



STUDY FOUR "RECIPROCAL LOVE" SEPTEMBER 30, 2007

MEMORY VERSE

1 John 4:19, "We love because He first loved us."

INTRODUCTION

Matthew 22:37 says, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." Upon hearing a sermon on this verse, a gal told the Lord that she did not know how to love Him in this way and pleaded with Him to teach her this kind of love. She had a distorted view of God at the time and expected Him to punish her for failure to love Him as He commanded. Instead the Lord showered her with reminders of His love for her. These memories came in the form of a sermon series on love, much like the one we are currently going through together. Through her Bible study, songs she heard on the radio and encouraging notes from people who knew nothing of her prayer, the Lord began to reveal to her how to love Him in this way. As she reflected on this experience in her journal, the Lord reminded her of a verse she had memorized years before. The truth of the memory verse above sunk into her heart and the Lord began to transform her. She realized the key to loving God with her entire being was that she first had to let God break a stronghold in her life of believing that no one, not even God, could love her. She also learned this love of God was a Fruit of the Holy Spirit. The more she fell in love with the Lord the more she had a desire to honor, glorify and love Him with all of her heart, soul and mind.

LEARNING FROM GOD'S WORD

1. God's sacrificial love demands a response from us. According to 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, why did Christ die for us? What should be our response to this amazing gift of love in our daily lives?

2. Read Micah 6:8. Explain in your own words what this verse means to you. How does living this way portray the love God desires for us to reflect to others?

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3. According to John 13:34-35, what new command regarding loving one another did Jesus communicate? How does this look for us in our every day lives? What might happen if followers of Christ truly loved each other in this manner?

 4. Read John 15:1-17. According to verses 9-10, how do we abide in Christ's love? From verses 12-17, how did Jesus model love in His friendships with His disciples? How does this encourage you in your walk with Jesus?

 5. What truth regarding the Lord's love for us is reflected in John 15:16? How does this help you understand what your priorities should be?

OUR WALK WITH GOD

1. How difficult is it to believe that Jesus loves you and delights in you in a real and personal way? Romans 5:8 tells us God demonstrated His love to us through Christ's death. What are some other ways God reflects His love to us on a daily basis? How should this impact the way we love God and others?

 2. Through this study we have seen some very specific ways in which we can show God how much we love Him. Which of these do you find easy to do and which do you find difficult to do? Explain.
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3. What are some specific steps you can take this week to let God's love be made complete in you? Share these with your small group and have them hold you accountable to take these steps.

 4. What keeps us from responding to God's love in the manner which he calls us to love? How can you help one another to overcome these barriers and begin loving God and others the way God desires you to love?

GOING DEEPER

Read Psalm 51. What do these verses reveal to you about God's love and how we should respond to Him in love?

SERVING AND BEING SERVED

God demonstrates His amazing love for us through the life and death of Jesus Christ. Because of this great love, we are called to love God and love others in a similar way. John 13:34-35 says we are to love one another as Christ has loved us and if we do this all men will know we are His disciples. This week focus on loving the people in your small group. You might let them know how much you appreciate the insights they share in the group discussions or how their honesty and transparency has been an encouragement to you. Write them a note of encouragement relating to some area they may be struggling in. Take someone out to dinner or a cup of coffee and get to know them better. Or, help meet a physical need that you are aware of in their lives. There are many other ways to express this kind of love. The point is to love the people in your small group the way Christ loves us.

**SUGGESTED SMALL GROUP STUDY FORMAT
CRAZY LOVE SERIES – “RECIPROCAL LOVE”
STUDY FOUR – SEPTEMBER 30, 2007**

CONNECT 25 MINUTES

1. Time of Fellowship
2. Opening Prayer
3. Icebreaker Question:

Think of someone you love dearly. What are some ways you show your love to this person?

MEMORY VERSE (Memorize and say aloud in your group) 5 MINUTES

1 John 4:19, “We love because He first loved us.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS..... 35 MINUTES

SERVING AND BEING SERVED 5 MINUTES

Commit to show the love of Christ to the other members of your small group this week.

PRAYER AND PERSONAL SHARING 30 MINUTES

1. Encourage one another to be “fruit bearers” in your lives. Pray the Lord will grant each member of your small group with a desire to bear fruit for Christ in their spiritual lives.
 2. Continue to pray the Lord will use this series and the truths of His Word to help RCC to be better lovers of Him and others.
 3. Pray for the personal needs of one another in your small group.
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