

Lenten Small
Group Study Guide
North Indy

The Questions Jesus Asked

IF YOU LOVE ONLY THOSE WHO LOVE YOU, WHAT REWARD
IS THAT?



CONNECT

WEEK 2: MAR 5 - MAR 12

WELCOME (10 MIN)

- Spend the first few minutes visiting and catching up.
- Take attendance. Who's missing?

PRAY (10 MIN)

Prayer of Loving Kindness

This Spiritual discipline moves us from thoughts of self, to those we love, to those we don't love, to all of creation. Sit comfortably with your feet flat on the floor and hands relaxed in your laps. Close your eyes or focus on something.

I'll pause after each line. Allow images and feelings to arise as you listen to each phrase. Notice places that need healing, hope, comfort. Or where you feel joy, or feel a pinch or a challenge. Start by taking two deep breaths.

Dear God, Lord God, Holy God, Loving God:

May I be happy. May I be healthy.
May I be safe. May I live with ease.
(Breathe)

May those I love be happy. May those I love be healthy.
May those I love be safe. May those I love live with ease.
(Breathe)

May those I don't love be happy. May those I don't love be healthy.
May those I don't love be safe. May those I don't love live with ease.
(Breathe)

May all creation be happy. May all creation be healthy.
May all creation be safe. May all creation live with ease. Amen.

CULTIVATE

READ THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Matthew 5:46-47

Matthew 5:43-48

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

For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?

Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

GROUP VALUES: It's important that you agree on the values you want to have in your group, such as openness, authenticity, and confidentiality. Honoring these values together creates a safe and healthy group environment.

DISCUSS (30 MINUTES)

What is the reward of loving people who are hard to love? That's what we are thinking about today. Jesus said, "Love your enemies and pray for those that harass you."

- How does a person or group of persons become your enemy? Share examples.
- What is your first reaction to Jesus' teaching that you are to love people who are your enemies, people who are very hard for you to love? Why?

Pastor Rob said that loving our enemies means we choose not to retaliate but instead we choose to pray for our enemies.

- Share a time when you tried to "love an enemy." What did you do and what was the result of your effort?
- Have you ever prayed for someone who has hurt you? What did you say in your prayer? What happened to you as you prayed about your enemy?

Pastor Rob said: We don't have to like someone in order to love someone.

- Share an example of what you think it means to love someone but not like them.

Why love an enemy who doesn't deserve our love? One reason is that our world needs us to. Our world is so split with hatreds and divisions and stands desperately in need of courageous souls willing to help bridge the divides.

To quote Dr. King, "I have also decided to stick with love, for I know that love is ultimately the only answer to (our) problems. For I have seen too much hate... I say to myself that hate is too great a burden to bear. I have decided to love."

- Do you think loving the enemy is hard for our culture right now? Why?
- Share a situation where you learned that hate is too great of a burden to bear.
- In Pastor Mindie's testimony, she talked about the risk of reconciliation, the fear of letting go of anger, the vulnerability of forgiveness, compassion, and mercy. Because she worked hard with God, she experienced the miracle of feeling compassion toward the person that hurt her the most.
- What might be your reward if you choose to love and pray for those who have hurt you? Will you do it?

CHANGE THE WORLD

Vacation Bible School (Impact = Kids!)

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READY, SET, MOVE! Follow Jesus here, there, and everywhere! June 12-16, 2023.

Be a part of the difference-making by joining our VBS Team this year! When you join the team your family gets to attend VBS for free! If you aren't able to help every day, that's perfectly fine! We'll be in touch and can discuss what schedule works best for you.

CLOSE

PRAY (5 MIN)

- Ask for any prayer requests
- Prayer idea: Dear God, Thank you for this group of friends as we share Lent together. May we draw close to each other and close to you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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