

you to empower me to overcome what I haven't been able to deal with on my own. I give you permission to change me because I want to draw closer to you and I don't want anything to get in my way."

3. God's Beloved

1 John 4:16 NLT - 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.

We were created to be united with God in a bond of love. Are you there yet? Do you see yourself as God sees you, "His Beloved"?

Make a list of all the ways God has expressed His love to you personally. How many verses can you think of that affirm God's love for you? Here are some to read aloud- Jn 16:27, Rom 5:8, 1Jn 4:9-10, 1 Jn 3:1, Rom 5:5, 1 Jn 4:16, Gal 2:20, Jer 31:3, Ps 86:15, Ps 136:26, Eph 2:4-5, Is 54:10.

WRAP-UP

God loves you - unconditionally, eternally, without reservations, and without boundaries. You are His beloved. As we trust Jesus more and more, He can settle into our hearts and we can begin to experience to fullness of love that God longs to pour out on us. It is far beyond our ability to fully grasp, but the more we embrace it, the deeper our roots of faith grow, and the stronger He makes us.. You are God's beloved, and we don't need to filter out what we are ashamed of or hide because we don't have to fear rejection or judgment from God. Nothing can separate us from God's love.

MEMORY VERSE

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 - Ephesians 3:19 NLT

PRAYER (20 MIN)

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

Challenge- Spend some time listening to Reckless Love of God by Cory Asbury (<https://youtu.be/6xxod3R2LoU>)

"You Are God's Beloved" **Made For More #3**

INTRODUCTION

When you consider the relationship you have with God, you might come up with various descriptions. He is your redeemer, your king, your Father, your creator. But when God looks at you He sees His beloved. The love God has for you knows no bounds. John 3:16 has become so familiar that we may forget it was because of His love for us that God sent Jesus. He loves us unconditionally, sacrificially, eternally. If you take a moment to process that truth it should overwhelm you that the creator of the universe loves YOU and wants to spend time with you personally. The Christian Life is rooted in God's love. It provides stability and power in our lives. Let's reacquaint ourselves with the love of God in this study.

Ice Breaker

Name three of your favorite ways to show someone you love them.

Key Passage

Ephesians 3:17 NLT - 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.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Paul's Prayer

Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus while he was imprisoned in Rome. He cared deeply for the Ephesians as this letter reveals. Chapter 3 of his epistle is a prayer with one powerful theme – God loves you. This truth grounds our faith and is the prerequisite for Christian maturity.

Ephesians 3:14-17 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. 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.

Paul prays for strength in our “inner man”, that is our soul. This is supernatural strength, from God’s unlimited resources, far beyond anything we can generate on our own.

If God is providing the strength we need, what is it we are called upon to do (v.17)? As Christ settles into your heart, what kind of changes can you expect?

Trusting Jesus creates an environment that allows Him to fill us with His presence and enables us to receive God’s love as we experience the same love shared between the Father and the Son.

Ephesians 3:18-20 NLT - 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. 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.

Paul prays both that we understand and experience God’s love. What is the difference between understanding and experiencing? Do you feel you have more of one or the other in your life? If so, which one? What are the problems or disadvantages, of having only one and not the other of these?

In the original language Paul writes that he wishes the Ephesians to be filled up with knowledge of God’s love although His love is far beyond our ability to fully know. If God’s love was an ocean, and our capacity to know it was a pitcher, we will never be able to contain the entire ocean in our pitcher. But we shouldn’t settle for a pitcher that is half full. Paul tells us to be filled to our maximum ability with God’s love. As much as you can hold, there will always be more. And what can

happen as we embrace the love God has for us? According to verse 20, infinitely more than we could ask or think. There is no limit to the power of God’s love.

2. Hiding and Filtering Your Life

Genesis 3:10 NLT - 10 He replied, "I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked."

We may have allowed barriers to arise between us and God’s love. In some ways Adam and Eve’s response to God after they sinned became a model of how we respond to God – by trying to hide what we don’t like about ourselves, unwilling to be genuine before God (or ourselves). They covered their nakedness with fig leaves rather than stand before God fully vulnerable and admit their need.

What are some of the ways we deal with the things we don’t like to admit about ourselves? If we truly believe and embrace God’s unconditional love for us, how should we approach dealing with our sin?

Luke 15:20 NKJV - 20 "And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.

Some of us may fear judgment or rebuke when we admit our sins to God but what reaction did the father show to the prodigal son while he was still a great way off, even before he confessed his sin? This is the picture of the love God has for us.

The hallmark of our most intimate relationships is a willingness to be unfiltered and vulnerable. Trusting that the other person will accept us despite our shortcomings. Conversely, we may fear rejection or worse if we reveal our true selves to the world.

Do you think there are things you’ve been unwilling to admit to God (or yourself)? Take a moment to silently come before God to say “I really don’t like “this” about myself, and I know you don’t either. Yet you love me no less because of it. I don’t have the power to change that apart from you God. Because of your great love for me I trust