

Loving God, Loving Others

Loving God

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1 LOVING GOD: KNOWING WHO GOD IS

Introduction

Who is the God of the Bible?

How you think about God will form the foundation of your relationship with Him and your interactions with him. But what if you are wrong in your thinking about God? Good thing we have the Bible as a guide to help us discover the answer to who God really is. This lesson will also help you learn more about who God is for you and to you in order to lay a foundation for your interactions with the Great I AM.

Opening Questions

- What word do you think of first when you think about God? Why?
- Why would it be important have an understanding of who God is when pursuing a relationship with God?
- We will discuss today what the Bible says God is like and how he relates to people.

In the Word

1. Find Isaiah 40 in your Bible

This is really the hinge chapter for the entire book of Isaiah. The first 39 chapters described the dark judgment of God. But now, the prophet tells of the promises of restoration, the coming of the Messiah and the future blessings in store for the nation of Israel. And it all begins in chapter 40 with a description of the greatness of our God.

In verses 9-31, the prophet Isaiah is painting an accurate picture of the nature and character of God to the nation of Israel. Like us, they had quickly forgotten what God was really like. He says in verse 9, 'Here is your God!'

2. Read verses 10-11

(a) How is God described in each verse?

(b) How can God can be both a mighty ruler and a tender shepherd at the same time?

3. Read verses 12-17 Isaiah asks a series of questions beginning with "who" or "with whom."

• What insights do you learn about God's character from these verses?

4. **Read verses 18-26** Israel was tempted to forsake the living and true God for the false gods and idols of the neighboring nations. Isaiah asks, "What likeness will you compare with Him?" He concludes in verse 25 with God Himself asking the same question: "To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?."

• How is the true God different from the false gods?

5. **Finish reading the chapter, verses 27-31** The prophet records the whining of Israel in verse 27 when they said, "God doesn't know about us" and "God doesn't care about us." But He did!

• According to these verses, how does God relate personally to you? Who is God to you? Creator? Healer? Redeemer? Lord?

6. How can we discover more of who God is?

7. Spend 2 minutes meditating on one of the characteristics of God

Live the Word

1. Ask someone you know what they think God is like. This could be a believer or pre-believer.
2. Spend 10 minutes this week meditating on the attributes of God or praying through the names of God.
3. Each day choose one attribute of God or name of God and journal how God has shown this part of His character in your life.
4. Come up with your own idea for how you can gain a deeper understanding of God's character (perhaps through a Bible study or one of the recommended reading texts).

Resources:

- List of Attributes of God [bible.org] (<http://bible.org/series/let-me-see-thy-glory-study-attributes-god>)
- List of Names of God [blueletterbible.org] (http://www.blueletterbible.org/study/misc/name_god.cfm/)
- Study adapted from: <http://www.graceglobalnetwork.org/Assets/articles%20PDF/HenrysGrowthBook/Ch13.pdf>

Recommended Reading

- Knowing God by J. I. Packer (InterVarsity Press)
- The Trinity [carm.org] (<http://carm.org/who-is-god>)

2 LOVING GOD: BEING A DISCIPLE OF JESUS

Introduction

Love God – By becoming Jesus' disciple

One of the last things that Jesus shared with his disciples was the command to make more disciples. As followers of Christ, we too are encouraged to be a disciple and make disciples. Have you ever wondered how to do that? Have you ever wanted to change or grow in an area of your life or spiritual journey? Jesus' answer for this was discipleship. This lesson will give you ways in which you can grow in your relationship with Christ with the goal of being transformed into his image.

Review

1. From last week's lesson what did you learn about God's character?
2. Were there any reflections or thoughts about God that stood out to you?
3. Did you share any of these thoughts within your circle of influence?

Opening Questions

1. What do you think that it means to say that you 'follow Jesus'?
2. Is following Jesus easy? Is there anything that you have to give up? Explain.
3. In your opinion, what is the difference between believing something with your mind and living it out?

