry, Mission and Worship, and make a plan to encourage your group members to growth and commitment in their weak areas.

At **GRACE** we use our name for the 5 purposes:

Glorify God

Relate to everyone

Act like Jesus

Care for other

Express God's love

✓ **PONDER YOUR PROGRESS** after each session and at the end of a series. Reflect on what went well and what didn't. Re-evaluation is key to your growth as a leader. Consider whether your plan is being effective in moving the group to greater understanding and commitment. How are you doing with leading the discussion: is it stimulating, challenging, and meaningful? Are you able to keep the group on track? Do you need to make some changes?

Using This Growing Further Discussion Guide

⇒ This Growing Further Discussion is only a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. For most groups there are too many questions to answer in one session together. After considering the needs of your group you may choose one of the following options:

- One section of questions
- One or two questions from each section

- ⇒ Feel free to adapt the format to meet the needs of your group. If your group is mature and wants to dig deeper, add Scripture and ask suitable questions. Remember that this is only a guide.
- ⇒ The questions relating to the five purposes are helpful to develop balance and spiritual maturity in our lives. You can bring your group to an awareness of their needs in these areas by using these questions as a regular part of each discussion.
- ⇒ Personal application is key to everyone's growth and should be included in every discussion. When asked how he or she intends to apply a certain principle a group member may say, "I need to spend more time in the Bible and in prayer." It is important for you to help group members make applications that are more specific and commit to a specific plan of action by asking, for example, "How are you going to begin?" An example is to get up 30 minutes earlier each morning, spending 15 minutes reading the Bible and 10 minutes in prayer. Encourage each group member to be accountable to the group for personal progress at the next meeting.
- ⇒ As the leader your goal is to help bring the group into a stimulating discussion that helps the members recognize their need for personal life change. Ultimately you want them to be willing to commit to change with accountability to the group. Accountability helps us to persevere in our commitments and achieve the blessings of success.