

II. Group discussion *Each number below includes a set of questions that relate to the scripture text. We offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement on an answer. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better.*

Read Luke 6:32-36 *Spend time in quiet reflection on this passage. Select three readers to read the text out loud slowly, with a minute or two of silence between each reading. It would be best if the readers used different translations, but this isn't necessary. This is a great way to invite your group to "live in the text."*

After the third reading followed by a period of silence, use the following questions as a guide for discussion.

1. What is Jesus' key instruction in this passage?

As we read, what phrases stood out or caught your attention?

2. What are some common ways, both good and bad, that Christians in our society are different from non-Christians?
How could you spot a Christian in public?

How much is love a distinguishing characteristic of Christians?

3. Why isn't it enough for Jesus to say, "love everybody" and leave it at that? Why does he tell us to love our enemies?

4. In this text, what does Jesus tell us to *do* besides love our enemies?

How did Jesus serve as an example of this?
Bring in the sermon material on John 13.

5. How essential to being a Christian is loving our enemies? Why?

What is the problem if Christians do not love their enemies?

6. Have you seen any recent examples of people loving their enemies?

What did it look like?

What risks did they take?

What was the result?

7. How would relationships be transformed if Christians truly lived like Jesus in self-giving love?

How could it transform a marriage?

How would it affect a congregation if everyone loved selflessly?

How might it impact our relationships with non-Christians?

III. Cultivating Love *Practical suggestions and reflections to help participants connect the discussion to their daily lives. Challenge each person to try at least one of these each week.*

When people meet, the question is often asked, "So, what do you do for a living?" How could this be an insensitive question? How could it be positive? What might be a better question to ask strangers?

Make a list of ways you are giving in your relationships, and ways you are receiving. Does the scale tip in one direction? What does this say about the Spirit bearing the fruit of love in your life?

Look at the enclosed list of times the phrase "one another" occurs in the New Testament. What do these verses reveal about the nature of the church? How does it compare with your experience of church? What can our group do to apply these verses in a richer way?

IV. Other resources

Prayer *Creative suggestions for group prayer*

Consider praying the following prayer out loud and in repetition:

*Our Father in Heaven, help us to love as Christ **taught** us
help us to love as Christ **showed** us
help us to love as Christ **empowers** us
help us to love as Christ **loves** us
In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

Meditative Reading

The week's method of approaching scripture is in the tradition known as *lectio divina*, which is Latin for "divine reading." It has been practiced for centuries by those who, rather than seeking to master a text of Scripture, have sought to let it take mastery over them. For information, consult chapter 5 of Richard Foster's *A Celebration of Discipline*.

Kid-friendly activity

An activity designed to help kids and adults connect the scripture to their lives. Works best when adults participate in the activity with the kids.

Offer a prayer of praise for the good things God is doing. Ask the group members to suggest a song about God's love.

Ask each group member to share a "bully" experience. How did it make them feel when they were mistreated by bully?

Read Luke 6:32-36 aloud.

- How does God want us to treat people at school or in our neighborhood who are not nice to us?
- Why do bullies act the way they do? How would loving them change that?



January 31, 2010

LIFE Group Guide

Luke 6 & John 13 – Love

By John Grant (jgrant@collegehills.org)

The theme for this meeting: **growing in love for God and others.**

To tie in with our 2010 theme, "A Home for Every Heart," we are studying characteristics that are present in godly homes and lives. Our starting point for this series is the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-25).

A few years ago, I was one of four contributors to a SG series that discusses Philip Kenneson's book on the fruit of the Spirit, *Life on the Vine* (IVP, 1999). The series is posted on the LG webpage. Our LG guides for the next several meetings will be adaptations of those guides.

It is not by chance that Paul lists love as the first fruit. Love is central to the Christian life. Kenneson's book asks an important question: "How do we cultivate a life marked by God's love—a love that is always directed toward the needs of others—in a culture so thoroughly saturated with self-concern?" This lesson will begin to answer that question.