In the Word

1. Read Matthew 28:18-20

What is Jesus asking his followers to do in this passage?

Leader Note

1. The scripture above quotes Jesus' teaching to His apostles shortly Before He ascended to heaven
2. This scripture is commonly called "The Great Commission."
3. The imperative in this scripture is "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations", The rest of the passage is followed by description in what things should accompany this initial command. At the very end Jesus intends to comfort his disciples with knowing that he will not leave them.

2. Definition of a Disciple

In your opinion what does it mean to be Jesus' disciple? Do you consider yourself a disciple of Jesus?

Leader Note

1. The word "disciple" literally means 'learner'.
2. According to Vine's Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words, it denotes "one who follows another's teaching"
3. But a disciple was not only a learner, he was also an *Adherent For this reason disciples were spoken of as imitators of their teachers.*
4. Is believing in Jesus enough to be a disciple? What about attending church services regularly?

3. The Goal of being a Disciple

Read Luke 6:40 and Romans 8:29. According to these Scriptures what is the goal of being a disciple?

Leader Note

To be Christ's disciple, then, is to strive to be like Him! Do you have a strong desire to follow Jesus and become like Him? Unless you do, it cannot be said that you are truly His disciple!

4. The Marks of a Disciple

(a) John 8:31

(b) Matthew 7:21-27

(c) John 13:34-35

(d) John 15:8

Leader Note

Have each small group member look up one of these scriptures and share with the group what it says about the marks of a disciple.

Marks of a Disciple of Christ

- 1. Following the teachings of Christ*
- 2. Demonstrating love towards other Christians*
- 3. Bearing fruit to the glory of God*

5. Reflection

(a) Consider the marks of a disciple of Jesus (Obeying the teachings of Christ, showing love for other believers and bearing fruit to the glory of God) and give an example of how a disciple might demonstrate these in his or her life.

Leader Note

For example someone might obey the teaching of Christ by seeking to "Not worry" as Jesus talked about in Matthew 6:25

(b) Do you feel that you have been trying to actively follow Christ's example as His disciple? Is there any area of particular difficulty?

(c) What is one step you will take this week to follow Jesus as His disciple?

Live the Word

1. Read some of the teachings of Jesus from one of the Gospels this week. Meditate on how a 21st century disciple could put these into practice.
2. One of the marks of a disciple is to "show love to other believers". Find a way this week to be a blessing to another Christian.

3. Decide on your own way to follow Jesus more in discipleship this week and have an accountability partner ask you about it sometime during the week.

Resources

- Accountability Questions
 - <http://www.discipleshiptools.org/apps/articles/default.asp?articleid=7052&columnid=1152>
 - <http://www.christian-discipleship.com/christian-questions/discipleship-accountability-questions.html>
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Recommended Reading

- Discipleship by Design by Chi Alpha Christian Fellowship
- The Me I Want to Be by John Ortberg

3 LOVING GOD: SPENDING TIME WITH GOD

Introduction

Develop your relationship with God.

In order to get to know someone it is necessary to spend time with that person. If you want to know God it is no different. Spending time alone with God connects you to his Spirit and allows you to know the God of the universe in a personal way. This communion is the basis for your existence as a believer in Christ. This lesson will encourage you and equip you to set aside time to be in relationship with your Heavenly Father.

Review

1. From last week's lesson what did you learn about being a disciple of Jesus?
2. What did you do this week to practice being a disciple?
3. Where do you think you are in terms of considering a decision to follow Jesus?
4. What is one thing that you think would make it difficult for you to become Jesus' disciple?

Opening Questions

1. Do you regularly spend time with God?
2. Where, when and how do you usually spend time with God?
3. What is the biggest challenge that you face when trying to spend time with God?

In the Word

1. Discuss the Purpose of Daily Devotional Time with God

(a) Read Philippians 3:7-14 and discuss

(b) Read John 15:4-15

- What does it mean to abide in Christ?

