

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

For the week of September 6-12, 2020

"AGENTS OF LOVE"

GETTING STARTED

To the facilitator: Use this section to introduce the topic. If possible, give a brief recap of the sermon.

Share a memorable point, a spiritual lesson, a personal application, a question, or something that challenged you from the sermon last Sunday.

What are some of the ways that people say they "love"? For each example that you mention, what does the word "love" actually mean? What kinds of motivations are revealed in these examples?

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Read Matthew 7:11, John 13:1, John 15:13, 1 John 4:8-10, Romans 5:8. Based on these passages, what are words that you can use to characterize "biblical love"? How different would this be from "secular love"? Why?
2. Read Luke 6:32-36. What are the possible reasons that we love like the world? What is the danger of thinking like this (Luke 6:26; John 15:19)? How then is a believer's love different from a non-believer's love? Why should it be?
3. Read Matthew 25:31-46. What impressions do you have of the sheep and goats? How does this affect your understanding of this story? Do you find the judgment against the goats surprising? What is the distinctive characteristic of the actions of the sheep? Are these actions what saves them or are these evidence of salvation?
4. Loving "the least of these" means loving the brethren who are unable to repay you or give back or benefit you in any way. It doesn't have to be as dramatic as laying down your life but could be something as ordinary as making someone lunch, mopping the kitchen floor or washing someone's feet. What are some ways that you have done this in the past? Is there something that the Spirit is telling you to do for a brother?
5. Read 1 Samuel 14:12-15; 20:17,35-42. What are your thoughts about Jonathan's accomplishments as a warrior (1 Samuel 14)? Why would David be considered a threat to Jonathan? What does Jonathan's love for David teach you about "loving the most of these"? Any way you can apply this in your life?

6. Read Matthew 5:43-48; Luke 6:27-28. What does Jesus say about loving our enemies? Do you think "loving our enemy" has become more of a cliché than a normal practice in Christianity? When was the last time you prayed for someone who mistreated or frustrated you? How can you adjust your actions to intentionally better love your enemies?

7. Of the three applications (loving the least of these, loving the most of these, and loving the worst of these), which one have you applied recently? Which one do you need to grow in?

8. [NEXT STEPS]

"God is the source of love. Jesus is the proof of love. We are the agents of love in this world."

- ☐ I will pray for opportunities to love someone who is "the least of the brethren"
- ☐ I will show support for a person who excels more than me.
- ☐ I will pray for my enemy.
- ☐ I will give thanks to God for his love.
- ☐ I will find ways to express my love for God.

Don't forget to:

- ☐ Go through the devotionals everyday this week.
- ☐ Have a regular daily time of prayer and reading of God's Word.
- ☐ Commit 30 minutes a day for God's intervention in this fight against the COVID virus.

CLOSING THE SESSION.

Close the session by taking the time to pray for one another. Consider the following as you pray:

- Pray that you grow in fruit of love, especially in the area that the Holy Spirit wants you to grow in.
- Take the time to pray for our nation, for peace and for the gospel to prosper during this time of the pandemic.
- Pray for those who are hurting, going through fear, worry and anxiety in the group.
- Pray for your unsaved family, friends and loved ones.