



LIFE GROUP SERMON NOTES

“We Are Family: We are a family of believers”

Ps. James Lowe - August 2, 2015

WARM-UP (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. *No right or wrong answers.*

- Who are you more like, your father or your mother? What traits do you resemble?
- What is one distinctive characteristic of your family?
- How did your parent(s) express their love and care for you?

WORD (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at <http://www.bethelworld.org>

1 John 5:1-5 ESV *“Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”*

Three lessons for today

- God's family: learning about his love
- God's family: learning his ways
- God's family: learning to live with others

1 John 3:1-3 ESV *See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.*

God is a perfect father, and promises to be a father to the fatherless. No one has grown up with a perfect father. We all need to learn what God is like. His love is broad and deep and wise. It includes mercy and kindness, but also discipline. He is gracious *and* just. He is authoritative and loving. He is not harsh, nor is he a pushover. He doesn't ignore sin, but has also provided for the forgiveness of sin and for the nullification of its power. We all need to be changed into his likeness. We will, if we will continue growing in our knowledge of God and his love.

1 John 3:4-10 ESV *Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. No one born of God makes a*

practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

As we grow in God's love, we must also learn to live according to God's ways. Because God wants each of us to become like him, he speaks clearly to us with authority about how he wants us to conduct ourselves. God cares not only about what we do and say, but also about our internal condition: our thoughts, motives, and attitudes. He has given us his Spirit to convict us, teach us, lead us, and empower us to walk in his ways. His Word, the Bible, reveals his commandments to us, so that we may clearly know his will in terms of general life and that we may do it.

1 John 3:11, 14-18 ESV *For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another... We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.*

As we grow in God's love and learn his ways from his commandments, we must also learn to live and walk with others who are part of God's family. God wants his people to be a family, not merely a host of servants. Some people are easier to get along with than others. We are drawn to some people more than others. Some are further along in their walk with Jesus than others. Some have more mature character than others. But God calls us to love all of our spiritual brothers and sisters.

Love is a verb. It involves action. It is not enough to have warm feelings toward a person. It is not even enough to speak kind and caring words to a person. God has demonstrated what love looks like. In Jesus God went the full distance and loved us with actions that were sacrificial. Love in action can be costly. God calls us to love one another with actions and in truth.

Let us grow in our revelation of God's love.

Let us learn to walk in God's ways.

And let us live with God's people in love.

PERSONAL APPLICATION (10-15 minutes)

Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related topic for discussion.

- How has the love of God revealed in the cross of Jesus impacted you? How could you grow to know and grasp his love more?
- Describe your relationship to the Bible. When do you read it? Do you study it? Do you use study guides? Do you journal what you learn? Is it clear to you? What could you do to learn its teaching better and with more insight?
- Are you growing in love and grace toward other people? Is there anyone you need to forgive? Is there anyone you need to seek to be reconciled with? How could you grow more in love and grace toward others?

PRAYER (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.

- Ask God for a greater revelation of God's love toward you personally.
- Ask God for a greater knowledge and understanding of his ways through his commands.
- Ask God for a greater love for his people that expresses itself in actions.