

# Meaningless Without Love

*Companion Study Guide*

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JQ Botes

*Free companion to the book*

*For small groups, family groups,  
and Bible study meetings*

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## A Note to the Group Leader

This book began with a simple conviction: that love is not one theme among many in the Christian life. It is the theme beneath all the others. The foundation everything else is built on.

Meaningless Without Love walks through 1 Corinthians 13 one quality at a time, asking what each one looks like in practice, where it is hardest, and how God's own love for us becomes both the model and the motivation for the love we are called to give. It is a book about patience, kindness, forgiveness, fear, choice, and what happens when love is absent. It is also a book about God, because every quality of love Paul describes is a quality of God Himself.

This guide is designed to help your group move from reading to conversation, and from conversation to real change. Each session maps to one or two chapters in the book. The structure is simple: read the chapters during the week, then gather to talk honestly about what you found there. The guide gives you an opening question, a key passage, a set of discussion questions, a group activity, and a closing prayer direction. That is all you need.

This guide works best when the group is honest. Some of the questions are uncomfortable. That is by design. Love is not comfortable. The book does not shy away from hard truths, and neither should your group. But honesty requires safety. Set that tone from the first session: what is shared here stays here.

You do not need to cover every question. Pick the ones your group needs. Skip the ones that do not land. The goal is conversation, not completion.

## How to Lead a Session

Timing: 60 to 90 minutes per session.

### Structure:

- Opening question (5 minutes)
- Key Scripture read aloud (5 minutes)
- Discussion (30 to 45 minutes)
- Group activity (10 minutes)
- Closing prayer (5 minutes)

### Leader tips:

- Ask the question and then be quiet. The silence after a hard question is where the real work happens.
- If someone shares something painful, do not rush to fix it. Sit with them.

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- Not everyone will talk in every session. That is fine. The quiet people are often processing the deepest.
  - Pray before each session, even briefly. Ask God to make the conversation honest and the group safe.

## Session I

### *Why Love Matters*

This week's reading: Why Love?

### Opening question

When was the last time someone loved you in a way you did not expect and did not earn? What did that feel like?

### Key Scripture

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

John 13:34-35 (NIV)

Also read: 1 Corinthians 13:1-3

### Summary

The opening chapter asks why love matters at all and confronts the reality that the world's version of love, built on feeling and dependent on what it receives, keeps failing. The chapter traces the evidence: divorce rates, fractured friendships, communities marked by loneliness rather than belonging. He argues that this is the predictable outcome of a world that has tried to have love without its source. The chapter then turns to what Scripture says: God loved us first, before we deserved it. Love is not a spiritual bonus feature. It is woven into the fabric of what we are. Jesus said the world would recognise his followers not by their theology or moral record, but by their love.

### Discussion questions

1. The chapter says "the world's version of love is built on feeling" and that when the feeling fades, that love "has no foundation left to stand on." What does he mean by this, and where have you seen it play out?
2. The chapter references Tertullian's observation about early Christians, "Look how they love one another." What was it about their love that stood out in a Roman world marked by competition and

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cruelty?

3. Why does the chapter argue that love is not one obligation among many but "the obligation that contains and fulfills all the others"? How does that change the way you think about the Christian life?
4. The chapter says "where love is absent, God's presence is absent." What does that claim mean for a local church or a small group like this one?
5. Where in your own life has your love been most dependent on what it receives? What happens to that love when the return stops?
6. If someone who does not know you watched your life for a week, would they be able to tell you were a follower of Jesus based on how you treat people? What would they see?
7. The chapter says the two greatest commandments are not a reduction of Christianity but an expansion of it. What is the difference, and why does that matter?

## Personal reflection

- Consider honestly: how much of the love you give is rooted in what you receive in return? Where is God inviting you to love differently?
- Think about one relationship where the feeling of love has faded. What would it look like to choose love there this week, not as a feeling but as a decision?
- Spend some time with 1 Corinthians 13:1-3. Ask God to show you where your faith has become busy but loveless.

## Group activity

Go around the group. Each person names one community or relationship they belong to, a family, a workplace, a church, a neighbourhood. Then ask: would an outsider describe that group as marked by love? No one has to answer out loud. Just sit with the question in silence for 60 seconds. Then the leader prays for those communities by name.

## Closing prayer direction

Pray that God would give your group an honest starting point. Ask Him to show each person where their understanding of love has been shaped more by the world than by Scripture, and to begin rebuilding that foundation over the coming weeks.

