



LOVE YOURSELF
WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 13

Welcome to the fall session of Life Groups! This week, we start with a potluck and covenant meeting. Your Life Group Leaders should have contacted you by now to confirm the meeting time and location, and what to expect at the first gathering. If you have not heard from your Life Group Leaders, please contact Samantha Poladian at (818) 709-0113, ext. 105, and she will help get you connected.

The Life Group Covenant explains the purpose of your Life Group, clarifies the expectations for being in your Life Group, and explains what you are committing to for this session. Your covenant will look different based on whether you are in an in-person or digital (Zoom) group.

As you prepare for your meeting, take time to answer the questions in the study and bring them to your first meeting.

Enjoy!

PAUSE

This weekend, we looked at what Jesus taught about loving people well, despite social, economic, or cultural differences. As you begin this study, take some time to read these verses a few times. What in these verses encourages or challenges you?

You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

Matthew 5:43-45

CONNECT

ICEBREAKER: Share something about your childhood that you still love or appreciate today.

STUDY

1. What was one key takeaway for you from the weekend message?

2. In his message, Joel asked the question, "What does it mean to love?" How would you answer that?

a. How might you have misunderstood what it means to love in the past?

b. Who in your life has modeled what loving well looks like, and how?

3. As we learned in the message, Jesus said the two greatest commandments are to love God and to love your neighbor as yourself. Jesus comments on this through the parable of the Good Samaritan. **Read Luke 10:25-37** and take note of any words or verses that seem to be highlighted to you.

a. The priest and Levite played a significant role in Israel's religious worship in the temple, were highly regarded, and were expected to uphold the law. Why do you think they passed by, and what might that reveal about their hearts?

b. Jews and Samaritans hated each other and were enemies. What point do you think Jesus is making in using a Samaritan as the hero in this story?

c. What sacrifice and risk did the Samaritan take to help this man?

d. What do you learn about love and compassion from the Samaritan's response?

4. In our lives, we will always be surrounded by people who think differently than us, even in our Life Groups. What are some tangible ways you can love someone well you disagree with?

5. One of the top three things we do in Life Groups is **support one another**. As the Life Group Covenant explains, "we will learn how to love and support each other through prayer, encouragement, listening, challenging one another, and meeting real needs." Read the following verses and write the theme of each in your own words.

- **Ephesians 4:29**

- **James 2:8**

• **Romans 15:7**

• **Proverbs 11:13**

a. How do these verses describe what it looks like to support and love others well?

RESPOND

Reflecting on the verses we covered in the message and study, how can you better love the people God has surrounded you with this season (e.g., family, friends, co-workers, and your Life Group)? Are there any practical ways He might be asking you to show your love to them?

Spend some time in prayer, asking the Lord to bless the people in your Life Group, even if you haven't met them yet, and to grow your heart in love and compassion for them during this fall session.

TOPICAL PRAYER

Prayer is an important part of each Life Group. Often those who are new to a Life Group are intimidated by praying aloud if they have never done it before. Others are so comfortable with prayer that they can take over the prayer time without meaning to. For these reasons, we suggest practicing topical prayer to help your group get comfortable praying together. Here are three basic guidelines:

1. Focus on a Single Topic/Request at a Time

Anyone in the group is free to introduce a prayer request. Once a topic is introduced, one or two members pray for that request. Then the Life Group Leader will direct the prayer time by sharing the next topic/request.

2. Pray Several Times Together

By focusing on one topic at a time, each member has an opportunity to pray at different times for the requests they are most passionate about.

3. Keep Requests/Prayers Short and Simple

By keeping both requests and prayers short and simple, everyone has a chance to share and pray. This helps those who are new to prayer feel more comfortable praying. It also helps everyone stay focused during your time of prayer together.