- What is the result if we don't abide in Christ?

- According to these verses how do we develop a friendship with Christ?

3. Discuss Tips and Ideas for Spending Consistent Time with God

Leader Note

For each point, share your own experience and ask the group to share good times, places and plans they have used for spending time with God. Make the discussion as interactive as possible.

(b) A Consistent Time

- At least 30 minutes suggested but start where you can.
- Quality not quantity.
- Try to spend time every day consistently

(b) A Consistent Place

- As Free from Distractions as possible
 - Accessible
 - Solitary
- (c) A Consistent Plan
- Spend time talking to God
 - Use a prayer plan (through the Lord’s prayer or ACTS) (see Chapter 6: Knowing God through Prayer)
 - Pray for different people every day (Monday- missionaries, Tuesday-Relatives, Wednesday— Small group members, etc.)
 - Tell God about what is going on in your life and ask for His input. As you read the Word, listen for what he might speak to your situation.
 - Prepare your heart to hear from God by confessing sin and being in a worshipful attitude
 - Spend time in the Word of God
 - Start a Bible reading plan
 - Use a daily devotional book
 - Don’t just read—spend time memorizing, meditating on scripture, reflecting on Scripture and journaling what God is speaking to you through Scripture.
 - Spend time in Worship
 - Put on Worship music and sing along
 - If you play an instrument, play and worship
 - Spend time thanking God for specific things
 - Spend time saying the names of God and praising Him for who He is in your life.

Live the Word

1. Try to spend at least 30 minutes alone with God each day this week. Use the scheduling chart or a calendar on your phone or computer to schedule when you will have time with God this week
2. Try something new in your time with God that you found on the survey that you do ‘rarely’ or ‘never’.

Resources

- Time Scheduler
 - Excel - <http://longhornxa.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Weekly-Schedule-Template.xls>
 - PDF - <http://longhornxa.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Weekly-Schedule-Template.pdf>
- Bible Reading Plans [bible gateway/youversion]

Recommended Reading

- Out of Solitude by Henri Nouwen
- Beyond the Quiet Time by Alister McGrath
- The Pursuit of God by A.W. Tozer

4 LOVING GOD: PRAYER

Introduction

Prayer – A dialogue with God

As you spend time alone with God, prayer is key to developing a dialogue between you and God. Through prayer you can feel the Spirit, receive direction, gain revelation, and impact the world around you. This lesson will give you practical suggestions and ways to pray for yourself and others.

Review

1. How did you spend time with God this week?
2. Was the plan you made last week effective? Did you have to change it?
3. Did you try anything this week that you don't usually try in your time with God?

Opening Questions

1. Is it hard for you pray out loud? Why or why not?
2. Tell the group about a time you prayed about something and how God answered your prayer.

In the Word

1. Discuss the Purpose and Power of Prayer

Read I Timothy 2:1-8 and Discuss

- (a) According to this passage how should we pray?

- (a) According to this passage for whom should we pray?

- (a) According to this passage why should we pray?

3. Read the following Scriptures. Who was praying and what did they pray about?

Leader Note

Each member look up one of these examples and share who was praying and what they prayed for.

- James 5:17-18

- Col. 4:12

- Ezra 8:22-23

- Nehemiah 1:5-7

4. Discuss ways to keep your prayer times fresh (both individual and corporate prayer)

- Keep a prayer journal. Record your prayers and the answers to your prayers.
- Take a prayer walk and pray for the people in that area or whatever God puts on your heart.
- Do a prayer retreat. Spend a day or a weekend in nature or indoors in solitude.

