

# GROWTH GROUPS

August 26, 2012

**Proverbs 3:3-8; Philippians 1:3-11; I Corinthians 13; Ephesians 3:14-19**

## **Conversation Starter:**

Have you ever wondered about the effort that it takes to love people? Sometimes it seems harder to love family than it does strangers or friends. Does it ever seem that love is a pain?

**Understanding:** In Philippians 1:2-11, Paul speaks to us of the place that believers in the church have come to have in his heart. He loves them and he wants them to love God and grow in their understanding of the love of God. He uses a phrase, "let love abound" that we do not usually use these days but at its core is in each situation in lie choose love and let it reign. A more modern phrase that captures this essence is found in the question "How do we grow in our capacity to love?" When you combine this passage with the Ephesians 3:14-19 passage you see that Paul clearly believes that most believers do not fully understand the love of God. They do not grasp what God's love does. In the Ephesians passage he speaks of God's love filling us to overflowing so that it spills into the lives of those around us. Our love and understanding of love is frequently flawed and needs redeemed and transformed. God's true love teaches us and serves as a measuring stick about what a love that pleases God looks like. In the book of Acts the early disciples were told that when the Holy Spirit came into their lives, He would make them witnesses to Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the world. If we find it hard now to love people right next to us and find it hard to move out of our comfort zones...what happens when God throws a Samaria into the mix of where he wants us to go and who He wants us to act in love. The Jews hated the Samaritans. They would travel for miles out of their way to avoid going through Samaria to get to Northern Israel. But God wanted to grow their capacity for love and it would begin in Jerusalem, move to Judea; it would include Samaria before it would go out to the rest of the world.

## **Questions**

1. Do you have any difficult people or situations in your life at this time? Why is it so hard to love people or to act in loving ways in situations? How does God increase our capacity to love? If we could go back into a situation and examine how we could "let love abound" towards a person, a group, or a situation; what might we do or see differently?
2. What does love require in a given situation? We cannot always let the other person define what a loving action would be towards them because addictions and sin can make a person blind as to what a truly loving course of action would be.
3. Is there an area of your life that God is calling you to stretch your capacity to love? What would that love look like?

First Presbyterian Church of Maumee  
<http://fpcmaumee.org> Email [staff@fpcmaumee.org](mailto:staff@fpcmaumee.org)  
200 East Broadway, Maumee, Ohio 43537  
Phone 419-893-0223 Fax 419-893-0327