



WEEKLY CELL GUIDE

25 JULY 2021 | THE LOVE OF GOD | 1 JOHN 4:8-10

Series : Following Christ | Speaker : Ps Ernie Song



WELCOME

[15 MINS]

You may want to look up the following websites for icebreakers suitable for your cell.

[Ice Breakers 1](#)

[Ice Breakers 2](#)



WORSHIP

[15 MINS]

You may select songs like

1. Reward
2. The Love of God (Hymn)



WORD

[45 MINS]

SPIRITUAL OBJECTIVES

At the end of the sermon discussion, cell members will:

1. Understand the characteristics of God's love in relation to all His other attributes.
2. Desire to love God and make His love the starting point in all that we do.

SERMON SUMMARY

Our understanding of God's love has been contaminated by society's definition of love – shallow romanticised type of love. God's love is holy – it is uncaused, unconditional, incomprehensible, and eternally active toward us. We must make God's love the starting point for everything that we do in life.

SERMON RECAP

Our definition of love is shaped by the culture around us. Therefore, it has diluted and contaminated our understanding of God's love. Most of the time we view God's love in a sentimental way – the same way we understand love in today's culture. In order to understand love, we must begin to understand God – for God is love ([1 John 4:8b](#)). God's love must be understood in relation to all His other attributes.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD'S LOVE

1. God's Love is Holy ([Romans 5:5](#))

- Holiness has two aspects in Scripture – “otherness” and purity.
 - God's love is “other” – it is unlike human love; it is different.
 - God's love is pure ([Ephesians 5:25-27](#)) – it is not contaminated by wrong motives, sin and situations.
- Therefore, all of God's intentions and actions towards us is for our good.

2. God's Love is Uncaused ([Romans 5:6-8](#))

- Human love is always triggered. We love someone because of beauty, a good deed done, faithfulness, family relations/obligations, etc.
- *“The world says: “Yes, I love you if you are good-looking, intelligent, and wealthy. I love you if you have a good education, a good job, and good connections. I love you if you produce much, sell much, and buy much.” There are endless “ifs” hidden in the world's love. These “ifs” enslave me, since it is impossible to respond adequately to all of them. The world's love is and always will be conditional. As long as I keep looking for my true self in the world of conditional love, I will remain “hooked” to the world-trying, failing, and trying again. It is a world that fosters addictions because what it offers cannot satisfy the deepest craving of my heart.” – Henri Nouwen*
- God's love is uncaused or un-triggered. He loves because He is love. There is nothing that we do that will affect His love for us; nothing can separate us from God's love.

3. God's Love is Unconditional and Incomprehensible ([Matthew 5:45](#), [Romans 8:32](#))

- God's love is of *divine* origin, therefore we cannot understand it. Being divine, it is totally unconditional. God's love is given to all people - sinners and saints.
- The journey of knowing and experiencing God's love is like a honeymoon that never ends. We will never reach the depths of God's love for all eternity; we discover something new every time.

4. God's Love is Eternally Active ([Jeremiah 31:3](#), [Psalm 23:6](#))

- God's love is always in the verb form (active) in Scripture.
- God's love is not only active while we are on this earth. Before we were born, we were already in His love. When we get to eternity, His love will continually be upon us.

Response to God's Love – We Love Because He First Loved Us ([1 John 4:19](#))

- “Our love for Him always comes out of His love for us.” – Francis Chan, *Crazy Love*
- Our identity and whole life must begin in the love of God – our value systems, our beliefs, our priorities. It is out of His love that we live our lives.
- The whole aim now is to love God because He first loved us. Loving God means desiring to do His will, bringing Him glory. He becomes first priority; we desire to participate in His work of expanding of His kingdom on earth and representing Him well on this earth (character and lifestyle) is our main focus.
- Unfortunately, many Christians still live out of “self-love”. God is not truly a priority. God is one of their many loves. They want Christ and other things.
- The true test is whether they are willing to give up everything else to get only God ([Mark 10:17-31](#)).
- You are God's treasure ([1 Peter 2:9](#), [Deuteronomy 26:18](#)). The question is – is He yours? ([Matthew 13:44-46](#))

Resources

If you have cell members that desire to rediscover God's love afresh, do point them to the following resources that can help them on their discovery journey of God's love:

- [The Good and Beautiful God](#) by James Bryan Smith
- [The Furious Longing of God](#) by Brennan Manning

- [Experiencing Father's Embrace](#) by Jack Frost

For cell members that have “spiritual obstacles” blocking them from being able to receive, understand or experience God’s love, encourage them to read “[Lord, I Want to Be Whole](#)” by Stormie Omartian or “[Restored](#)” by Neil T. Anderson (Free Download).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **We all have our own ideas and versions of what love is, but does our version of love measure up to God’s love?** [10 Mins]

Leader's Notes

Share honestly with your cell members what your idea of love is. Then discuss what God’s love is as sermonised by Ps Ernie. What are the differences? What does our love lack? How can we renew our minds and hearts so that our perspective and idea of love will align with His?

For more insights: <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-meanings-of-love-in-the-bible>

Transition

It is only when we compare our love with God’s love that we discover how flawed or how lacking our love is. That is when we realise how amazing and beautiful that God desires to love us; we who are so unworthy of His love! Doesn’t this make you want to love God even more?