- Fast. Skip a meal or several meals, do a juice fast, or a water fast.
 - Attend a prayer meeting (Chi Alpha's morning prayer, pre-Encounter prayer, or at your church).
 - Pray for someone who is sick.
 - Find a prayer partner and commit to praying for each other/with each other.
 - Find an older Christian and ask them questions about prayer.
 - Play music and just enjoy God's presence (don't ask him for anything).
 - Watch the news and pray for issues that touch your heart.
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5. Conclude the time by spending some time in prayer, using one of the prayer resources as a guide

Live the Word

1. Try to spend at least 30 minutes praying with a friend or someone in your small group this week.
2. Try fasting a meal or two and spend that extra time in prayer.
3. Try one of the ideas discussed in this lesson that you have not done recently.

Resources

- How to Spend an hour in prayer - http://www.jwipn.com/pdf/cywtp_chapter09.pdf
- Guidelines for effective intercession - http://www.jwipn.com/pdf/cywtp_chapter33.pdf
- How to pray for the unreached - http://www.jwipn.com/pdf/cywtp_chapter15.pdf
- Guidelines for Effective Intercession

Recommended Reading

- Hearing God by Dallas Willard
- With Christ in the School of Prayer by Andrew Murray
- Practicing the Presence of God by Brother Lawrence

5 LOVING GOD: WORSHIP

Introduction

Worship – Expressions of Love

The way we express our love towards God is called worship. There are many ways to worship God. In this lesson you will discuss both new and familiar ways to show God how much you love him. As in a human love relationship, in our relationship with God if the love is never expressed, the relationship will not grow. The more you know who God is the more you can express your love for Him in worship. This cycle continues much like a well formed dance. It is our prayer that this lesson will lead you into deeper expression of God's love for you and your love for Him.

Review

1. From last week's lesson on prayer, what is one thing that you have seen changed, improved or implemented in your prayer life?
2. Did you see God answer any prayer this week? If so, what was it?

Opening Questions

1. How would you personally define 'worship'?
2. How do you usually worship God?
3. Why do you think that people worship things or gods or God in their lives?

In the Word

1. Read and Discuss Luke 7:44-48

(a) What actions did the woman take in this passage?

(a) What was her attitude?

(a) How are the other people in this passage participating in worship?

2. Why do we worship? Discuss what these two passages say about why we worship God.

(a) Revelations 4:9-11

(a) Hebrews 12:28

3. How do we worship?

Leader Note

For each point, share your own experience and ask the group to share personal examples of when they did this or saw this done by someone else that they know. Also discuss how each act was an act of worship.

There are many expressions of worship. When we do these things with an attitude of reverence and a motivation of love towards God we are engaging in worship.

- Obedience
- Service
- Praise (lifting up of hands, shouting, dancing etc)
- Forgiveness
- Love

- Exercising Spiritual Gifts
 - Art
 - Songs
 - Daily living (Working at your job, Cleaning your house, etc)
 - Going to church
 - Worshipping with other believers
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4. Discuss

(a) What is one way this week that you can bring worship into your life?

(b) What is one way you can invite others to join you in worship? Or how can you bring worship into your area of influence?

5. Take one or two of the ways to worship God and practice them together.

Live the Word

1. During a worship service (aka life group, church, community gathering, etc) try one new expression of worship. (For example if you have never raised your hands, raise them in praise, or you have never knelt down bow before the Lord, then kneel in worship).

2. This week follow through with one act of obedience as worship to God. (for example if God is asking you spend a longer prayer time do it, if God has asked you to call some one, do)

3. Choose one of the ways to worship God mentioned in this lesson or the resources and try to focus on worshipping God for at least 15 minutes each day this week. You can do the same type of worship every day or try a different one each day.

Resources

- Preparing for worship - <http://blogfinch.files.wordpress.com/2011/11/preparing-for-worship.pdf>
- List of Creative ways to Worship God by Rael Gore <http://longhornxa.com/wpcontent/uploads/2012/09/Creative-Ways-to-Worship-God.pdf>

Recommended Reading

- 10 Ways to Worship Without Songs - <http://www.saddleback.com/story/5071.html>
- Let the Nations be Glad by John Piper
- The Worship Warrior by Church D. Pierce
- Sacred Pathways by Gary Thomas

6 LOVING GOD: WALKING IN OBEDIENCE

Introduction

If we love God we will follow His commands.

