

## BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, July 22, 2012

Passage: Various

Memory Passage: John 13:34-35

### DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read John 13:1, 34-35 & 15:12-17.** The “One Another” verses of Scripture represent a “how to” manual for our relationships with each other, and we begin by looking at 2 of the “one another” commands which make it possible to obey all of the others. In 13:1 what 2 ways did/will Jesus love his disciples (“having loved” and “loved them to the end”)?
- (b) How does Jesus describe the greatest expression of love in 15:13? As we studied Romans 1-4, did you think of the work of God in Christ as an expression of the greatest form of love? Think through (or re-read) Romans 1-4 and write down everything you learned that gives you a greater insight into this supreme act of love, and write either a prayer of thanksgiving or a psalm of praise for such mysterious and wonderful grace and love extended to you.
- (c) Considering verses such as Lev. 19:18, what is “new” about Jesus’ commandment? In what way are we to love one another, and to whom does “one another” refer? How did Jesus love us?
- (d) *Family:* Ask, “In what ways do people show love for other people?” Make a list on your white board of all the ways that are mentioned. Make a mental note of how many expressions you wrote down and then ask, “Which of these expressions shows the least amount of love?” (Emphasize that just because one expression might show greater love, it does not make the other expressions worthless!) If they *did not* mention the act of giving up one’s life for another person, add one to the number of expressions on the board and begin with that number as you start with the expression that shows the least amount of love (i.e. if there are 6 expressions listed, start with the number 7). When you get to number 1 you will be out of words, so try to get them to think of “giving one’s life for another,” and provide this answer for them if they cannot think of it on their own. If they *did* list it, start with the number of expressions listed on the white board (i.e. 6). The idea is to have “giving up your life for someone else” as the number 1 expression of love. Then **Read John 13:34 & 15:12-13** and teach them Jesus’ words about the greatest expression of love, and how we are to love each other based on His giving His life for believers.

### DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read John 13:34-35 & 15:12-17.** According to 13:35, what is the outward result of believers obeying this New Commandment? How, exactly, do “all people” know we are Christ’s disciples when we love each other?
- (b) What is the requirement to be called a friend of Jesus? Write down your definition of a friend, what it takes for someone to become your friend, and what do you expect from the relationship you have with friends. How does your relationship differ between a friend and an acquaintance?
- (c) On what basis does He call us friends rather than servants (15:15)? Explain what significance this has in the life of a believer today (and therefore *your* life!). As you answer this, think about the extraordinary intimacy that this phrase (Jesus’ friend) carries, the difference between being a friend and a servant, and the sacrifice made to make you His friend.
- (d) What is the purpose for which Jesus chose and appointed us? What was the result? What is the connection between believers loving each other (the bookends of vs. 12 & 17) and Jesus choosing us & appointing us to bear abiding fruit?
- (e) *Family:* Have each person make a list of the characteristics or actions that make someone a friend. Have each person read his/her list and discuss each characteristic and make a master list of combined characteristics on your white board. Then **Read John 15:12-17** and teach this passage using the list you made, adding other characteristics if need be. Emphasize the difference between a friend and a servant, the fact that obedience marks true believers (as opposed to people becoming true believers through/because of their obedience), and what our response must be if we are truly friends of Jesus (bearing fruit).

### DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Rom. 13:8-10 & 1 Pet. 4:8.** Does the command to “owe no one anything” prohibit all borrowing, and on what do you base your answer (Context, context, context!)? In what ways can loving someone be understood as “owing”? Why does Paul say this is important (“for” in v. 8)? How is the law fulfilled by love (vs. 9-10)?
- (b) How, specifically, are the 4 commands listed in v. 9 fulfilled by loving? Is this idea limited to these four commands, or does love fulfill every command? How do you know?
- (c) What happens when we “keep loving one another” (1 Pet. 4:8)? What is meant by the phrase “love covers a multitude of sins” and how does it happen? Why is this of primary importance to Peter (“above all”) in this context?
- (d) Describe what a body of believers would look like if these verses were applied without fail. What kinds of relationship struggles would be avoided? Assess your obedience to this command of loving others and write down three ways that you can

better obey this command this coming week. Think about particular situations in which you are regularly failing to love someone and be specific in your application.

(e) *Family*: Walk your family through (a), (b), (c), and (d) above, replacing the church application with your family.

#### **DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**

#### **READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read Eph. 4:32 & Col. 3:12-13.** What does it mean to forgive another person? Don't just assume you can define this word, take the time to write out a full definition. In what way are we to forgive each other ("as-so also")? Explain how God in Christ forgave you. Be full and specific, especially in light of what we have been learning in Romans.

(b) Since we are to both love and forgive one another the same way that God loved and forgave us in Christ, how are the ideas of love and forgiveness tied together? Can you truly forgive without loving? Can you love without forgiving? What circumstances make it difficult to forgive someone?

(c) Is there anyone in your life that you need to forgive that you have not? Given your definition of forgiveness, are there people in your life that you *say* you have forgiven but have not? What should you do about this? Is there anything you can do right now, immediately, to begin this process? If so, what is it, and if not, why not ("so you also *must* forgive" [Eph. 4:32])?

(d) *Family*: **Read Eph. 4:32.** Ask your family for a definition of "forgive." Write their responses on your white board. Then lead them in a discussion of how God has forgiven believers in Christ (remind them of what you learned in Romans 1-4, especially in 3:21-26) and last night's discussion about believers being Jesus' friends. Explain that Eph. 4:32 contains one of the 2 Greek words for "forgive" (Greek is the language in which the NT was written) and it means, "to forgive on the basis of one's gracious attitude toward another, freely, graciously, as a favor." So it entails not only not being angry with them, but also not holding a grudge or finding fault with them and having a grace-filled attitude toward them. Use a situation from your own life in which you were forgiven by someone or in which you forgave someone to illustrate true forgiveness.

#### **DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**

#### **READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read Matt. 6:14-15, 8:21-35 & Luke 17:3-4.** According to Matt. 6 & 8, why "must" (Eph. 4:32) we forgive others? How are we to understand Jesus' words: Can a person have forgiveness from God one day and lose it the next day if they refuse to forgive someone? If not, then what is He saying? Why is it so important for Christians, for YOU, to forgive others?

(b) According to Jesus in Matthew & Luke, how many times are we to forgive someone? Why do you think Luke's account includes repentance as a ground for forgiveness (and this is the only place in the Scriptures where "repent" and "forgive" are found in the same verse)? Are we only required to forgive when someone repents?

(c) **Read 2 Cor. 7:8-13.** What do you learn about the marks of true repentance? What do you think should be the relationship between forgiveness, true repentance, and reconciliation? Can one forgive another but not be required to reconcile the relationship? Upon what conditions should reconciliation happen?

(d) I have written long this week, so please forgive my abrupt ending to this week's study!

**DATE: July 22, 2012**

**PASSAGE: Various**

*Loving & Forgiving One Another*