## Before next week

Read *What Is Love?* and *Love Is Patient* before the next session. As you read, pay attention to the invitation to replace the word "love" with "God" in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.



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## Session 2

### *What Love Actually Is*

This week's reading: What Is Love? and Love Is Patient

### Opening question

Think of the most patient person you have ever known. What made their patience feel different from ordinary waiting?

### Key Scripture

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails."

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 (NIV)

### Summary

These two chapters lay the foundation for the rest of the book. The chapter argues that love is not primarily a feeling but a choice, "a decision made and remade, quietly and often without recognition, day after day." He invites the reader to replace the word "love" with "God" in 1 Corinthians 13 and to sit with what that reveals about how God has already been treating us. Then he moves into patience, the first quality Paul lists, calling it "love's quiet strength" and "the soil where every other fruit of love grows." God spent 120 years waiting before the flood and 40 years teaching Israel to trust Him. His patience is not passive waiting. It is enduring pain, rejection, and rebellion while continuing to love.

### Discussion questions

1. The chapter says love "is a decision made and remade, quietly and often without recognition, day after day." What distinction is he drawing between this kind of love and the version the world has built its relationships on?
2. When you read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 with "God" in place of "love," which quality surprises you most about God's character? Which one is hardest to believe He extends to you?
3. Why does the chapter say that patience is not passive waiting but "long-suffering"? What is the difference, and why does it matter for how we love people?

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4. The chapter argues that God gave humanity 120 years before the flood. What does that reveal about the nature of God's patience, and what does it cost Him to wait that long?

5. Where in your life right now is God asking you to be patient with someone, and what makes that patience difficult?

6. The chapter describes patience as "power restrained by love." Think of a time when you chose restraint instead of reaction. What did it cost you, and what did it produce?

7. What relationship in your life most needs the kind of patience this chapter describes, not the patience of gritting your teeth, but the patience of genuinely believing God is at work in that person?

### Personal reflection

- Consider reading 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 slowly each morning this week, replacing "love" with "God." Notice what it does to your understanding of how He sees you.
- Ask God honestly: has He been waiting for you in some area of your life? What is He waiting for?
- Think about one person you have grown impatient with. What might God be doing in their life that you cannot yet see?

### Group activity

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 aloud together, replacing "love" with "God" every time it appears. Read it slowly. When the reading is finished, sit in silence for 60 seconds. Let it land.

### Closing prayer direction

Pray for the patience to stay when staying is costly. Ask God to show each person the relationship where their patience matters most this week, and ask for the grace to give it without keeping score.

### Before next week

Read Love Is Kind and Love Does Not Envy before the next session. As you read, notice where The chapter says kindness is not always pleasant, and where envy is hiding in places you did not expect.



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## Session 3

### *The Quiet Sins*

This week's reading: Love Is Kind and Love Does Not Envy

#### Opening question

When was the last time someone corrected you and you were genuinely grateful for it, even though it was uncomfortable at the time?

#### Key Scripture

"A heart at peace gives life to the body but envy rots the bones."

Proverbs 14:30 (NIV)

Also read: Romans 2:4

#### Summary

These chapters move from the active side of love (kindness reaching out) to the hidden side of its absence (envy rotting from within). The chapter defines kindness as "God's active goodness toward those who deserve nothing" and challenges the assumption that kindness is always pleasant. Sometimes it looks like correction, even rebuke, because real love would rather speak the truth than protect its own comfort. Then the chapter on envy goes deeper into one of the most socially hidden sins in the church. The chapter names it precisely: "the quiet sting when a colleague gets the promotion you wanted, the subtle dissatisfaction that follows scrolling through someone else's life online." At its root, envy is a security problem. It is what happens when our sense of worth is placed in something other than God.

#### Discussion questions

1. The chapter says "refusing to correct someone is an act of selfishness, a love for yourself that fails your brother or sister." What makes that claim so uncomfortable, and where do you see it at work in your own relationships?
2. What distinction does the chapter draw between jealousy and envy? Why does the chapter say that envy is not primarily about desire but about wound?
3. Why does the chapter argue that the antidote to envy is not willpower but "going deeper into the qualities that preceded it"? What does he mean by that?

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4. The chapter says "envy is one of the most socially hidden sins in the church." Why is it hidden, and what makes it so difficult to talk about honestly?