Obedience is perhaps the most important way that we can show our love for God. In fact, Jesus states that if we love Him we will keep his commandments. If we say that we love God but we are not willing to obey God, then we are hypocrites in our faith. Obedience includes being willing to do what God asks us to do and being willing to stop doing what God tells us not to do. It's source should be a heart full of love for God, but it must go beyond the heart and become evident in our choices and actions.

Review

1. From last week's lesson what did you learn about worship?
2. How did you worship God this week?
3. Did you do anything that would bring worship into your circle of influence?

Opening Questions

1. What were some of the rules that you were expected to obey as you were growing up?
2. Did you resent some of the rules, or did you recognize they were for your good? Explain.
3. What are some reasons why people obey authorities?

In the Word

1. Our obedience is a measure of our love for God.

(a) Read John 14:15 and John 14:21

(b) What are some of the commandments that this verse is talking about? How do we know what God wants us to do?

(c) Why do you think that God would say that our love for Him is based on our obedience?

2. Notice that God's love for us is not based on our obedience.

(a) Read Romans 5:6-8 What do these verses say about God's love for us?

(b) How does knowing God loves you even when you do not obey him make you feel about obeying God?

3. While God's love is not based on our obedience, God will be able to use us more in his kingdom if we are obedient to Him.

(a) Read 2 Timothy 2:20-21 What reasons does this verse give for us obeying God?

(b) What are things we can fill our life with that would be dishonorable to God?

(c) What are ways that we can dedicate ourselves to God?

(d) What are ways that you could imagine God using you in a greater way because of dedicating your life more to God?

Leader Note

• Paul says we are like the different kinds of dishes and pots in a large house: “Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.” (2 Tim. 2:20-21)

• Paul wants us to ask ourselves, which kind of vessel do I want to be in God’s kingdom? If, as a Christian, I fill my mind and heart with “dishonorable” things before God, I can expect to be like a vessel for “dishonorable use” (like the scrub bucket or the garbage can or the dish we put the dog food in).

• God may still use me for something in his kingdom, but there won’t be much blessing in it. But, if I turn away from things that dishonor God, if I keep from my eyes and my mind from “what is dishonorable,” then I will be to God like a dish made of gold or silver, “a vessel for honorable use ... ready for every good work.” If we want God to use us in significant ways, we have to walk in obedience to him.

4. Our obedience can help others who are not Christians come to Christ

(a) Read - 1 Peter 2:12. According to this verse, what is another result of living an obedient life?

(b) How can our actions be a witness to unbelievers?

(c) Does the way that you treat others push them closer or further from God?

(d) What are ways that you can live that would help others to draw closer to God?

We should obey God because we desire to see unbelievers come to Christ through observing our lives. Peter tells believers that their good conduct will be their defense against slander and will often lead to the conversion of those who first speak against them.

5. Reflection: Think about your life, and answer these questions

(a) Is there any specific area of your life in which you are not fully loving God because of your disobedience to Him?

(b) What are things you can do to surrender those areas of disobedience to God and dedicate yourself to Him more fully?

(c) Have you followed the Lord in obedience in water baptism? See Mathew 28:19-20.

Live the Word

1. Make a plan for specifically walking in obedience in a certain area of your life this week.

Area: _____

Steps this Week:

(a) _____

(b) _____

2. Become more familiar with what God has asked us to do. Choose a teaching of Jesus or a pastoral epistle and read it this week. Make a list of specific commands that should be obeyed in Scripture.

Resources

Recommended Reading

- The Cost of Discipleshp by Dietrich Bonhoffer

7 LOVING OTHERS: FELLOWSHIP

Introduction

Fun and Friendship are Important to our Spiritual Life

Fellowship is much more than just getting together, talking and eating although these things are perhaps some of the outward expressions of fellowship. True fellowship is how we live out Jesus command to “Love one another as I have loved you” (John 13:34) Our attitude towards other Christians and how we treat each other can also reflect our love for God. What our fellowship shows about our relationships is also usually what attracts or repels others about our community.

