

Small Group & Personal Bible Study

Memory Verses: John 13:34

“A new command I give you, Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”

Discovery Bible Study Exercise:

In your journal or on a piece of paper make three columns and follow these steps:

- Step #1: Read 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15
- Step #2: Re-write in your own words 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15
- Step #3: Write down what you discover from this passage
- Step #4: What will you do to obey what this passage says?
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Daily Meditation Readings:

Day 1 – John 13:34-35

Day 2 – John 15:12-17

Day 3 – 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Day 4 – Colossians 3:12-17

Day 5 – 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15

Lesson: Relating to Others

1. According to the Bible passages in your daily reading this week, why should we love one another?

First of all we are to love because Jesus has commanded it. It is the way the world will know we are His followers. A follower of Christ is identified by His love for others.

2. How does the world define relationships between people?

The world sees relationships as conditional and self serving. What is in it for me? Does it bring me pleasure? Am I getting what I need? How close to I want to be to this person? If I help you, what will I get in return? I need relationships that are safe and comfortable for me.

3. How would you describe a real love relationship with a person, as God defines it? How can that help us understand what Jesus meant in John 13:34-35?

I think God defined relationships require being selfless, a servant minded helper; an encourager that brings hope, coach that brings wisdom and truth, and a concerned friend who is always kind loving and patient. A brother or sister who has the desire to build up not tear down. Relationships rest on the foundation of Christ and pull strength from His word and seek to model Jesus.

4. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15 again. Which of these directions do you find hardest to do in love?

Let everyone share which they find most challenging and why.

- Warn those who are idle
- Encourage the timid
- Help the weak
- Be patient with everyone
- Don't pay back for the wrongs done
- Be kind to each other and everyone else

Spiritual Growth Is Not a Private Matter

by Rick Warren

Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near. Hebrews 10:24-25 (NLT)

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Some of us hesitate to commit ourselves to developing an intentional plan of growth that requires accountability or relationship with others because we believe spiritual growth is a personal and private matter. We choose to believe each person develops in his or her own way at his or her own rate.

This is an aberration from the truth. The idolatry of individualism has influenced even the way we think about spiritual growth. So much of the teaching on spiritual formation is self-centered and self-focused without any reference to our relationship to other Christians.

This is completely unbiblical and ignores much of the New Testament. The truth is that Christians need relationships to grow. We don't grow in isolation from others. We develop in the context of fellowship.

Over and over again in the New Testament we find this basic truth: Believers need relationships with each other to grow! Hebrews 10:24-25 says, "Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another ..." (NIV).

God intends for us to grow up in a family.