"Divine Love"

Immeasurably More #5 • Ephesians 5

INTRODUCTION

In chapter 5 of Ephesians Paul continues to exhort the church to reflect Christ in their lives. This means they are to "walk in love as Christ loved us." This study considers how divine love is perceived. What does it look like, feel like, sound and smell like to walk in divine love. The Bible gives us insight into how we can "make sense" of diving love.

Ice Breaker (Optional):

Which of these senses do you most closely associate with your mother; her touch, her voice, her perfume, or her cooking?

Study Questions (45 MIN)

Making "Sense" of Divine Love

It smells good

Q1. Read Ephesians 5:1-2; Leviticus 1:8-9; Ephesians 5:3-6

We are created to experience life through a variety of our senses. In Eph 5:2 Christ's loving sacrifice for us is called a fragrant¹ offering. Who is it in Lev 1:9 that finds the aroma of an offering pleasing? Why do you think God perceives sacrifice as sweet and pleasant?

In contrast, Ephesians 5:3-6 warns against all impurity². What odors do you associate with impurity or filthiness? What are the qualities or actions listed in these verses that repulse God? Have you grown less sensitive to some of these due to prolonged exposure? If so, how can you regain God's perspective?

 $^1eu\bar{o}dia$ -sweet smelling thing, incense, on odour or something sweet smelling

² akatharsia -impurity (the quality), physically or morally:—uncleanness.

It looks good

Q2. Read Ephesians 5:7-14; John 3:19-21

In Eph 5:7-14 Paul focuses on the contrast between light and darkness. What is the "fruit" of light listed in verse 9? How does John 3:20 explain the reason someone would choose to stay in darkness? John 3:21 makes it clear where the good fruits of the light come from. What good fruit of God's doing have you seen come to light in someone's life recently?

It sounds good

Q3. Read 2Peter 3:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5; 1 Peter 2:15; Ephesians 5:15-20

To truly be imitators of Christ (Eph 5:1) we need to understand what His will is. In the passages above what are some things listed that we can know with certainty are the will of God? What are some of the ways you seek to know God's will?

Eph 5:18 tells us to be filled continually with the Spirit. What do verses 19 and 20 list as natural results of being filled with God's Spirit? When do you most feel moved by the Spirit to sing in this way?

It feels good

Q4. Read Ephesians 5:21-6:9

We are well served to begin with a look at this entire passage of Eph 5:21-6:9 in context. There are many roles and relationships listed. What responsibility does the husband have toward his wife in Eph 5:25-31? As the wife of a husband who faithfully executes this charge, what feelings would you expect as a natural response? In such an environment of self-sacrificing love, would it be difficult to give this man respect and submit to his authority in the marriage relationship? Paul tells us this is a depiction of Christ and his bride, the church. Each one of us is called to place ourselves in submission to the authority of Christ. Reread this passage, noting aloud all the ways Jesus modeled the role of a husband.

Wrap-Up

It is impossible for us to comprehend the immeasurable love God has for us. But the Bible shows us that we can experience it through a variety of ways. We can receive the loving sacrifice of Jesus as a sweet fragrance, unlike the repulsive odor of sin. When we walk in God's light, we are fruitful and produce all that is good and right and true. Paul also refers to a variety of musical expressions springing out of a filling by God's Spirit, through which we may thank and praise God in all things. And when we walk in submission, and fulfill the responsibilities God has called us to, we will feel cared for and cherished just as God cherishes His bride, the church.

Memory Verse

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us...

Ephesians 5:1-2a ESV

Prayer (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life:
Pray for your group members' needs: (see back for more notes)

Challenge: Take time this week to recognize all the ways God has expressed His love to you, through nature, circumstances, and people in your life.

Q1

Ephesians 5:1-2 ESV - 1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Leviticus 1:8-9 ESV - 8 And Aaron's sons the priests shall arrange the pieces, the head, and the fat, on the wood that is on the fire on the altar; 9 but its entrails and its legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall burn all of it on the altar, as a burnt offering, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

Ephesians 5:3-6 ESV - 3 But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. 4 Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. 5 For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

Q2

Ephesians 5:7-14 ESV - 7 Therefore do not become partners with them; 8 for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), 10 and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. 11 Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. 12 For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. 13 But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, 14 for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

John 3:19-21 ESV - 19 And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. 20 For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. 21 But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God."

$\mathbf{Q3}$

2 Peter 3:9 ESV - 9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 ESV - 3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each one of you know how to

control his own body in holiness and honor, 5 not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God;

1 Thessalonians 5:18 ESV - 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

1 Peter 2:15 ESV - 15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.

Ephesians 5:15-20 ESV - 15 Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, 19 addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, 20 giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Q9

Read Ephesians 5:21-6:9 in your Bible		
Prayer Notes cont.		