

ICEBREAKER

- Describe someone you know who loves you. How do/did they show it to you?
- Where do you live? Who are your neighbors? What are they like? Which "neighbor" is the hardest to love right now? What could you do this week to change this relationship?

LEADERSHIP SUMMARY

1. This week's reading could also be titled, "Learn To Be Loved" or "Learn That You Are Loved." One of the best definitions of love that could serve as a conversation starter to this session comes from Dick Foth. He defines love as, "The accurate estimate and the adequate supply of another's need." Notice that this definition is less about emotion, romance or feelings. Rather, it focuses on knowing someone intimately and seeking to meet needs (versus wants). In John 3:16 the Bible says that, "God so loved the world..." If you replace the word "loved" with this definition, the power of it becomes clear. Those in your group may have spent a lifetime thinking of love in terms of the Hollywood definition so it may enhance their understanding of this Attribute.
2. On page 145 we are encouraged to write the following phrase on an index card: "I am deeply loved, completely forgiven, fully pleasing, totally accepted by God." Please note that this is connected to the "Four Common Lies" chart on pages 236-237. You may want to come to this session with a stack of index cards and do this exercise as a group. If you decide to do this, here are a few follow-up questions that will stimulate healthy dialogue:
 - a. Which of the four phrases is the toughest for you to write down at this point in your life? Why?
 - b. Which phrase is the easiest for you to believe about yourself? Why?
 - c. Which of these do you find the most challenging to pass along to the next generation? What can you do to intentionally communicate them to your children and grandchildren?
3. It may help for you to explore the difference between God's acceptance and His approval. He accepts us unconditionally, but there are times when He doesn't approve of our actions. This is a worthy discussion to ensure group members understand the loving discipline (vs. punishment) of God as our heavenly Father (see Hebrews 12:1-11).

QUESTIONS

- Read Matthew 22:37-39 **[See if they can quote it.]**

³⁷ Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

1. What words are repeated in those three verses?
2. What is significant about the word "all" to you?
3. Why is it important to start with God's love for us rather than our love for God?
4. What did you learn about yourself from taking the assessments on pages 228-235?
5. Which of the four lies do you struggle with the most (pg. 236)? How does that show up in your life?
6. How would your life be different this week if you truly believed the truth related to the lie with which you struggle? (see pg. 237)
7. How will knowing the truth about God's love for you impact your relationships?
8. What could you do to remind yourself about God's love for you to impact your relationships?
9. What could you do to remind yourself this week of God's love for you?

BREAK INTO GROUPS OF 2-3

1. What could you do to express your love to God this week?
2. What could you do to love the people around you this week?

MISSION

- Have someone share their 3 minute story.
- Plan how you as a group are going to reach out to people who don't yet know Jesus.
- Pray for people on your influence list who don't yet know Jesus.
- Pray for the missionary you have adopted and that country.

PRAYER

- How can we pray for each other? (emphasize decisions)

BEFORE NEXT GATHERING:

- Read *Learn To Pray* (pgs. 160-183)
- Memorize Matthew 6:9-13

RESOURCES

- Music to Inspire You to Follow Jesus (PDF)
- Trust God Assessment (pg. 228)
- Seeking God Assessment (pg. 230)
- Enjoying God's Acceptance Assessment (pg. 232)
- Partnering with God to Change You Assessment (pg. 234)