



Sermon Discussion Guide

THE WORD OF LOVE

The Seven Greatest Words of Love-Part 3

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Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother (Mary), his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple (John) whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Dear woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.
John 19:25-27

As Jesus was on the cross dying, instead of thinking about himself, he looks at his mom. He knows that she has no resources, no money. As a widow she will not be cared for. So Jesus shows his love for her by giving her into the care of his best friend John. Here is our example of how to love like Jesus, doing these four things: 1) Care for my own family; 2) Treat other believers as my family; 3) Learn to see other's pain even when I'm in pain; and 4) Meet others needs even if mine aren't met. When you are in pain, remember: Jesus cares, accept love from others, and look for someone else to help. Let's talk it over.

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

"Honor your father & your mother." Exodus.20:12

1. In what ways you could pay more attention to your immediate family to show your love and importance to them? How can getting closer to Jesus help raise their importance in your eyes?

"If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." 1 Timothy 5:8

2. Why do you think helping your family pleases God?

"Friends love through all kinds of weather, and families stick together in all kinds of trouble" Proverbs 17:17

3. Have you ever stood up for someone who needed your emotional support and how did that turn out?

"Jesus said, 'Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and my sister and my mother.'" Matthew 12:50 (NIV)

4. What does Christ's love tell you about how you should love other believers? Discuss steps you can take to improve your ability to serve older believers and mentor younger ones. As a group, pick one idea mentioned and practice it this week.

"Your attitude should be the same as Christ Jesus." Philippians 2:5

5. How does pain make you more self-centered? How can you prepare yourself to reach out to others in pain even when you are suffering? Ask each member to briefly share how they were healed from their pain by helping others.

"Each one of us needs to look after the good of the people around us asking, "How can I help?"
Romans 5:2 - 3

6. What distractions or activities keep you from meeting the needs of others? List some practical steps to more often find Jesus disguised as a hurting person. What can you do (as an individual or small group) to increase your service to others?



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Diving Deeper (optional)

1. Knowing that Jesus cares about your pain, what is the most painful experience in your life that you want God to use to alleviate the pain in someone else's life?
2. Why is it difficult to request help when you are hurting or suffering? How can gathering others around you during a struggle glorify God and help believers to mature?

REVIEW ANY ASSIGNMENTS OR COMMITMENTS MADE DURING YOUR PREVIOUS MEETING.



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SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE LEADER NOTES

Suggestions for This Week’s Study

- **Icebreaker:** How did you help a person who was in pain or struggling?
- **Goal:** Learn the single most important lesson in life – to love like God loves you.
- *Dear heavenly Father: Help us understand we are wildly loved by you; that you take great delight in us. Just as a good parent loves their child with abandon, you love us that way. Help us to love like you, truly, deeply and lavishly. In Jesus’ name. Amen.*

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.
- ✓ **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 Sermon Discussion Guide

- Talk It Over is a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. We’ve designed it so it can be completed easily within 30-45 minutes. As the discussion leader, you should preview and evaluate the questions based on the needs of your group. Decide in advance what is most important to focus on, should time not allow for the entire lesson.
- Feel free to adapt the format to meet the needs of your group. If your group is mature and wants to dig deeper, consider using the Diving Deeper section or add additional Scripture and ask suitable questions. Remember that this is only a guide.
- The questions relating to Bible study methods are helpful to develop Bible literacy and spiritual maturity in our lives. You can help your group be aware of their needs in these areas by using these questions as a regular part of each discussion.
- Personal applications are essential for growth and should be included in every discussion. When discussing how they will apply principles, group members may state very general goals such as “I need to spend more time in prayer.” It is important for you to help people make goals that are very specific and commit to specific plans of action by asking, for example, “How are you going to begin?” An example is to get up 25 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.



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- Your goal as the leader is to bring the group into a stimulating discussion that helps the members recognize their needs 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.