Review

1. From last week’s lesson what did you learn about obedience?
2. Was there any specific opportunity you had this week to practice obedience to God?
3. Were you able to meet with an accountability partner this week?

Opening Questions

1. What kind of people do you enjoy spending time with?
2. When do you find it the most difficult to show love to someone?
3. If you could imagine the perfect Christian community, what would be some words to describe it?
4. What are some of the ways that you can tell that someone truly cares about you and wants to be your friend?

In the Word

1. True Fellowship is showing love to others just as Jesus has showed love to us

(a) Read John 13:34-35. What are some of the ways that Jesus has shown love to you?

Leader Note

For example: Jesus has accepted me just the way I am. Jesus has forgiven me for the wrong things I have done.

- (b) For each way that Jesus has shown his love for you, give one practical example of how you could show that same love to someone else.

Leader Note

For example: Jesus has forgiven me. I can forgive my roommate when he/she does something to offend or hurt me.

2. Fellowship is essential to our spiritual growth

(a) Read 1 John 4:7-21. Why is loving others so important to our spiritual growth?

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Leader Note

Answers may vary. Here are some possible answers.

(a) Verse 8 - Whoever does not love does not know God.

(b) Verse 11 - As we grow in understanding God's love for us, we will grow in our love for one another

(c) Verse 17 - When we love others, we become more like Jesus.

(d) Verse 20 - If we claim to love God but hate a brother or sister, we are liars and disobedient to what Christ commands.

3. Fellowship in the Early Church

(a) Read Acts 2:42-47.

(b) What are some examples of how the early church fellowshiped with one another?

(c) What were some of the results that they saw in their love for God and each other?

Live the Word

1. Do your own Bible study on fellowship by looking at at least 10 of the 'one another' verses in the New Testament. Use Biblegateway.com or a concordance to find verses that mention what we should do with and to "one another". Use these verses to make a list of all the different things that God would like to see in our community.

2. Plan a time for your small group to hang out and fellowship with each other sometime in the next couple of weeks.

3. Invite someone in one of your spiritual communities (church, Chi Alpha, life group) to your home for dinner one day this week or on the weekend.

4. Choose one of the examples that was given during the discussion of John 13:35 and intentionally do it this week to show love to someone in your community.

Resources

- BallStateChiAlpha.com - See what opportunities for fellowship are coming up this week in our community.

Recommended Reading

- Everybody's Normal Til you Get to Know Them by John Ortberg

8 LOVING OTHERS: FORGIVENESS

Introduction

Can you forgive as you have been forgiven?

Sometimes forgiveness is a hard subject to discuss because of the deep emotions that come with it. We all know what it is like to be hurt by someone, some of us so bad that it has changed us and we haven't been the same since that hurt was administered to us. Yet as Christians Christ calls us to live above that hurt and to walk in forgiveness to those who have done us wrong. As we meditate on the great forgiveness of God to us we are reminded of Jesus' words in Luke 6:36 "Forgive and you will be forgiven."

Review

1. Did you have any good opportunities to fellowship with other Christians this week?
2. What is one thought about fellowship that stood out to you in the previous lesson?

Opening Questions

1. Is it easy for you to forgive why or why not?
2. Talk about a time where someone need to forgive you.
3. Tell about a time where you had to forgive someone.

In the Word

1. What is forgiveness and what does it mean to you?

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2. Forgiveness is a choice. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? why?

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3. Read and discuss what the Bible says about forgiveness in these passages.

