



Sermon Discussion Guide

Called To Be Loved

Live Your Calling: What On Earth Am I Here For? – Part 2

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“Long ago, even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. And this gave him great pleasure.” Ephesians 1:4-5 (NLT)

The first purpose of our lives is to let God love us. In fact, our first calling is to enjoy a relationship with God. This is important in answering the question, “What on earth am I here for?” Staying aware of God’s constant love for us produces five significant changes in our lives: (1) we feel accepted rather than ashamed, (2) we’re bold in bringing our needs to God, (3) we have peace in pain we don’t understand, (4) we gain the courage to take risks, and (5) we worship instead of worry!

OPEN YOUR GROUP WITH A PRAYER. THIS IS ONLY A GUIDE – SELECT THE POINTS YOU WANT TO DISCUSS.

1. Read Ephesians 1:4-5 above. How does this verse indicate we are called to be loved?

“I pray that Christ will be more and more at home in your hearts as you trust in him. May your roots go down deep in the soil of God’s marvelous love. And may you have the power to understand, as all God’s people should, how WIDE, how LONG, how HIGH, and how DEEP his love really is. May you EXPERIENCE the love of Christ though it is so great you will never fully understand it.” Ephesians 3:17-19 (NLT)

2. Ephesians 1:4-5 above indicates that God loved us before he even made the world having planned to adopt us into his own family. God’s love for us is constant on both our good and bad days. Read Ephesians 3:17-19 above and discuss how we might experience the love of Christ through a relationship with God as His own son or daughter.
3. Meditate on Ephesians 3:17-19 above, specifically on how God’s love for us is so wide, long, deep, and high. God’s love is high enough for Him to overlook every mistake we’d ever make. As we grow in understanding of how much God loves us, how does that help us to grow in love for God?

*“If God says his chosen ones are acceptable to him, can anyone bring charges against them?
Or can anyone condemn them? No indeed!” Romans 8:33-34 (CEV)*

4. Read Romans 8:33-34 above. Many people live for the approval of others, even those who have already passed on. Whose approval are you seeking? Sadly, people run from God because they feel ashamed instead of accepted. Imagine fully accepting God’s unconditional God’s love as His chosen child. What needs would you boldly bring to Him? What charges do some people commonly bring against others that this verse says they cannot?

“There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment.” 1 John 4:18 (NIV)

5. Often people lack peace when they struggle with pains or problems they don’t understand. However, God wants us to trust Him. How can 1 John 4:18 give us courage to take risks, especially in areas of our lives where dreams may not yet be realized? Be specific in sharing what types of action you would take in order to take a risk where God is calling you.

“Give yourself completely to God, since you have been given new life.” Romans 6:13b (NLT)

6. Worry indicates that we are not fully living the new life given to us and is often a warning sign that we are not living in God’s love. Worship is simply telling God we love Him, whether at church, with others, or alone. Worship is always a response because God first loved us. How can you remind yourself to worship the next time you begin to worry?

Diving Deeper (optional)

1. If our first purpose in life is to be loved by God, we must overcome obstacles that prevent us from fully receiving His love. How would your life change if you felt God loved you ever moment of your life regardless of any mistakes you’ve made in the past or may make in the future? How has God freed you from mistakes you’ve made in the past, and how might he free you from mistakes you’re still holding onto today?
2. See Romans 6:13 above. In light of the fact that we’ve been given new life, how might we give ourselves more completely to God? In what ways have you not given yourself completely to God?

REVIEW ANY ASSIGNMENTS OR COMMITMENTS MADE DURING YOUR PREVIOUS MEETING.

Sermon Discussion Guide Leader Notes

Suggestions for This Week's Study

- **Icebreaker:** When have you been surprised to be treated as “one of the family” – perhaps when a coach or teacher took you under their wing at school, or a colleague mentored you and helped you to advance at work?
- **Goals:** To help group members understand that their first purpose in life is to realize that they're called to be loved by God and to enjoy a relationship as a son or daughter of God. Also to become aware of what changes happen if we stay aware of God's constant love for us.
- **Prayer:** Father, I take this moment to fully receive the unconditional love you've always had for me. Forgive me for all that I have done that does not reflect your love. Thank you for your grace, mercy, and forgiveness, which I also fully receive right now. Help me to remember to receive your love each moment of the day, that I may fully worship you and love others, as you have loved me.

Preparing to Lead Your Group

- ✓ **PRAY** for insight as you begin to prepare for leading your group. Ask for God's wisdom, that the Holy Spirit will be the teacher and that you will be God's instrument to lead the group to greater understanding and a willingness to commit to becoming more like God. Prayer should be your primary source of personal preparation for leading your group.
- ✓ **PLAN** where you want to take your group in the next 60-90 days. Is your group strong in some areas and weak in others? How can you challenge the members to live more balanced Christian lives? Consider God's five purposes for the church: Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry, Mission and Worship, and make a plan to encourage your group members to growth and commitment in their weak areas.
- ✓ **PONDER YOUR PROGRESS** after each session and at the end of a series. Reflect on what went well and what didn't. Re-evaluation is key to your growth as a leader. Consider whether your plan is being effective in moving the group to greater understanding and commitment. How are you doing with leading the discussion: is it stimulating, challenging, and meaningful? Are you able to keep the group on track? Do you need to make some changes?

Using This Sermon Discussion Guide

- Talk It Over is a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. We've designed it so it can be completed easily within 30-45 minutes. As the discussion leader, you should preview and evaluate the questions based on the needs of your group. Decide in advance what is most important to focus on, should time not allow for the entire lesson.
- Feel free to adapt the format to meet the needs of your group. If your group is mature and wants to dig deeper, consider using the Diving Deeper section or add additional Scripture and ask suitable questions. Remember that this is only a guide.
- The questions relating to Bible study methods are helpful to develop Bible literacy and spiritual maturity in our lives. You can help your group be aware of their needs in these areas by using these questions as a regular part of each discussion.
- Personal applications are essential for growth and should be included in every discussion. When discussing how they will apply principles, group members may state very general goals such as “I need to spend more time in prayer.” It is important for you to help people make goals that are very specific and commit to specific plans of action by asking, “How are you going to begin?” An example is to get up 25 minutes earlier each morning, spending 15 minutes reading the Bible and 10 minutes in prayer. Encourage each group member to be accountable to the group for personal progress at the next meeting.
- Your goal as the leader is to bring the group into a stimulating discussion that helps the members recognize their needs for personal life change. Ultimately you want them to be willing to commit to change with accountability to the group. Accountability helps us to persevere in our commitments and achieve the blessings of success.