



socks & underwear

What the World Needs Now

#npsocksandunderwear

Week 1
1 of 3

December 9, 2018

Bottom Line: Love—experience it, extend it.

Icebreaker: What's the worst or most disappointing Christmas gift you ever received?

Key Verse: *The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.* Galatians 5:6

What's the good word that comes to your mind first and foremost when you think about Christmas? There are so many wonderful emotions and experiences connected with Christmas itself, and with what God did for the world at Christmas. Maybe your word is forgiveness or peace or family or hope or anticipation or . . . well, we could go on for some time listing the significant words that in one way or another represent Christmas. But if we had to select one word to cover them all, that word would be LOVE. The word that makes Christmas so attractive is love. It is the beautiful treasure box that holds all the others.

God loved the world in the most profound way possible when He sent His Son Jesus to our dark and lonely planet. He came to meet the deepest needs of our hearts, needs we often don't even recognize we have until they are filled through relationship with Him. God created us in order to love us. Love was His motivation for creation, for sending Jesus Christ, for creating the community called the church, for all of His actions toward us. Even when we don't understand or think we need or want what He is giving us, when we get some distance, we see it was love expressed and just what we needed.

The love God gives us is undeserved, unearned, and unconditional. It is His deepest desire that everyone of us would open that gift and experience it for ourselves. That love fuels and empowers us, and then we are able to extend the same kind of love to others that God gives to us. It's a big challenge. God's kind of love is supernatural, and we cannot possibly extend that kind of love with our natural abilities. We need the supernatural healing of our woundedness, the supernatural perseverance and courage, and supernatural grace that comes from our daily relationship of love with Jesus, the gift of Christmas.

THINK IT OVER >>>

What impacted you most from the message?

"When underserved, unearned, unconditional love is given to us, it is refreshing. When that kind of love is required from us, it is disturbing." Discuss.

The Beatles sang that love is all you need. True—but not the kind of love with which we are familiar. Discuss the differences between the love the Beatles sang about and God's kind of love.

"God doesn't want to love you to a role but to a relationship." What does that mean to you?

How does this love relationship with God change your self-perception and acceptance of yourself?

How does this kind of love relationship with God change your relationships with people?

What do you believe "faith expressed through love" looks like?

LOOK IT OVER <<<

When I receive God's love, I am called to extend it to others, not hoard it. I extend His love in an important way when I see the needs of someone else and practically meet them with my own resources. Neither part of that extension is natural. It takes supernatural empowerment from God to SEE the needs of others. What are some of the factors that prevent us from seeing the true needs around us?

It is also a supernatural act to use my own resources of time, money, and energy to love others. What are the reasons we frequently don't meet the needs we see?

God promises tremendous blessings for extending God's love. Many of them come directly from what happens in us through our obedience. Dwight mentioned the rewards of peace of mind, provision, and God's presence. How have you found this to be true? What other blessings have you experienced?

NEXT STEPS

This week consider taking some next steps together as a group:

- 1) Plan some specific, directed times between now and Christmas to allow yourself to experience and reflect on God's love for you.
- 2) We are surrounded by people in need of love extended this Christmas. Ask God to help you see with His eyes, and pick someone to whom you will extend practical love by meeting some of their needs.

EVALUATION/ACTION

Realizing and reaching your full potential in Christ

Bottom Line: Love—experience it, extend it.

Rate yourself from 1 to 10 1 (never), 10 (always)	1	2	3	4		6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating?										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
Do you know someone who demonstrates this bottom line well? What do you admire about that person?										
What specific action can you put into practice to raise your rating?										
At the end of this week, reflect - where did you see the bottom line show up in your actions throughout the week?										

PRAYER

List group members and their prayer requests for this week:

DAILY STUDY

Want to dig deeper? Check out **The Daily** this week at newpointe.org/daily:

Monday: John 3:16

Tuesday: Ephesians 3:17-19

Wednesday: Jude 1:1

Thursday: 1 John 4:7-8, 11-12; 1 John 3:16-18

Friday: 1 Corinthians 13:3

Don't let the conversation stop here. Keep talking it over with others throughout the week.

(Don't forget to bring this paper to your next small group meeting)