

The Heart of Christmas

Week 3 | For God So Loved

BOTTOM LINE

God loved us so we love one another.

GOAL OF THE GROUP

To create meaningful conversation that stretches our faith and draws us closer to the heart of God. This guide is a suggestion. Adjust the questions as appropriate for your group.

SCRIPTURE

Romans 5:8, John 3:16, Luke 15:4-7, Luke 19:10

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Love is a word people use in all kinds of situations. "I love your coat." "I would love to join you for dinner." "My nephew loved his birthday surprise." How do you define and use the word love?
2. The type of love that God has for us goes beyond our love for things, events, or even family and friends. The love is a giving love. It is a sacrificing and selfless love. The Greek word for sacrificial love is agape. Agape love can be defined as *"Unconditional love that is always giving and impossible to take or be a taker. It devotes total commitment to seek your highest best no matter how anyone may respond. This form of love is totally selfless and does not change whether the love given is returned or not."* Jesus loves us simply because He loves us.
 - a. Is it more difficult to believe that God loves others or that He loves you? Why?
 - b. Read Romans 5:8. God loves us and does not expect anything in return. Can you think of a time you did something and did not expect something in return? How did it feel to not "keep score"?
3. John 3:16 says "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." The type of love that God has for the world is unconditional love.
 - a. When is it difficult for you to recognize God's love?
 - b. How would living like you are sacrificially and selflessly loved by God look in your life?
 - c. How could living like it affect the way you pray?
4. Read Luke 15:4-7 and Luke 19:10: Jesus told the Parable of the Lost Sheep to show us the heart of God and declare His mission for the world. In order to participate in God's mission, we must leave behind some things and go after those who have not yet been reconciled to Him.
 - a. What comfort zone could God be calling you to leave? What is preventing you from participating in the mission of God for your life?
 - b. When we are loved by the unstoppable love of God, we are "free" to "seek and save the lost". Do you feel invited and challenged to experience this type of freedom?
 - c. What are your greatest fears in reaching those in your life for Jesus? What is God saying to you personally through Luke 15:4-7 and Luke 19:10?

Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice, giving up everything – all His glory, His life – to serve us. This is *agape* love.



TRY THIS

God loved us so that we can love one another. To really live this out, who is God leading you to reach this week? Often we have a chance to love someone through sharing a word (of encouragement or hope), an act of service (leveraging our time, skills or talents) or giving a gift (a possession we can give away). Choose one of these ways to love one person in your life this week!