



## LOVING ONE ANOTHER - 1

*"Loving from the Heart"*

**KEY PASSAGES:** 1 Peter 1:22-23

### GROUP DISCUSSION:

- Read the key passage (1 Peter 1:22) and then answer the following three questions:
- If we are purified for a sincere love for one another, why are we being commanded to love from the heart (John 13:34)?
- What does it mean to love from the head vs. to love from the heart (Romans 12:10)? How is Peter attempting to make this distinction (1 Peter 3:8)?
- Peter's words (NLT translation) imply that we are free to love *because* we have been purified of sin by accepting the truth of Gospel. Why do some of act unloving as though we are still in bondage to sin?
- Read the rest of 1 Peter 1:23 and answer the following question:
- What best explains the "seed" that gives the new birth? Share in your group how this seed has changed your life and the hope that you now have as a result. This is a great time to give your testimony.

### THE DISCIPLESHIP PROCESS:

**Spiritual Infant** - The language/behaviors of a spiritual infant are characterized by lack of understanding. Infant's primary medium for learning about love is likely popular culture. Cultural bias for loving as a feeling one gets at the expense of another negates the message of the Bible that love is sacrificial, an action, not a subjective feeling. Infants need to experience love to be able to reflect it. One of the characteristics of being young in the faith is fear; fear of what others may expect of them. Since perfect love casts out all fear, infants will need to experience this love in an environment that is safe and allows for mistakes.

**Spiritual Child** - The language/behaviors of a spiritual child are characterized by self-centeredness. Children may believe the cultural paradigm that love is about what they can obtain personally from the relationship. Or that it's all about feelings. They may say "I'm not in love with my spouse any more". Love is an action as seen in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. Children also need to experience real love as modeled by spiritual parents who express love as tangibles (patience, kindness, perseverance, etc.). Love means that children will need to be corrected and disciplined in order to produce fruit, but not to punish. Children may behave foolishly in-group or during group activities. They need to be corrected, but believe and experience that the relationship with the parent or leader is not in danger.

**Spiritual Adolescent** - The language/behaviors of a spiritual adolescent are characterized by a search for identity. In the process of learning to accept God's unconditional love, they may ask questions such as "Is God still out there? Is he real? Does he love me?" Adolescents are going to make mistakes in receiving God's love and in giving love unconditionally as they begin to own their faith. Adolescents need opportunities to disciple others and to love difficult people without judgment or conditions. A great way for them to learn is through apprenticeship, assigning them opportunities to meet with and disciple others in the group.

**Spiritual Parent** - The language/behaviors of a spiritual parent are characterized by intentionality and strategy. Parents embrace self-sacrifice. Their love and concern for others is greater than their own needs. They consider others as more important than themselves and how they express love is through getting into the trenches with those who are hurting, broken, or lost. Parents will sacrifice their own comfort and needs for the sake of others. "There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends." John in his Gospel account records Jesus as saying these words: "The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." This is the portrait of love - to give of oneself selflessly for the sake that another may experience true life.

## **ADULT STUDY / HOMEWORK: (For your personal daily study time)**

### **Day 1**

- Read 2 Peter 1:3-8 - Describe what God has given Believers as stated in verses 3-4.
- Read 1 John 4:7-8 - What does it say about God's divine nature?
- Since we have everything we need to obey the command, how can we use that God-given power?
- Write out the definition of grace. Memorize 2 Peter 1:3.

### **Day 2**

- Read 2 Peter 1:3-8
- To learn to love like God is a journey. Write out this journey from faith to love in verses 5-7.
- The action phrase in verse 5 is "make every effort." List three steps you can take toward making every effort.

### **Day 3**

- FAITH - Read Ephesians 2:8, Matthew 16:17, Romans 10:17, Hebrews 10:38, 11:6,8
- What is God's part in our faith? What is our part?
- MORAL EXCELLENCE - Read Ephesians 4:22-32
- What does moral excellence (goodness) look like according to these verses?
- KNOWLEDGE - Read Proverbs 2:1-6, James 1:5 - Where does knowledge come from and how do we access it?

### **Day 4**

- SELF-CONTROL - Read James 1:22, 1 Corinthians 9:25-29
- What do these verses teach us about becoming more self-controlled?
- PERSEVERANCE (Patient Endurance) - Read Hebrews 12:1-3, James 1:3-4
- What is required to endure opposition to Christians? Who can we look to for inspiration? What is the result of persevering?
- GODLINESS - Read Psalm 119:11, Proverbs 11:6, 13:6, 15:9, 1 Timothy 4:7-8, 6:6
- What is the key to obtaining godliness and the blessings associated with it?

### **Day 5**

- BROTHERLY AFFECTION - Read Romans 12:9-21
- What are the acts of brotherly love act in these verses?
- LOVE - Agape = God's love: The essence of agape love is self-sacrifice - Read Ezekiel 36:26, 2 Corinthians 3:18
- In our journey toward learning to love, what do these verses teach that God does in us?
- Read Luke 10:27, John 15:11-12, 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13, 1 Peter 1:8
- What is the Lord's goal for believers?

## **FAMILY STUDIES / HOMEWORK (For 1<sup>st</sup> Grade and up):**