- Psalm 130:3-5

- Mark 11:24-26

- Matthew 5:23

- Matthew 18:21-35

Leader Note

- *Psalm 130:3-5 Discuss forgiveness from God*
- *Mark 11:24-26 Discuss how our forgiving others affects our relationship with God*
- *Matthew 5:23 Notice that this verse and Mark 11:24-25 together show that Jesus puts the responsibility on you to make it right whether you have something against someone, or someone has something against you.*
- *Matthew 18:21-35 The parable of the unmerciful servant.*

Leader Note

Discuss these different types of forgiveness with your small group and invite (but do not force) opportunities for people to share openly about any of these they are struggling with. If members do share personal things, have everyone pray with them and ask them if there is a specific thing that the group can ask them about next week to keep them accountable. Also remind the group at the end of the discussion that everything should be kept confidential that is mentioned in the group.

4. What is one area in which you feel like you often have to ask God for forgiveness?
5. Is there anyone who you think might have something against you?
6. Is there anything that you have a hard time forgiving yourself for doing? It could be something that happened in the past, or it could be an area of struggle with a sin where we ask forgiveness and then easily do it again.
7. Is there anyone that you have a hard time forgiving?

Live the Word

1. Spend extra time in your prayer time this week on Confession (asking forgiveness from God for areas of disobedience). List specific areas of disobedience that you want God to help you with.
2. Meet with an accountability partner this week and ask each other accountability questions to help each other grow. Pray with each other asking God for forgiveness in areas where you have messed up.
3. If anyone came to mind during the discussion about asking others to forgive you or forgiving someone else, follow through with the steps listed to do this this week. If you need to talk to them, find a time to talk with the person to extend or ask for forgiveness.
4. If you have a lot of trouble forgiving yourself, a trained counselor can help you work through this. If you feel you could benefit from this, make an appointment with a counselor you know or ask your small group leader if they have someone they could refer you to.

Resources

- <http://biblestudyplanet.com/forgiving-others/>

Recommended Reading

- The Peacemaker by Ken Sande
- Forgiveness chapter in Tools for Mentoring

9 LOVING GOD: SERVING OTHERS

Introduction

Service – Our place in the body of Christ

God made you unique and gave you specific gifts and abilities so that you could fulfil his purpose. One of the things God calls us to is to serve others. How we serve might differ from one person to another, but we are all called to serve. Serving could mean helping people who need help, serving in our spiritual community to help fulfil the great commission or seeing something that needs to be done in our city, state or world and doing it for God's glory.

Review

1. Did you follow through with the home work from last week? How did it go? Give an example of what you did/learned?
2. Did you have any new opportunities to forgive people this week?

Opening Questions

1. What is one act of service that someone has done for you, and how did it bless your life? Or how has someone helped you just when you needed it?
2. If you were to “wash someone's feet” or serve them in some way, you would go to whom and do what?
3. If you were to make a list of people you know who serve selflessly, who would be on that list?

In the Word

1. Read the Scriptures below. As a group, build a list of servanthood or “greatest in the Kingdom” traits. Write them down.

• Philippians 2:5-11

• Matthew 18:1-5

• Mark 10:35-45

• John 13:12-17

2. In which of these traits do you feel you are strongest? In which one are you the weakest? Which one would you like to grow in?

Live the Word

1. If possible do a “foot washing” (based on John 13:1-17) with the members in your small group. Take turns washing each other's feet as a sign of servanthood. Say encouraging things or pray for the person while you wash their feet.

Leader Note

You will need to prepare towels and a bucket.

2. We can all use our own talents and abilities to serve God. Complete a spiritual gifts survey. Think of ways that you can use your strongest gifts to serve others.
3. Plan a service activity time and place that the small group and go out and serve to together.
4. Read Mark 9:35 daily this week and pray for opportunities to serve others. Then go out of the way this week to serve those that come into your path/ area of influence/class/etc.
5. Ask a staff member about ways to serve the Chi Alpha Community. Pick one or two and do them with your small group or individually.

