

# Love & Light: Love One Another (WG)

September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023

John 13:34-35. Acts 2:42-47 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 1 John 4:7-12



## Begin with Prayer

In silence, invite the Holy Spirit to guide you. Then pray: *Empowering God, we pray that you will send your Holy Spirit to move us to understanding; to help us to believe the gospel; to give us strength and wisdom to live by it. Amen. (Worship Sourcebook Q.3.5.8)*

## Reconnecting and Debriefing

Take a moment to check in with one another (2 minutes each).

1. Which friends from a movie, book, or TV show stand out to you as particularly wonderful? (e.g. Sam & Frodo, Starsky & Hutch, Pam & Dwight, Anne & Diana, etc.)?
2. Consider your most treasured relationships, whether past or present, family or friends, co-workers. What has made those relationships so significant?

### Introduction

Whether we gather in person or online, our goal remains the same: to be a people apprenticed to the life of Jesus. His life and teaching is our example and our source of truth. Remember the commitments we make to each other to foster safety and freedom as we pursue spiritual growth together:

- Whenever possible, please listen to the sermon prior to gathering (Sunday or online).
- While we are meeting (even online), commit to focussing rather than multitasking. Be all here.
- Give every person an equal opportunity to share, even if it takes time to form or finish their thoughts.
- Be respectful and non-judgmental.
- Honour sharing boundaries z Honour sharing boundaries (only what you have permission to share, no gossip) and guard confidentiality (what we share here stays here).
- Don't try to fix, problem-solve or rescue; keep pointing one another to the truths of the gospel for our lives.

## Listening to God's Word

When we see strong, meaningful, or significant relationships, they make us want to experience that kind of relationship in our lives. Lifelong best friends, a couple in love, a strong team at work, or playground buddies, can reminded us of the value of relationships. Jesus told his disciples the relationships they had with each other could be so unique that other people would recognize Jesus in them. This is not always the case, and yet when Christians love each other with the love of Christ, the result is incredibly powerful. Let's take a look at what can make relationships so impacting.

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## Small Group Discussion

### Read John 13:34-35.

- Jesus uses the word 'command' in this verse, which reminds us of 10 other commandments in the Bible. Jesus puts 'loving one another' right up there with avoiding murder and adultery. *When have you seen or experienced people loving each other the same way as Christ? What impact did it make on your life? What has been the impact when the opposite has happened (i.e. people not loving each other like Christ)?*
- **Read John 13:1-5, 12-15.** Jesus lived his life as an example of how Christians were supposed to love one another. *If you are unfamiliar with the life of Jesus, what kind of love would you have to see for this to be appealing to you? If you are familiar with the life of Jesus, what examples would you point to of how Jesus loved his disciples?*

- **Read Acts 2:42-47.** This is an example of how the early church began practicing Jesus' commandment to love. *Though our culture is different from theirs, what would our life group look like if we incorporated the heart of these things into our community? How has our group done this well? What is one thing we could do in the coming season to grow?*
- **Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 and 1 John 4:7-12.** We see here that God's "invisible love" is made visible through people. *In which relationship or context do you find God's love is most easy to embody? Where in your life do you feel it is most important for you to demonstrate God's love these days, and how could that look?*
- God loves perfectly, and though we are recipients of this amazing love, we demonstrate it imperfectly. *Why do you think God has chosen to use imperfect people to demonstrate his perfect love? How can His love still shine through in our brokenness?*
- *Who are two or three people that God is leading you to demonstrate his love to? Consider sharing the names as a group.*
- ***How do you sense the Holy Spirit calling you to respond to or act on what we have read and discussed?***

## Practice Confession

Confession can be difficult and scary, particularly if your group is still building trust. Vulnerability can be difficult, but relationships grow when people are willing to be vulnerable. Be sensitive to where your group is at in terms of trust, but encourage members to take those steps. **As a leader, people will often respond to the vulnerability that you yourself demonstrate.** Prayerfully consider how you can wisely set a tone of trust, openness, vulnerability, and spiritual significance for your group.

Break into smaller groups of 2 or 3 people and take some time to answer the following question:

*In what context or relationship do you find it most challenging to embody the love of God?*

Share with each other, remembering to respond to vulnerability with compassion and in trust. If you prefer, you can also have a time of silent reflection. Afterwards, **read 1 John 1:7, 9 to each other** as a promise and a blessing, inserting names into the verse.

"As you, \_\_ (NAME) \_\_ walk in the light as God is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies you from all sin. As you have confessed your sin, \_\_ (NAME) \_\_, God is faithful and just and will forgive you your sin and purify you from all unrighteousness.

## Caring for One Another

- *Pray for the names you shared earlier.*
- ***Do you or your family have a need that the Life Group can help meet?***

Using **the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13)** as a guide, based on what you've shared together, spend time listening to God and praying for one another.