2. **Were your choices in life (career, finances, etc.) made out of a desire to love God? Are there hints of self-love in your life?** [10 Mins]

Leader's Notes

It is highly likely that when we make important decisions in our lives, we will base them on our self-interests, our capabilities, and our dreams. It is natural that we think about what we want first because this is human nature. Think about the life choices you have made (lifestyle, expenditure, etc) and the routes you have taken (career choices, parenting, etc), and then reflect on whether there are other loves in your life that may be competing with your love for God. Be honest with yourself and then seek to change. Return to rediscovering God’s love and out of your daily experience of His love, ask Him for help to make Him your priority. He is more than willing. Are you willing?

Transition

We are always enough for God. We don’t have to do anything to make Him love us more. But would we be happy if we only have God and nothing else? Is God enough for us? In the next question we explore how to love God like He loved us.

3. **Practically speaking, how can you love God “because He first loved you”?** [15 Mins]

Leader's Notes

When we have genuinely tasted God’s love and understood how vast, how unconditional, and how tireless it is, our natural response would be to love Him back. But we cannot do this alone. Francis Chan said that we need God’s help to love Him. We can’t love God with our own effort; we will fail. We need to seek Him constantly through the reading of His Word and spend quality time with Him to get to know Him. We also need to pray and rely on Him daily. Then we will come to a point where we experience His goodness and His love for us, and we will fall in love with Him.

Sometimes our love for God grows colder as time goes on because of the distractions around us. We feel that it is difficult to love God because His rules are too restrictive, or there are too many to follow. But it’s in these times where we need God the most – to have a right understanding of His love so that we can experience His love the way He intends for us to experience it. Seek Him out, talk to Him and let Him heal you and give you rest. Remember that God *never* gets tired of you. His perfect love for you will always be greater – how can you not love such a perfect Being?

For more insights: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/enjoying-god/>

Closing

God desires us so much and yet very often our response to Him is one of lukewarmness, or periodic bursts of passion at best. We need to do so much better in loving God. In this season, may we once again discover the love of God afresh and live our lives out of that revelation.



Consider dividing the group into micro-groups for a deeper time of sharing as well as praying for the following items:

1. Sermon Application

- Seek God for grace to help us understand His love, and the power to love Him more.
- Behold Him so that our love and passion for Him will never diminish but instead overflow to loving others.

2. Singapore Happenings

- There have been sobering tragedies that have happened over the past week. Pray for the recent incidences where lives have been lost, and for the affected families to be comforted.
- Pray for wisdom for MOE to manage the recent incident where a student died in school.
- Pray for all youth and their families who are affected by the news, and those who are struggling with mental health issues. Pray that they get the necessary support to deal with the shock, grief and find healing in a Christian community.

3. COVID-19 in Singapore

- a. The sudden rise in community infections to be halted (including the recent KTV and Jurong Fishery Port clusters).
- b. Pray that we will have wisdom in our speech even as we discuss the updates of the COVID-19 situation.
- c. Pray that the spread of the Delta variant will be stopped as well.
- d. Continued progress in Singapore to overcome the negative economic and social impact of the current crisis.
- e. Pray for those whose livelihoods have been directly impacted by this pandemic, especially those in F&B.

4. COVID-19 in the World

- a. A swift end to the COVID-19 crisis globally, especially in India and the rest of South Asia.
 - b. Healing and comfort for those who are sick and suffering.
 - c. Protection and guidance for healthcare professionals at the frontline, giving them wisdom, courage, and strength to confront this crisis.
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1. **Bible Reading Plan.** You can access our 2-Year Bible Reading Plan 2021-2022 by visiting <https://rlc.sg/brp2021>.

- Upcoming Sermon Series: Following Christ 11 Jul - 15 Aug.** Jesus' call to discipleship is to follow a Person - "deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me" (Mat. 16:24). Following Christ is a very distinct life. In daily interactions with others, people should see and feel the One whom we follow. The question would be: Is God the main character in your life, or is life mainly about you? In this series, we look at what it means to follow Christ – to be so amazed by who He is that we march to the beat of a different drum and live as a people who truly belong to Him.
- Prayer Ministry.** If you require prayer ministry for any issues you face (eg. unforgiveness, demonic oppression, etc), you can sign up for RLC's RTF ministry: <https://bit.ly/rlcrtf>
- Alpha Online.** 2 Sep to 20 Nov. 12 Sessions. Thursday zoom sessions (8.00pm - 9.30pm): 2, 9, 16, 23 Sep | 7, 14, 28 Oct | 11 Nov Sunday in-person sessions: 2, 23 Oct | 20 Nov. Sign up online at rlc.sg/ao-reg by Tues, 17 Aug. For more information, please contact Karen Koh at karenkoh@riverlife.org.sg.
- COVID-19 Vaccine & The Christian.** Watch the recording of the panel session here: <https://rlc.sg/covidpanel>. For additional resources: <https://linktr.ee/covidpanel>.
- The Behold Album.** The RiverLife Worship team has launched a new album titled 'Behold'. Listen to the album and access chords and lyrics for the songs: rlc.sg/thebeholdalbum

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