

Once you have the understanding and the experience of God's love you are ready to start a wildfire for the Kingdom. God wants to use us to spread His love. If we don't stay connected to the source of love by abiding in Him, our spark fades. But if our roots have grown deep into God's love, we can help spreading the flame.

*Ephesians 3:20-21 NLT - 20 Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. 21 Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen*

*Paul tells us God can do more than we can ask or imagine. So, what might God do if we allow Him to use us to love our family? our community? our world? He can exceed your greatest expectations, so dream big!*

## WRAP-UP

God is on a mission to bring the world into a loving relationship with Himself and one another. He invites us into that mission as lights in a dark world. But it starts with our abiding in His love and experiencing it ourselves. Only then will we have the power to spread it like wildfire and see lives transformed.

## MEMORY VERSE

*Ephesians 3:19 NLT - 19 May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.*

## PRAYER (20 MIN)

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

---

---

---

*Challenge- Wherever you go this week, stay plugged into God's love and allow Him to use you bring hope and healing to those around you.*

## "Spreading like Wildfire"

### Spark #4

## INTRODUCTION

If you've lived in California for any length of time you know how quickly a wildfire can spread. When a spark lands in dry vegetation and is fanned by strong wind you can be sure the flames will spread far and wide. Under the right conditions we can spread God's Kingdom in the same way. If we let the spark of faith be empowered by God's Holy Spirit, then the love of God and the Good News will spread throughout our communities and the world.

## Ice Breaker

Have you ever seen a wildfire in person?

## Key Passage

*Matthew 5:14-16 NLT - 14 "You are the light of the world--like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. 15 No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.*

## STUDY QUESTIONS

### 1. Lighting the Darkness

*Matthew 5:16 NLT -16 In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.*

When we look at the world around us it is easy to feel overwhelmed by the darkness that seems to be growing deeper. We might be tempted to try to lessen the problem, for example the problem of increasing violence, by trying to get people to be less violent. But we really can't control the world that way. Jesus told us "In this world you will have

trouble.” But in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus began by telling us what we could do to bring light into the darkness.

*What does Matthew 5:16 tell us shines in the darkness? What kind of change do we expect to see when we shine in that way?*

*Jeremiah 24:7 NLT - 7 I will give them hearts that recognize me as the LORD. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me wholeheartedly.*

The darkness we see in the world is not a problem of wrong actions it is a problem of the heart.

*Jeremiah says God changes our hearts. What is it that motivates God to change hearts?*

*Acts 1:8 NLT - 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere--in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

*Luke 24:49 NLT - 49 "And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as my Father promised. But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven."*

*If God's mission is to love the world, how do we get empowered to join Him in that mission?*

When we read the above passages from Acts and Luke we find that it is not by our own efforts that we receive the power from the Holy Spirit. In fact, it is when we rest in and wait on God that He does the work through His Holy Spirit.

## **2. Deep Understanding of God**

*Ephesians 3:14-16 NLT - 14 When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, 15 the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. 16 I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit.*

As he wrote to the church at Ephesus, Paul was overwhelmed. He understood God's plan to bring people into a relationship with Him and with each other. I bet you've heard this before "God wants to have a relationship with you." But have you really allowed the significance of this truth to impact you? The creator of the universe sees you and wants to connect with you directly. He wants you to know Him and be transformed by Him. Paul's plea was to get this from being head knowledge to heart knowledge.

*This would be a good time for your group to pause for a time of prayer to address God directly. As you pray, look into the eyes of Jesus, and thank Him for the incredible gift of relationship He is offering us. Allow yourself to draw near to God.*

## **3. Rooted in Love**

*Ephesians 3:17-19 NLT - 17 Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. 18 And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. 19 May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.*

*According to verse 17, we need to trust Jesus to initiate Christ taking residence in our hearts. What are some things that affect our ability to fully trust Jesus? Are there other things we are putting our trust in more than in Him? Do we trust our own abilities more than His?*

Paul knew first-hand what can happen to us when we personally connect with God. God's love and His power are inseparable. It is God's love that keeps us strong. Paul first wants us to "understand" (*katalambanō*) or lay hold of the immensity of God's love. But he also wants us to "experience" (*ginōskō*) or to know intimately, how much God loves us.

*Can you think of a time you experienced the immensity of God's love for you? How do you feel that changed the way you live?*