



WEEK 2—Loving God by Loving Others

1. Pastor Rick said that in order to live for the purposes of God, you must surrender. Does that word have a positive or a negative connotation for you? Why? What do you think he meant? Read Matthew 10:37-39. Do you think that the idea of surrender is contained in this passage? What is it that we must surrender? What does it say will happen if we do? Read Luke 14:25,26. Do you think Jesus is actually telling us we have to hate these people in order to follow him? What do you think he does mean? Do you agree that surrendering to God is the heart of what it means to worship him? Why or why not? What has been the hardest thing for you to surrender to God?

Answer—Total surrender of everything in our lives is what God is after, we surrender our right to determine how we live to God and allow Him to tell us how we should live. The passage in Luke 14 is not saying that we need to “hate” those people. The Greek word that is translated hate in this verse can and should have been translated as “love less”. Jesus is saying we should love Him above everyone else and put his priorities in our life above even our own family in order to follow Him. God wants it all!

2. Explain what you think each of these statements mean in the context of being a Christian (read the passages for each one to help you) : A. Life is a test, 1 Peter 1:6,7; B. Life is a trust, 1 Corinthians 4:1,2; C. Life is a temporary assignment, 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. How should these three statements affect how we think about our lives and how we live?

Answer—These three statements reflect the idea that one of the reasons God leaves us here on this earth is to give us the opportunity to not only develop a relationship with Him, but to show him how much we love Him by choosing to respond to what happens to us in this life the way he wants us to, especially in the hard times.

3. What does it mean to worship God? Who is worship for? Explain what you think this statement means: “Worship is not part of my life, it is my life.” Does this change how you think about the purpose of singing worship music in church? How? If worship is everything we do in our lives, how are you doing in worshiping God? What areas of life do you feel you are doing well? What areas do you think you need to improve on?

Answer—Many times when we sing worship music in church we focus on how it affects us emotionally instead of focusing on the one we are singing about.

4. From Pastor Rick's message, what five things makes God smile? Discuss ways that we can do these things in our lives on a daily basis. Which ones do you think you do well at? Which one do you struggle with the most? Why do you think you struggle in this area? What are some things you could start focusing on to help you in the area in which you struggle?

Answer—The five things were (You might want to read the verses also) God smiles when I: A. Love Him supremely, Matthew 22:37,38; B. Trust Him completely, Psalm 147:11; C. Obey him wholeheartedly, Psalm 119:33-35; D. Thank Him continually, Hebrews 13:15; and E. Use my abilities faithfully, Colossians 3:17,23.

5. We were formed to be part of God's family. Human families can be good, bad, or a mixture of both. What was your family like as you were growing up? In what ways do you think God's family is like your human family? How do you think it is different? What makes a person a part of God's family? As you were growing up, your "family life" happened in your home, where does the "family life" happen for God's family? If this is true, then how important is it that a Christian get involved in a local church? If Grace Church is your church family, how are you participating in family life here? Is there more that you could or should be doing as part of the family? Do you think that a Christian can become what God wants them to be without being connected to a local church?

Answer—It is imperative that a Christian become connected to a local church. There are many commands in scripture that can only be carried out if you are participating in the life of the family which occurs in the local church. As Pastor Rick says, a Christian without a church family is an orphan, which we know is never a healthy thing. The only way we can be connected to our family is if we spend time with them. Your small group is one great way to do that, but it should never be the only way you do so.

Group Application—Pastor Rick challenged us to rearrange our lives so that we can contribute to a local church family. Think of ways you can serve together as a small group. Find five ways to serve together, one activity for each of the five purposes.