

**WELCOME:** Open up in prayer, and encourage everyone to lay aside all burdens and focus on God.

**WORSHIP:** *"God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."* John 4:24(NIV)

**WORD:** *"Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love."* 1 John 4:7-8 (NLT)

This is only a guide. Discuss the points as you are led.

*"For one will scarcely die for a righteous person - though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die - but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."* Romans 5:7-8 (ESV)

1. Reading this scripture reminds of the incredible sacrificial love of God, for all saved and sinners. Examine your own life and consider who you would automatically lay down your life for in order that they might be saved.
2. Then consider the very last person you would naturally want to lay down your own life for.
3. Read out loud Ephesians 3:17-20 (NLT). Then ponder and pray for a greater and greater measure of understanding of God's unfathomable love for us and all of those around us.

*"Tax collectors and other notorious sinners often came to listen to Jesus teach. This made the Pharisees and teachers of religious law complain that he was associating with such sinful people - even eating with them! So Jesus told them this story: "If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them gets lost, what will he do? Won't he leave the ninety-nine others in the wilderness and go to search for the one that is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he will joyfully carry it home on his shoulders. When he arrives, he will call together his friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.' In the same way, there is more joy in heaven over one lost sinner who repents and returns to God than over ninety-nine others who are righteous and haven't strayed away!"* Luke 15:1-7 (NLT)

4. Consider this parable in light of an understanding that God is a 'gentleman' but also pursues our hearts us with His great love?
5. Consider what was read and discussed in questions 1-3 above, and reconcile the notion as children of God of pursuing (as opposed to avoiding) the love of those who you naturally do not even like, let alone love?

*"Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Won't she light a lamp and sweep the entire house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she will call in her friends and neighbors and say, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost coin.' In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God's angels when even one sinner repents."* Luke 15:8- (NLT)

6. How would you describe the relentlessness of God's love to someone who doesn't know it?
7. Is there someone God has placed in your life to sacrifice more for, and pursue even more relentlessly, for the sake of His Kingdom?

**WORKS:** Let's pray for:

- A greater and greater grasp and understanding of the love of our heavenly Father God.
- Any special needs in the group.