

For the week of November 26-December 2, 2017

Based on Pastor Tucker's message from November 26

## The Love of God

**Best Way to Prepare for Your Group?** Listen to the teaching and read the appropriate scripture. Please give emphasis to the latter. These notes are prepared on Fridays. Sometimes, the sermon gets modified right before service. So, allow for flexibility. Remember, your time together isn't meant to be a re-teaching of the most recent lesson. Instead, the discussion points and questions are designed to encourage group members to share insight and application of what they've learned from God's Word—and thereby grow closer to the Lord and each other.

### [Format for the Evening]

#### WELCOME:

Get to know each other. Re-introduce yourselves if need be and welcome any newcomers. Invite those new to the group to share a little about their lives and Christian experience. Spend some time talking about real-life issues that may have come up during prayer or fellowship time the previous week. These Community Groups are more than Bible studies. They are designed to help believers form deep and lasting relationships.

**KEY PASSAGE:** *"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*—Romans 8:38-39

#### THINK ABOUT THE TEACHING: God's Love is True and Constant

God loves you now, He has always loved you, and He won't stop loving you. Romans 5:10 says that while we were God's enemies—while we were still living contrary to everything He is—He reconciled us to Himself by sending Jesus. If He loved us as enemies, how much more will He love us now that we have put faith in Christ?

We so frequently doubt God's love for us. But that doubt is based on examples we have on this Earth of what love is. These examples are flawed and imperfect. Apart from love given by God, there is no perfect love. No man or woman can love you in a way that is true and complete unless they have first experienced God's love. This love God has for us is not circumstantial, nor is it measured by feelings. The situations of your life, whether good or bad, are not a measuring stick to determine how much God loves you. That concept can be so difficult for us to understand. We think of all the things we have done or thought, or even things we have not done that make us unworthy. But Romans 8:33-34 brings up a great point. Who is it that is able to bring a charge against you? You belong to God. If someone accuses you before God, He is the one they bring the charge to. And He already loves you. Because Jesus is the Judge, and has already accepted us to the point of paying the price for our sins, we should be confident in His love for us. This confidence frees us from fearing our inadequacies. Paul says, "I am persuaded." He is convinced. He has thought through this list of things that could separate us from God's love, and has come to the conclusion that none of them has that power.

#### TALK ABOUT THE TEACHING:

1. Whose opinion most affects your self-concept or self-worth? To whom do you give the power to make you feel loved, wanted, accepted, worthy, or the opposite of those things? How is that contrary to this week's passage? Who is truly able to condemn you?

2. What do you know about Jesus that should persuade you that God loves you?
3. What convinces you that God loves you, in spite of your friends, circumstances, and emotions?
4. Have you ever felt that some of the difficult circumstances of life have meant you are less loved, or made you less loveable?
5. Based on the context of Romans 8, what could you possibly do to make God stop loving you?

### **THINK ABOUT THE TEACHING: Experiencing God's Love Enables us to Love Others**

When Romans 8:38 becomes alive to you, and you understand how deeply and completely you are loved, based on God's gift of Jesus, your whole life is changed. You now have peace and joy in your soul. You are free to be who He created you to be, conformed to the image of Christ. You now have a radical love, different than what you've ever known. This kind of love doesn't end with your relationship with God, it is also to be displayed for people. We can now start living out the love God has given us to the world around us. Because of this love God has given us, it is our reasonable service to share this love with the others, as described in Romans 12:9-21.

We have to be so secure in the love of God that we are free to love people. Some of it will be difficult. The standard is self-sacrifice, caring for those who don't care for you, those who won't thank you, even giving your life for someone else. Once we understand the standard of God's love for us, we are free from the trap of religion and good works. Now we are being conformed to the image of Jesus by living out His love.

### **TALK ABOUT THE TEACHING:**

1. In view of how much God loves us, in what ways do we sometimes limit the way we love people?
2. Are there limits to how God asks us to love? How does that answer change the way you should approach the people in your life?

### **TAKE TIME TO PRAY:**

Please pray that God would show believers how to live like Jesus, empowered by the leading of the Holy Spirit so that their divinely inspired and life-changing love reveals God to the world around them. Pray that the lives of the family members at Calvary Boise glorify God and draw others into His Kingdom. Pray that we will be actively engaged in pursuing revival.

### **TRANSITION TO REAL LIFE:**

Before you head home take some time to talk about the week ahead, make note of any needs and prayer requests, and enjoy each other's company. That's what family does.

**Note:** Pastor Tucker welcomes your feedback. Please email him at [tucker@ccboise.org](mailto:tucker@ccboise.org) with your insight.

## **WEEKLY PRAYER REQUESTS**

*“And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.” –Philippians 1: 9-11*

It is good to pray for one's friends. Indeed, the friendship that does not include prayer is lacking in one of its most sacred elements. We have also a good index of the character of the friendship in the things that one asks for one's friends. To seek for them only earthly blessings is to miss friendship's highest privilege, which is to call down heaven's benediction upon them.

It is interesting to study Paul's prayers for his friends. His prayer for the Philippians may be taken as an example. He does not ask that they may have more of this world's good things or that they may prosper in business, but he asks for them those things that will enrich their spiritual life and character. –J. R. Miller

**About the Author:** James Russell Miller was the pastor of several churches in Pennsylvania and Illinois, a member of the Presbyterian Church and a popular Christian author who lived from 1840–1912.

### **Our Community Life Group:**

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### **Our International Missions: Brent & Hope Harrell in Rome, Italy**

- Pray for their ladies' tea scheduled for the second Saturday of December. Pray for them as they plan and prepare, and for Jen as she has agreed to share from the word with the ladies. Pray for Jen to hear from the Lord and be encouraged as she prepares a message.
- Pray for Brent as he prepares messages to encourage and equip the African pastors that he will be visiting while in Kenya at the end of the month.

### **Prayer Requests for our Family Ministry**

- Pray for our Family and Junior. High Pastor Reggie Etheridge and his family. Pray that God will give him wisdom as he meets with and counsels couples about to get married, or who are already married and struggling. Pray for the marriages and families in our church, that God will protect them and make them grow in love and unity.