



February 25, 2018

Week 4 Leader Guide

THE WIN

Group members will identify some excuses we make to keep us from loving fully and explore what it means to love sacrificially.

3-5
minutes

SERMON RECAP: WHAT DID THE TEXT MEAN? WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

In the message this week we learned that our actions reveal our love for one another and one practical way is to meet the needs of others.

ASK THIS: What stuck out to you in this week's message?

3-5
minutes

WARM UP

ASK THIS: Who is the most loving person you have ever known personally? Why do they come to mind?

30-35
minutes

THE TEXT: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ME?

LEADER TIP: *One of the quickest ways to stunt spiritual growth of your group is to issue a challenge and not hold them accountable. Take the next couple minutes to ask your group how they have been doing with the challenges presented throughout this series. If they haven't participated in a challenge, encourage them to join in this week. Today's lesson will also be an encouragement and challenge as we share how our actions speak louder than words.*

SAY THIS: Last week we were challenged to be generous with those around us and be sensitive to our heart behind the gift.

ASK THIS: Share how you were generous last week to someone in your arena of influence? (Pause for Answers) How did someone's generous act towards you this week make you feel?

HAVE SOMEONE READ: 1 John 3:14-17 and Matthew 25:31-46

ASK THIS: Are you surprised that John says that our love is a barometer for our love for Jesus?

LEADER TIP: *These two scenarios we face weekly may rile up your group a little bit. While we do not advocate just throwing money at people, we are digging into the heart of our acts of service. We have been given much by God free of charge; so give free of charge (Matthew 10:8). Let your group wrestle with this and remind them, that we will not be held responsible for how people use what we give to them, but we will be accountable for how we care for those in need. (see Matthew 25:31-46)*

SAY THIS: One morning you are running late to work. You pull up to a stop light, and you notice a man and his dog holding a sign "Just looking for a little help." At that moment, you are faced with two choices 1) Pay no attention to the man because he may use it for something you don't approve of OR 2) Roll down your window and hand him some change and speak a little blessing.

You proceed to drive towards your destination when you see a woman on the side of the road with a flat tire and flashers on, two choices present themselves again, 1) continue to drive towards your destination or 2) Stop and help, making yourself sweaty and late to work.

There scenarios like this that we face on a regular basis, and we can have a list of excuses to explain the choices we would make, but in light of 1 John 3:14-17 and Matthew 25:31-46:

LEADER TIP: *While these are two scenarios we can face, there are many like it that we will encounter on a daily basis. We want to wrestle with the idea that when we see people in need we must decide how we will respond, just by words and thoughts or by actions? Try not to let it be just about these two scenarios.*

ASK THIS:

- In light of these two scriptures, how would you respond to someone who has closed off their heart to those in need?
- What do our excuses say about our heart and love for God?
- What barriers or obstacles stand in your way from us loving people fully?

READ THIS: 1 John 3:18

SAY THIS: For followers of Christ, love isn't really love unless love is in action. Do you find yourself saying words like "I'm sorry for all you're going through. I will pray for you."

ASK THIS:

- What are some ways that you can personally act beyond words and show the love that Christ has put in you?
- How could your group exhibit this love for the community and world to take notice?

HAVE SOMEONE READ: Philippians 2:5– 8

ASK THIS:

- In what ways was Jesus the ultimate example of this self-sacrificial love?
- What can we learn and apply to our lives about love from Jesus's example?

HAVE SOMEONE READ: Romans 12:9-19

ASK THIS: How do you think the world defines "love"?

SAY THIS: Romans 12:9-18 clearly defines what it means to love another deeply and sincerely, providing us a working model. This passage starts off by saying "love must be sincere." The rest of the passage describes a sincere love.

DO THIS: Using a sheet of paper, make three columns and make a list of the following from Romans 12:9-18

1) Things to do 2) Things not to do 3) Attitudes of the heart

ASK THIS:

- What keeps us from loving others this way?
- How can you love others selflessly (sincerely) and not selfishly this week?

3-5
minutes

DIGGING DEEPER

HAVE SOMEONE READ: Titus 3:1–11

ASK THIS: How does remembering that God rescued us foster sacrificial love?

3-5
minutes

CLOSING THOUGHT

Leader Tip: *Whenever you make a challenge, remember to hold yourselves accountable for it next week.*

Challenge this: John provides one very practical way to love one another: meet the material needs of other believers (1 John 3:17–18). This week, as a group, prayerfully consider identifying an individual or family whose material needs you can meet.

Pray: Ask God to show you opportunities this week to show acts of service to those in your arena of influence.