5. Where does envy show up most quietly in your own life? Is there a specific person or area where someone else's blessing produces discontentment in you rather than joy?

6. The passage says "people-pleasing is a lack of love, fear disguised as false humility." How does that reframe something most people consider a virtue?

7. What would a life genuinely free from envy actually look like in your daily routine, your social media habits, your conversations?

### Personal reflection

- Consider writing down one area where envy has taken root in your life. Bring it to God honestly and ask Him to show you what your security is actually resting on.
- Think about someone whose success is hard for you to celebrate. What would it take for their good news to genuinely become good news for you?
- Ask God to show you one person who needs honest, loving correction from you this week, and ask for the courage to offer it.

### Group activity

Each person writes down, privately, one area of life where they are most tempted to compare themselves to others. It could be career, family, ministry, finances, appearance, anything. No one shares what they wrote. Fold the paper. The leader reads Romans 12:15 aloud: "Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn." The group sits in silence for 30 seconds, then prays together for freedom from comparison.

### Closing prayer direction

Pray for the security that only comes from being rooted in God's love. Ask Him to replace the habit of comparison with genuine celebration when others are blessed, and to give each person the courage to be kind even when kindness is uncomfortable.

### Before next week

Read Love Does Not Boast and Love Is Not Proud, Love Does Not Dishonor Others, Love Is Not Self-Seeking before the next session. As you read, notice the question The chapter asks: "When was the last time you did something good and told no one about it?"



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## Session 4

### *The Loud Sins*

This week's reading: Love Does Not Boast and Love Is Not Proud, Love Does Not Dishonor Others, Love Is Not Self-Seeking

### Opening question

What would it feel like to walk into a room and truly not care who noticed you, not from defeat, but from genuine freedom?

### Key Scripture

"For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you."

Romans 12:3 (NIV)

Also read: Ephesians 2:8-10

### Summary

These chapters tackle the sins that make noise: boasting, pride, dishonor, and self-seeking. The chapter argues that all four grow from the same root, a heart that has not yet found its security in God. Boasting is "pride added to accomplishment," using what you have or have done to elevate yourself. The chapter warns that when we boast, we "trade the deep, lasting reward of obeying God in secret for the brief, shallow satisfaction of human approval." The chapter on pride contains one of the book's strongest lines: "The antidote to pride is not low self-esteem. It is not thinking less of yourself, it is thinking of yourself less." Dishonor and self-seeking are then traced to the same insecurity. Pride, dishonor, and self-seeking "all share the same address: a heart that does not yet fully believe it is loved."

### Discussion questions

1. The chapter uses the Greek word *perpereuomai* for boasting, describing it as "a performance, a deliberate act of self-display that requires an audience to function." Where do you see that kind of performance in the church today?
2. Jesus says in Matthew 6 that those who do good publicly "have received their reward in full." What exactly has been lost, and why is the reward of secrecy greater?

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3. The chapter says "the antidote to pride is not low self-esteem. It is not thinking less of yourself, it is thinking of yourself less." What is the practical difference between humility and low self-esteem?
  4. Why does the chapter group pride, dishonor, and self-seeking together rather than treating them as separate problems? What is the shared root he identifies?
  5. When you boast, whether publicly or in subtle conversation, what are you usually looking for from the people listening?
  6. The chapter says "when you boast, you give them a person to admire rather than a God to encounter. When you give God the credit, you become a window rather than a wall." Who in your life has been a window for you, and what made them different?
  7. Where in your life do you most feel the pressure to be seen, validated, or impressive? What would it take to let that go?

### Personal reflection

- Think of something you are genuinely proud of. Trace it honestly: how much of it has God's fingerprints on it? Consider telling that story this week in a way that points to Him rather than to you.
- Ask God to show you one area where your sense of worth is tied to performance, status, or the approval of others rather than to Him.
- Consider doing one act of kindness or generosity this week that no one will know about. Pay attention to what that feels like.

### Group activity

The leader reads Psalm 115:1 aloud: "Not to us, LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness." Each person silently identifies one achievement, gift, or ability they have been tempted to take credit for. Then, without naming the specifics, each person says aloud one sentence: "That was You, God." The group closes with a brief prayer of gratitude.

### Closing prayer direction

Pray for the freedom that comes from no longer needing human applause. Ask God to settle each person's identity so deeply in His love that they walk through the week without needing the room to notice them.

### Before next week

Read Love Is Not Easily Angered and Love Keeps No Record of Wrongs before the next session. As you read, pay attention to the question: do you have a list?



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## Session 5

### *The Hard Ones*

This week's reading: Love Is Not Easily Angered and Love Keeps No Record of Wrongs

### Opening question

Think of someone who wronged you and never apologised. Without naming them, how often does that memory still surface?

### Key Scripture

"He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us."

Psalm 103:10-12 (NIV)

Also read: Ephesians 4:26-27

### Summary

These two chapters address what may be the hardest aspects of love: controlling anger and releasing the record. The chapter traces easily angered hearts back to unresolved wounds and pride. The Greek word *paroxynomai* carries the image of a blade being sharpened through repeated contact, meaning a hair-trigger temper is built over time through unhealed hurt. The record-keeping chapter opens with a devastating question: "Do you have a list?" The chapter reveals that the Greek word *logizomai* is an accounting term, describing the careful recording of debts. Then he makes the turn: "God does not just forgive, He forgets. He is not incapable of remembering. He chooses not to hold them against you. That is an act of will, rooted entirely in love." The standard we are called to apply to others is the same forgiveness we have received.

### Discussion questions

1. The chapter describes anger as "almost always a secondary emotion," meaning something else comes first, like fear, hurt, shame, or a sense of injustice. When you feel anger rising, what is usually underneath it?
2. What distinction does the chapter draw between righteous anger and the anger Paul warns against? What is the test for telling the difference?

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3. The chapter says "God does not just forgive, He forgets. He is not incapable of remembering. He chooses not to hold them against you." What does it mean that God's forgiveness is an act of will rather than a failure of memory?
  4. Why does the chapter call the record of wrongs "a prison, and you are the one locked inside"? How does keeping the list actually harm the one who keeps it?
  5. Have you kept a record of wrongs against someone you say you have forgiven? What are you hoping that record will eventually give you?
  6. The passage says forgiveness does not require the other person to apologise, acknowledge the wrong, or even be present in your life. What makes that so difficult, and why does he argue it is necessary?
  7. What would it look like to actively close the record on someone this week, not as a feeling, but as a choice?

## Personal reflection

- Consider writing down the list you are carrying, the names, the offenses, all of it. Bring it to God in prayer. Ask Him for the grace to release what you have been holding.
- Ask God honestly: have you received His forgiveness more fully than you have extended it to others?
- When a painful memory surfaces this week, practice not feeding it. Do not replay it or rehearse your case. Acknowledge the pain, bring it to God, and make the choice again.

## Group activity

Each person is given a small piece of paper. They write down one name, just a first name or an initial, of someone they have been keeping a record against. Fold the paper. No one shares aloud. The leader reads Colossians 3:13: "Forgive as the Lord forgave you." The group prays silently for 60 seconds, each person asking God for the grace to release that debt. Then each person tears the paper in half and places it in a bowl at the center of the table. No one looks at what anyone else wrote.

## Closing prayer direction

Pray for the courage to forgive the person whose name was written on the paper. Ask God to heal the wounds that make forgiveness feel impossible, and to give each person the experience of freedom that comes from letting go of a debt they were never meant to carry.

## Before next week

Read Love Does Not Fear and Love Rejoices, Protects, and Perseveres before the next session. As you read, notice what The chapter says about "loving from behind a wall."



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# Session 6

## *What Love Survives*

This week's reading: Love Does Not Fear and Love Rejoices, Protects, and Perseveres

### Opening question

Think of a time someone stayed with you through something hard, not because they had to, but because they chose to. What did their presence do for you?

### Key Scripture

"There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love."

1 John 4:18 (NIV)

Also read: 1 Corinthians 13:6-8

### Summary

These chapters move from what love refuses (fear) to what love always does (rejoice, protect, trust, hope, persevere). The chapter names fear as fundamentally self-focused and argues that fear and love cannot occupy the same space. "Fear closes. Love opens." He traces most of our fears back to insecurity and a love that has not yet fully taken root. Then the chapter on perseverance paints a picture of love at its most complete. The Greek word *stego* means to cover, to shelter, to bear up under. Love takes the weight so that the people underneath are kept safe. And *hypomeno* means to remain under, to stand one's ground, to stay when every reason says leave. The chapter closes with one of the book's most powerful lines: "Love never fails. Keep going."

### Discussion questions

1. The chapter says "fear is ultimately a trust problem. It is what grows in the gap between what we know about God's love in our heads and what we have actually received into our hearts." Where is that gap widest in your own life right now?
2. What is the difference between the two kinds of fear The chapter describes, the fear of a prisoner before a judge and the wonder of a child before a Father? Which one shapes your relationship with God most?
3. The chapter describes what it looks like to "love from behind a wall," giving freely up to a point but never fully surrendering. Where do you recognise that pattern in yourself?

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4. Paul says love "always" protects, trusts, hopes, and perseveres. What does that word "always" actually require of a person?

5. The chapter says "God is watching the condition of your heart when the person who hurt you stumbles." When someone who has wronged you faces difficulty, what is your honest first response?

6. Think of someone who loved you before you were capable of receiving it fully, a parent, a friend, a mentor. What was that love doing beneath the surface that you could not see at the time?

7. Where in your life right now is love asking you to stay when everything in you wants to leave? What would it take to remain?

### Personal reflection

- Identify one relationship where you are currently loving from behind a wall. Ask God to show you what the wall is protecting and whether the cost of keeping it up is greater than the cost of lowering it.
- Consider the line: "Your job is not to produce the outcome. Your job is to stay." Where does that apply in your life this week?
- Spend time with Romans 8:38-39. Let the truth that nothing can separate you from God's love settle into the places where fear has been loudest.

### Group activity

The leader reads 1 Corinthians 13:7 aloud: "It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres." Go around the group. Each person names one person they are tempted to give up on, first name only. No stories, no context. Just the name. Then the group prays briefly for each person named, asking God to sustain the love that wants to quit.

### Closing prayer direction

Pray for the kind of love that does not quit. Ask God to replace fear with trust, weariness with hope, and the desire to withdraw with the strength to stay. Pray especially for the people whose names were spoken aloud.

### Before next week

Read Love Is A Choice, What Is The Absence of Love?, and How Do You Know If You Truly Love Others? before the next session. As you read, sit with the question: "Have you ever congratulated yourself for not doing something terrible?"



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# Session 7

## *The Hard Questions*

This week's reading: Love Is A Choice, What Is The Absence of Love?, and How Do You Know If You Truly Love Others?

### Opening question

When was the last time you did something good for someone and genuinely did not need them to know about it? What did that feel like compared to doing something good that was noticed?

### Key Scripture

"Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth."

<sup>1</sup> John 3:18 (NIV)

Also read: Matthew 22:37-40

### Summary

These three chapters form the theological backbone of the book. The chapter argues that love is always a verb and never merely a feeling. He points to Jacob, who worked fourteen years for Rachel, as a picture of love that has "looked at the cost and said: you are worth it." Then the chapter on the absence of love makes one of the book's most confronting claims: sin is not primarily a list of prohibited behaviours. It is the absence of godly love, "a departure from love." The chapter challenges the habit of comparative goodness, writing that "less bad is not good" and that "God does not grade on a curve." Finally, the chapter on truly loving others introduces the fruit test from Galatians 5 and the principle that "you can only give what you have first received." The depth of your love for others is directly connected to the depth of your experience of God's love for you.

### Discussion questions

1. The chapter says "you cannot feel your way into patience with someone who has exhausted you." What is he arguing about the relationship between feeling and choice in the Christian life?
2. The chapter describes sin not as rule-breaking but as "a departure from love." How does that reframe the way you think about your own sin?
3. The chapter presents two examples: skipping time with God because you do not feel like it, and staying silent when a brother or sister is heading toward destruction. Why does the chapter call both of these sin?

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4. The chapter says "less bad is not good" and that "performing better than the person next to you does not make you good, it makes you comparatively less bad." Where have you been measuring your spiritual health by comparison to others?

5. How does the principle "you can only give what you have first received" change the way you approach your capacity to love? Where are you running on empty?

6. The passage says "you cannot truly love others if you do not love yourself" and that "the love you give to others has to pass through you first." What does healthy self-love look like, and how is it different from the world's version?

7. If you applied the test "is this love?" to every decision you made today, what would change?

## Personal reflection

- Pay attention to your words this week. Not to perform, but to listen. Ask yourself: what do they reveal about what my heart is currently full of?
- Consider one area of your life where you have been avoiding sin rather than pursuing love. What would it look like to shift the orientation from avoidance to active love?
- Ask God to show you where you are running on empty and where you need to return to the source before you have anything left to give.

## Group activity

The leader reads Galatians 5:22-23 slowly: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." Each person silently identifies one fruit that is growing in their life and one that is noticeably absent. Then the group turns to the person next to them and shares only the one that is growing, as an encouragement. No one has to share the absent one. Close with a brief prayer for growth in the areas that remain unspoken.

## Closing prayer direction

Pray for the honesty to stop measuring ourselves against each other and start measuring against the love of God. Ask Him to fill each person so fully that what overflows into their relationships this week is not their own depleted reserves but His love, given freely and without limit.

## Before next week

Read *How To Manage Pain And Hurt*, *How Do You Love God?*, *Loving Jesus*, and *What Now?* before the final session. As you read, pay attention to this question: "Do you love God, or do you just believe in Him?"



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## Session 8

### *The Way Forward*

This week's reading: How To Manage Pain And Hurt, How Do You Love God?, Loving Jesus, and What Now?

#### Opening question

Think of a painful experience that, looking back, produced something valuable in you. What did it grow that could not have been grown any other way?

#### Key Scripture

"Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

Ephesians 5:1-2 (NIV)

Also read: Philippians 3:10

#### Summary

These final chapters bring the book full circle. The opening chapter on pain argues honestly that "deep love and pain are inseparable" and that suffering, brought to the right source, deepens love rather than destroying it. He introduces *koinonia*, the shared participation in Christ's sufferings that produces a bond nothing else can. Then the chapters on loving God and loving Jesus draw a sharp line between belief and love. "You can believe that God exists and still not love God in the way Scripture describes." The chapter traces love for God through knowing Him personally, through obedience that flows from affection rather than obligation, and through guarding the heart as a daily practice. Jesus, he says, does not invite admiration from a distance. "Admiration asks very little of you. Love asks everything." The book closes with a simple call: "Go and live it. Not perfectly. Not without struggle. But consistently, courageously, and with the confidence of someone who knows that the God who is love is living inside them."

#### Discussion questions

1. The chapter says "pain that is never processed never leaves. It simply goes underground, and from there it shapes us in ways we cannot see." Where have you seen unprocessed pain distort someone's capacity to love, whether in yourself or in someone you know?

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2. The chapter describes suffering as *koinonia* with Christ, a "shared participation" rather than something you endure while God watches from a distance. How does that change the way you think about your hardest seasons?
  3. The chapter asks: "Do you love God, or do you just believe in Him?" What is the difference, and how would you answer honestly?
  4. Why does the chapter connect love for God so directly to obedience? How is the obedience described here different from legalism?
  5. The chapter says "admiration is comfortable. It keeps a respectful distance. Love asks everything." Where in your relationship with Jesus have you been offering admiration when He is asking for love?
  6. The chapter on loving God says that "the state of your relationships is one of the clearest indicators of the state of your relationship with God." Look honestly at your relationships right now. What do they reveal?
  7. The book closes with a simple instruction: "Go and live it." What is the first thing that comes to mind when you read those words? What is the one thing in your life that needs to change this week?

## Personal reflection

- Ask God to show you one area of pain you have been burying instead of bringing to Him. Consider bringing it to a trusted friend or leader as well.
- Spend time this week reading one of the Gospels with fresh eyes. Pay attention not just to what Jesus taught but to who he is. Ask Him to become more real to you as a person.
- Write down one sentence that captures what this book has shown you about love. Put it where you will see it every day.

## Group activity

Each person names one person they will love differently this week. Say the name aloud. It can be a spouse, a child, a parent, a colleague, a neighbour, an enemy. The group prays for each person named, briefly and specifically, asking God to give the one who named them everything they need to love that person well.

## Closing prayer direction

Pray for the courage to go and live it. Ask God to take everything the group has discussed over these eight weeks and move it from the head to the heart, and from the heart into the way each person actually lives. Pray that the love of God, received and given away, would be the defining mark of this group long after the study is finished.

## Before next week

There is no next week. But there is tomorrow. And the day after. The book ends with a call that does not expire: "Live in love. That is the whole thing. That is what you were made for." Go and do it.



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Thank you for walking through this book together.

If it resonated with your group, three things  
would mean more than you know.

1. Leave an honest review on *Amazon*.
2. Tell one person about it.
3. Visit [jqbotes.com](http://jqbotes.com) for more writing.

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