

Small Group Discussion Guide — January 19, 2020

- Series: “I Pray That” - Prayers of the Apostle Paul
 - Sermon: The Reach of God’s Love
 - Scripture: Ephesians 3: 16-19 (NIV)
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FOLLOW-UP FROM LAST WEEK:

Has your prayer life been different this week, after considering Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians that they would know God better?

CONNECT:

“Who in your life ... has helped you love the good that grows within you? Let’s just take 10 seconds to think of some of those people who have loved us and wanted what was best for us in life — those who have encouraged us to become who we are tonight.”

- Fred Rogers, The World According to Mr. Rogers

Who did you think of? How did they love you well?

ENGAGE:

1. Read Ephesians 3: 16-19 (NIV).
 - What is Paul asking God to do? What is he praying for the Ephesians (and for us)?
 - What does it mean to be “rooted and established in love”?
 - Paul mentions “power” several times. Why would we need so much power in order to understand God’s love?
 - What are the implications of Christ “dwelling” in our hearts, versus visiting occasionally?
 - What is the connection between faith and Christ’s dwelling in our hearts?

APPLY:

1. What does it feel like to be completely filled by the fullness of God?
2. Why is it sometimes easier to believe in the depth of God’s love for others, than to accept His love for ourselves? Do you see a difference between believing God’s love and experiencing it?
3. What is your love language (Words of Affirmation, Acts of Service, Giving/Receiving Gifts, Quality Time, Physical Touch)? How can you experience God’s love in your own love language?
4. Did one of the “measurements” in particular stand out to you - how wide (measured by the number of sins it covers), how long (not only without a beginning or end, but also without pause), how high (Jesus came from the heavens above to rescue the world he loves), or how deep (he lifted you out of the slimy pit)?

PRAY:

Father we thank you for your boundless love for us. Hold us, we pray, reassure us of your presence within us. Let us not just go forth with head knowledge, but heart knowledge, that you are with us, and this is more than a sentiment, it’s a reality. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

GOING DEEPER:

1. Pete mentioned that we may need to quiet the onslaught of information coming our way in order to do the inner work – to quiet our souls and get to the depths of our insecurities, so that we can believe first that Christ lives in us, before we can believe His love. According to Spurgeon, “Paul wants you to have a love of Christ of a most abiding character, not a love that flames up under an earnest sermon, and then dies out into the darkness of a few embers, but a constant flame, the abiding of Jesus’ love in your hearts.” What steps can you take toward this goal this week?
2. What does it mean to be “rooted and established in love ... together with all the saints”? We (the church) are to be called “oaks of righteousness” (Isaiah 61:3). How can being rooted together this way help us experience God’s love in the way He intends us to do?

References:

Psalm 85:2 (NLT) You forgave the guilt of your people—yes, you covered all their sins.

Isaiah 61:3 They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor.

John 3:17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

Jeremiah 31:3 “I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.

Psalm 40:2 He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.

Quotes by Charles Spurgeon:

“To a great many people, the love of Jesus is not a solid substantial thing at all - it’s a beautiful fiction, a sentimental belief, a formal theory. But to Paul, it was a real, substantial, measurable fact.”

“Paul wants you to have a love for Christ of a most abiding character, not a love that flames up under a good sermon, and then dies out into the darkness of a few embers, but a constant flame, the abiding of Jesus’s love in your heart, both day and night.”

“The love of Jesus Christ does not surround our favored island alone, but like the ocean, it washes up on every shore.”

The Complete Works of C. H. Spurgeon, Volume 12