



DISCUSSION GUIDE

October 4/7, 2018

Living in Love

BIG IDEA: How we treat people should be different than the world around us.

GROUPS VISION

Life transformation happens when we engage with other people, with Jesus as our focus, and take next steps together. A next step is any behavior or belief that moves us forward on our journey with Jesus.

My Story. An encounter with Jesus leaves a story to tell. Share yours at valleycreek.org/MyStory.
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KEY VERSE

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this, all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

John 13:34-35

POTENTIAL NEXT STEP

Who has God identified for you to focus on and love? Maybe it's a co-worker, student, or another parent?

This week, be intentional and show them love in an unexpected way.

MAIN POINTS & SCRIPTURES

Jesus invites us to a better way of life. As followers of Jesus we are called to live a life of faith, hope, and love. **(Isaiah 55:8-9)** God has called us to stand out, to live differently from the world, and to offer hope to those around us. **(1 Peter 2:12)** A relationship with Jesus changes every other relationship we have. And an encounter with Jesus will cause us to interact with people completely differently than we ever have before. **(James 2:14-19,)** If we are included in Christ, we are called to live like Christ, who spent His life loving others with a radical, sacrificial, and generous love. **(Luke 6:40NLT)** Faith without action, faith that doesn't change the way we live, is pointless. **(James 2:26)** We're not saved by works, but works are the evidence that shows we have been saved. We are saved and changed by grace for good works, and the greatest work is to love people. **(Ephesians 2:8-9)** The world will know we follow Jesus by how we love, not by what we say. Love is what makes us abnormal in a love starved world. **(John 13:34-35, Matthew 7:15-21)** Love is the natural byproduct of walking in the Spirit; it's the first fruit that begins to grow in our lives. **(Galatians 5:22)** We are to be a people of big action, not big talk. The more we walk with Jesus the more we love what Jesus loves, and Jesus loves people. **(1 John 3:18)**

Here are three groups of people (our neighbors) that our faith is to be put into action for:

1. **We are called to love our people.** We all have a group of people we call our own; our circle, tribe, crew. We were made to live in community, so God placed these people in our lives so we can learn to love. **(Genesis 2:18)** Our people are a gift from God, although sometimes it can be difficult to love them because: we're too busy, we take them for granted, and we see all their failures and flaws. Love is accepting people as they are, for who they are, and using what we have to help them become their best. This is what Jesus did for us and we are called to do the same for them. **(1 Corinthians 13:7-8)**
2. **We are called to love Jesus' church.** Jesus died to build His church, not the building, the people. Before we love the world, we are called to love each other in our church. **(Galatians 6:10, John 13:34-35)** We are the body of Christ and we have been given spiritual gifts, not for ourselves, but for those in our church family. God has given each of us a unique expression of Christ, our gifts and talents that are needed in our church family. **(1 Corinthians 12:7, 12, 27)** The church needs us and we need the church. **(Ephesians 4:15-16)** We need to love ourselves before we love our neighbors; we will love others to the extent we love ourselves. Jesus had a high view of God and a healthy view of Himself, that's why He was able to lay down His life for us. **(Mark 12:30-31)**
3. **We are called to love the world.** Like Jesus, we are called to love the unlovable, serve those in need, and honor everyone, putting the love of God on display. **(Matthew 5:43-47)** The people of the world are lost children of God, not our enemies, and He has sent us to bring them home. **(Ephesians 6:12)** When we view those around us through Jesus' perspective, it becomes easier to love them. **(James 2:13, 1 John 4:7-12)**

DISCUSSION

1. Faith leads to action. How are you loving your people, those in our VCC family, and the world around you?
2. What unique expressions of Jesus (your talents, gifts, and passions) are you using to build up your church family?
3. As an individual or as a group, how can you put the love of God on display this week?
4. **What is the Holy Spirit saying to you? What is your next step?**