Leadership tip: LG is scheduled to meet again next Sunday (Feb. 7), and that is also Super Bowl night. It would be good to talk about your plans for that meeting during this week's meeting. The teens will go to a game watch and devotional at Lipscomb.

I. Relate *Use a few of these to introduce the theme and "break the ice." No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage individuals through these questions.*

- ❖ Gimme five...smells in your grandparents' house.
- ❖ In three minutes, how many songs can the group name that have the word "love" in the title? *Make this a team game.*
- ❖ How would you say our culture defines love?
- ❖ Describe the kind of person who is easy to love. What percentage of people fit this description?

A List of New Testament "One Anothers"

From Sticky
Church, by
Larry Osborne, 2008

This is a list of the things Christians are commanded to do with and for one another. It's a list of commands that are hard to fulfill in a large group setting. They are best fulfilled within the framework of close and accountable relationships similar to those found in a healthy small group.

Love one another.

- John 13:34–35: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."
- John 15:12–13: "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."
- John 15:17: "This is my command: Love each other."
- Romans 13:8: "Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law."
- 1 Thessalonians 4:9: "Now about brotherly love we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other."
- Hebrews 13:1: "Keep on loving each other as brothers."
- 1 Peter 1:22: "Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart."
- 1 Peter 4:8: "Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins."
- 1 John 3:11: "This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another."
- 1 John 3:23: "This is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us."

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If New Testament "One Anothers"

- 1 John 4:7: "Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God."
- 1 John 4:11–12: "Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us."
- 2 John 1:5: "I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another."

devoted to one another.

- Romans 12:10: "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love."

nor one another.

- Romans 12:10: "Honor one another above yourselves."

e in harmony with one another.

- Romans 12:16: "Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited."
- 1 Thessalonians 5:13: "Live in peace with each other."
- 1 Peter 3:8: "All of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble."

Stop passing judgment on one another.

- Romans 14:13: "Let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way."

Accept one another.

- Romans 15:7: "Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God."

Instruct one another.

- Romans 15:14: "You yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another."
- Colossians 3:16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you

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A List of New Testament "One Anothers"

sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God."

Greet one another with a holy kiss.

- Romans 16:16: "Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ send greetings." (See also 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Peter 5:14.)

Agree with one another.

- 1 Corinthians 1:10: "I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought."

Wait for each other.

- 1 Corinthians 11:33: "When you come together to eat, wait for each other."

Have equal concern for each other.

- 1 Corinthians 12:25: "... so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other."

Serve one another.

- Galatians 5:13: "You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love."

Do not provoke or envy one another.

- Galatians 5:26: "Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other."

Carry each other's burdens.

- Galatians 6:2: "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."

Bear with one another.

- Ephesians 4:2: "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love."

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Colossians 3:13: "Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."

Be compassionate to one another.

Ephesians 4:32: "Be kind and compassionate to one another."

Forgive one another.

Ephesians 4:32: "... forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."

Colossians 3:13: "Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."

Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

Ephesians 5:19: "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord."

Submit to one another.

Ephesians 5:21: "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ."

Do not lie to each other.

Colossians 3:9: "Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices."

Encourage one another.

1 Thessalonians 4:18: "Encourage each other with these words."

1 Thessalonians 5:11: "Encourage one another."

Hebrews 3:13: "Encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness."

Hebrews 10:25: "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

Build up each other.

1 Thessalonians 5:11: "Build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."

Spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

Hebrews 10:24: "Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds."

Do not give up meeting together.

Hebrews 10:25: "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

Do not slander one another.

James 4:11: "Do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it."

Offer hospitality to one another.

1 Peter 4:9: "Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling."

Cloth yourself with humility toward one another.

1 Peter 5:5: "Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.'"

Be kind to one another.

1 Thessalonians 5:15: "Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else."

Don't grumble against one another.

James 5:9: "Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!"

Confess your sins to each other.

James 5:16: "Confess your sins to each other."

Pray for each other.

James 5:16: "Pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective."