

1 John 4:16 and 17 show us the process of becoming a community that loves like Jesus. It starts with each of us knowing and trusting God's love for us, then as we do, God lives in us and our love grows.

What are some of the things that facilitate this? How do we express "living in God's love" in our daily lives?

What are some of the ways we, as the body of believers at New Life, can make this a safe place to reveal our weaknesses and be healed?

WRAP-UP

The Pharisees were intent on following the rules. They just didn't know the God of love that underlies the commandments. God expressed his love for us when He created the Sabbath as a day of rest and relationship with Him. But Jesus was the expression of God's love for us, even on the Sabbath. When we accept God's love for us and trust Him to do good because of His love, we are able to bring our weaknesses before Him for healing. And even if we aren't physically healed, God can heal our hurts, shame and fears associated with that weakness. Most of us naturally hide our weakness from view, but in a community of believers, living in the love and restoration of Jesus, we can create a safe place for others to expose their weaknesses and be healed. We can live like Jesus lived on earth.

Memory Verse

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.

- 1 John 4:7 NLT

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____

Pray for your group members' needs: (see back for more space)

Challenge- Look through your bible for some of the verses that demonstrate God's love for you. Ask God if there is anything preventing you from seeing and accepting the fullness of His love for you.

"Loved by Jesus"

Focused #1

INTRODUCTION

The love of God is literally woven throughout the entire Bible. If we look for it, we will find the expression of God's love from Genesis through Revelation. In this study we focus on the story of Jesus healing a man on the Sabbath. In this incident we get a glimpse of the perspective of the Pharisees whose focus was on following the letter of the law. But we also see a demonstration of Jesus' love expressed to an individual at his point of need, unhampered by the Pharisaical interpretation of God's law.

Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)

How did you spend your day last Sunday?

STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

1. Jesus Loves People First

Luke 6:5 NLT - 1 One Sabbath day as Jesus was walking through some grainfields, his disciples broke off heads of grain, rubbed off the husks in their hands, and ate the grain.² But some Pharisees said, "Why are you breaking the law by harvesting grain on the Sabbath?"³ Jesus replied, "Haven't you read in the Scriptures what David did when he and his companions were hungry? ⁴ He went into the house of God and broke the law by eating the sacred loaves of bread that only the priests can eat. He also gave some to his companions."⁵ And Jesus added, "The Son of Man is Lord, even over the Sabbath."

Jesus was more concerned with people than with laws. That put him at odds with the Pharisees, who laid stress, not upon the righteousness of an action, but upon its formal correctness.

In the above passage, what had Jesus done that they objected to?

In Exodus 20 God not only gives the commandment to observe the Sabbath, he explains the purpose behind the Sabbath.

Exodus 20:8-11 NLT - 8 "Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9 You have six days each week for your ordinary work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the LORD your God. On that day no one in your household may do any work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your livestock, and any foreigners living among you. 11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy.

What was God's purpose for the Sabbath? How is God's purpose an expression of His love for us? How did Jesus' actions on this Sabbath fulfill God's purpose underlying the law more than the Pharisee's strict interpretation of the law?

2. Revealing Your Weakness

Luke 6:6-11 NLT - 6 On another Sabbath day, a man with a deformed right hand was in the synagogue while Jesus was teaching. 7 The teachers of religious law and the Pharisees watched Jesus closely. If he healed the man's hand, they planned to accuse him of working on the Sabbath. 8 But Jesus knew their thoughts. He said to the man with the deformed hand, "Come and stand in front of everyone." So the man came forward. 9 Then Jesus said to his critics, "I have a question for you. Does the law permit good deeds on the Sabbath, or is it a day for doing evil? Is this a day to save life or to destroy it?" 10 He looked around at them one by one and then said to the man, "Hold out your hand." So the man held out his hand, and it was restored! 11 At this, the enemies of Jesus were wild with rage and began to discuss what to do with him.

The Pharisees continued to watch Jesus for infractions of their laws. They actually anticipated that He would heal on the Sabbath, allowing them to accuse him of working and thus breaking the law.

Why do you think Jesus chose to heal this man publicly rather than discretely or even waiting until the Sabbath had passed? What did the man have to overcome to show his withered hand before the crowd?

What we "reveal" to Jesus is directly related to how much we trust Him. If the man didn't trust Jesus' intention to heal him, he would be subject to shame and rejection by revealing his weak hand. So, exposing his weakness was an act of this man's faith in Jesus' goodness and love.

What are some of our own weaknesses that we commonly keep hidden? Is there a difference between trusting God to heal you and trusting Him to do good?

2 Corinthians 12:9 NLT - 9 Each time he said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.

When we bring our weaknesses to God, we can expect that He will work in our lives, but that might not always be with physical healing.

How can God "heal our hurts" when He doesn't heal our bodies?

3. Living in A Loved and Restored Community

1 John 4:7-8, 16-17 NLT - 7 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. 8 But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love. ... 16 We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. 17 And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world.

Let's start with this fact: God is love. In the book of 1 John we see clearly the difference in the perspective of the Pharisees and Jesus. The lack of love expressed by the Pharisees concerning Jesus' hungry disciples and the disabled man, reveals the Pharisees did not know God. They might know what the law says, but they didn't know the one who said it.
'agape-deep and constant "love"

John tells us to love one another. Why is it important to start with the recognition that God loves us (v.16) before we try to live in love towards others? What is the hardest part of accepting God's love for you?