Resources

- <http://www.randomactsofkindness.org/kindness-ideas> - More than 300 ideas for serving and showing kindness in your community.
- http://www.lifeway.com/lwc/files/lwcF_MYCS_030526_Spiritual_Gifts_Survey.pdf Spiritual gifts survey for determining your areas of strength for serving your spiritual community.

Recommended Reading

- 100 Ways to Serve others - <http://learnthis.ca/2010/02/100-ways-to-serve-others/>
- How Do You Know God Wants You in Missions: An Email to a Student by Sankie Lynch - <http://www.travelingteam.org/>

10 LOVING OTHERS: LIVING A MISSIONAL LIFE

Introduction

How do we live missionally?

When we experience life transformation through Jesus Christ and bring this transformation to everything we do, we are living missionally. This means sharing the good news of Christ with others and making disciples of all nations. It also means living God's love and grace and having godly priorities whatever our life calling. Who we are and what we say are both important as we work to build God's kingdom.

Review

1. From last week's lesson what did you learn about service?
2. Did you do any of the service projects? How did you feel? What did you learn?
3. Did any of the service projects help you realize a hidden gift, passion or idea that you didn't have before?

Opening Questions

1. Have you been on a missions trip or local outreach before? Describe your experience
2. Is it hard for you to share your faith? Explain.
3. What are some reasons why people don't share their faith?
4. Have you shared your faith with a family member ? friend? co-worker? how did it go?

In the Word

1. Read Matthew 4:19 and Mark 3:14
2. We should remember that the Jesus' first priority is that we be with him.
 - Why do you think that Jesus wanted his disciples to be with him in relation to preaching the gospel?
 - Based on this where do you think you are in terms of living these verses?
 - (a) Still haven't started following Jesus
 - (b) Need to be with Jesus more consistently
 - (c) Starting to be sent to reach others with the message.
 - (d) God often uses you to share Jesus with others.

Leader's Note

We don't stop sharing the gospel just because we've missed a quiet time. However, it should always be our top priority to live from the overflow of God and not in our own strength.

3. The second priority Jesus gave was that we should preach the gospel. What does preaching the gospel mean to you?
4. Why do you think Jesus gave these two priorities?
5. Mathew 28:16-20 is called the Great Commission (CO-mission)
Matthew 28:16-20 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
 - (a) What is the mission?
 - (b) What or why the Co-?

Leader Note

God's mission is making disciples who will live for him in every area of life. The co- talks about the partnership with Jesus who 'will be with us always'. Some commentaries say that this phrase "Therefore go" is translated from Greek "as you go" meaning as you are doing your daily life make disciples. When we live this way it is called living a missional life.

(c) Is making disciples part of your daily life?

(d) Discuss the difference in meaning between missions and missional.

(a) Be intentional.

- Share the gospel in your daily life through as you meet people and become their friend.
- Pray and look for opportunities to help those you meet, pray for them, or share with them scriptural truth.
- Have the attitude of Christ in everything you do. A quote sometimes attributed to St. Francis of Assisi is "Preach the gospel always, and if necessary, use words."
- Extend invitations to small group, life group, church or other places where people will hear the gospel.
- Share testimonies of what Christ has done in your life with family and friends.

(b) What to share

- What Jesus has done for you (your testimony in 3 min. or less)
- Who Jesus is.
- What He has done.
- Why He did it ?
- How do we respond?

(c) Pray together for friends who do not know Jesus. Ask God to highlight someone and give you opportunities to share with them this week. Pray with each other for boldness and open hearts.

Live the Word

1. Look over the list of creative ways to be missional and pick one to do this week alone or with someone in your small group
2. Study one of the Models for sharing the gospel this week and share it with your small group next week.
 - Bridge Diagram
 - Two Ways to Live
3. Go out of your way to do something to serve someone who is not a Christian this week.

Resources

Two Ways to Live

Recommended Reading

- Walk Across the Room by Bill Hybels
- The Purpose Driven Life by Rick Warren
- Out of the Salt Shaker and into the World by Rebecca Pippert