

3. Love is Caught in Community

Ephesians 4:1-3 NLT - 1 Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. 2 Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. 3 Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace.

Paul knew that living out God's love in community isn't easy. He shared his wisdom with the church at Ephesus to overcome the challenges it would present.

Ephesians 4 tells us it takes humility, gentleness, patience, and peaceful unity to live in the way God calls us to. To do that we need to set aside what we think is "fair" or "justified" and replace it with grace. When have you witnessed grace extended by members of the church community?

Jesus didn't come to condemn, but to restore, redeem, and heal the broken. If the body of Christ is living this out, the next generation will take notice and be drawn to follow the God who makes this possible.

WRAP-UP

The kind of love Jesus offers is far beyond our capacity, apart from Him. When we receive and embrace the amazing radical transforming love of Christ, we can't help but pour it out on others. That means we will share our story of deliverance and extend the same grace to others that we have received ourselves. It is that kind of love that is contagious and will draw others into the kingdom of God.

MEMORY VERSE

6 And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. 7 Repeat them again and again to your children...
Deuteronomy 6:6-7a NLT

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life.

Challenge- Invite someone to share a meal this week and tell them your redemption story.

"Love is a Verb" **Spread the Love #4**

INTRODUCTION

As we take up God's call to spread the love let's think about how that love gets passed on to others including the generations that follow. If you are a parent, you probably know that "Because I say so" or "Do as I say, not as I do" just aren't effective means of changing behavior. But what does influence others to love God? What is it that makes Jesus' love contagious?

Ice Breaker

Is there something that your parents did that you now find yourself doing in the same way?

Key Passage

Deuteronomy 6:6-9 NLT - 6 And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. 7 Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. 8 Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. 9 Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Love that's "All In"

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 NLT - 4 "Listen, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. 5 And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength.

Do you know what happened when people had a personal encounter with Jesus in the Gospels? Jesus' love overflowed from them to those around them. And it overflowed because they were filled up with love

for God and for others. They loved with all their heart, soul, and strength.

It can be challenging to shift our “westernized” cultural understanding of love from something we feel to a more biblical understanding of love as something that motivates our every move. But Deuteronomy 6:4-5 says we must love with “all our heart, soul and strength”. We need to be “all in”.

What does it mean in our everyday lives to love God this way? If each decision you make and each person you encounter became an expression of God’s love, do you think people would notice? What sort of reactions might they have?

Contagious, radical, transforming love doesn’t come from our efforts, it begins when we receive and recognize the love God has for us. So, take some time to receive God’s love and let it fill you so completely that you can’t contain it.

2. Tell the Stories

Deuteronomy 6:6-7a NLT - 6 And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. 7 Repeat them again and again to your children...

Now when it comes to passing this love for God to our children, we need to keep first things first. Before we “repeat them to our children” (v. 7), we must wholeheartedly commit ourselves to God’s commands (v.6). And of course, the greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God. But cultivating that love for God is best done consistently over time. We need to establish rhythms in our lives that bring us into God’s presence and transform us into His image.

What are the rhythms in your life that give you an opportunity to encounter God? What are the ways you personally hear from God (e.g., reading His word, prayer, worship, meditation, solitude)? Do these practices have a regular place in your schedule, and do they involve your family? For instance, prayer, reading the Bible aloud or worship can be part of the rhythms of your household.

Deuteronomy 6:20-25 NLT - 20 "In the future your children will ask you, 'What is the meaning of these laws, decrees, and regulations that the LORD our God has commanded us to obey?' 21 "Then you must tell them, 'We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt, but the LORD brought us out of Egypt with his strong hand. 22 The LORD did miraculous signs and wonders before our eyes, dealing terrifying blows against Egypt and Pharaoh and all his people. 23 He brought us out of Egypt so he could give us this land he had sworn to give our ancestors. 24 And the LORD our God commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear him so he can continue to bless us and preserve our lives, as he has done to this day. 25 For we will be counted as righteous when we obey all the commands the LORD our God has given us.'

Moses foretold of a time when the next generation would ask about the meaning of God’s commandments. How is explaining the meaning different from explaining the practice of God’s commandments? What did Moses equate with the meaning (v.21-25)? Have you ever shared your story of God’s deliverance with your family?

Judges 2:7, 10 NLT - 7 And the Israelites served the LORD throughout the lifetime of Joshua and the leaders who outlived him--those who had seen all the great things the LORD had done for Israel. ... 10 After that generation died, another generation grew up who did not acknowledge the LORD or remember the mighty things he had done for Israel.

The sad truth is that the Israelites who entered the Promised Land failed to pass on the stories of God to their children. When their generation died, how was the next generation described in Judges 2:10?

This is why it is so important for those who have encountered Jesus to share their story, along with their whole-hearted love of God, so that those who hear their story will also seek to encounter God.

One of the places we can share our stories is over a meal. Either at the family dinner table, or with friends when you gather, be sure to tell the story of God in your life.