

Growing

"Loving"

Week 4 – October 23, 2022

Scripture: Luke 15; 1 John 4:19; Ephesians 3:16-19

Grab your Bible and a few people to connect with. Look up the verses below and share your thoughts. It's that easy!

Share: What book or movie does everyone love that you don't like at all?

Read the scripture noted above together: Take turns reading if you prefer. Enjoy the different Bible translations we each read.

Watch the video posted here together: www.kensingtonchurch.org/growing Each week has a short video about the weekends message.

Discuss the following context:

This is the fourth of five weeks looking at growth in our relationship with God which results in transformation.

Kensington's Mission statement is **to see everyone transformed and mobilized by Jesus**. This series is about transformation of our lives- *by Jesus*. Jesus' desire is that we would become disciples. Disciples, as Dallas Willard so succinctly puts it, are those who are **"Learning how to be with Jesus to learn from Jesus how to be like Jesus."**

The five things we are considering in this series are *not steps*, but rather a part of an ongoing and never-ending process that continues until our hearts no longer beat. Instead of steps leading us somewhere, think of a cycle that feeds and grows off each part. Today we look at the critical and powerful place of love in our spiritual growth.



Share your thoughts about the following questions:

1. In our English language, we use the word love pretty generously: we love people, food, football. The New Testament was written in Greek, and that language had a number of words for love so a distinction could be made regarding feelings for a person and feelings for a sailboat, for example. The word used throughout the New Testament when speaking of God's love is the word "Agape". *It is a decision and commitment on God's part to us no matter what we do.* How does this differ from how we often define love?
2. **Luke 15** reveals God's passionate love for us. He tells three short stories (The Lost Sheep, The Lost Coin, The Lost Son) meant precisely to let us know what God feels. We are the lost object or person in each story. When you imagine God thinking about you in these ways, how do you feel? Do you believe there is something you can do which will cause God to love you more or less than he does right now?
3. To unlock the power to transform us, we need to experience the love of God. John wrote: "We love because he first loved us" (**1 John 4:19**). Our own love is a response, an increasing and powerful loving, because we are experiencing the deep love of God in our soul. Ask yourself this question: Am I living loved? Is my life an expression of one who experiences being loved by God? Why or why not?

Pray together: Ask each other to share what is on your heart today. Pray the following Scripture- a prayer God wants to answer. The pronoun is changed to pray it for ourselves; insert names when you pray it for others. Consider praying this prayer each morning for the next week.

God, I pray that out of his glorious riches that you may strengthen me with power through your Spirit in my inner being, so that Christ may dwell in my heart through faith. And I pray that I, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge — that I may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:16-19)