

# LIFE GROUP LEADER GUIDE

For the week of April 25, 2021

*This guide is designed to give helpful hints in preparing & leading your group in discussion.*

## LEADER NOTES

### ⇒ LEADER'S FEEDBACK ON SERVE YOUR CITY WEEKS

Your feedback about anything you think we should keep, add or change if we do Serve Your City again is important. Please submit your thoughts next to your name when you do your weekly attendance or email your Station-in-Life Pastor.

### ⇒ ATTENDANCE

Submit your group's attendance online at [northcoastchurch.com/attendance](http://northcoastchurch.com/attendance). If you're not sure how to post attendance, you can check out the guide here: [lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/how-to-post-attendance](http://lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/how-to-post-attendance)

*Discussion Reminder: As always, remember that the purpose of multiple questions in the homework is to offer a variety of discussion options (kind of like a smorgasbord), as groups often vary when it comes to where they would like to focus. Answering all the questions oftentimes means you're not taking the time to hear from everyone, digging into the question or taking the time to catch-up and hear how everyone is doing.*

*This week, make sure you take time to focus on the action steps in "Digging Deeper" question #2. It is our hope you and your people are encouraged to take those next steps to show God's love to those He has brought into your life. Be aware that depending on when in the week your group meets, some people may have put something into action already and some may not have yet. If people have done so already, you can take some time to talk about how it went, and if they haven't yet, you can help brainstorm, encourage and keep them accountable by following up throughout the week.*

## QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or something that caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

## MY STORY

1. Love is widely talked about in our world in a variety of ways. Thinking about what you have heard from popular culture, music, movies, television, books, etc., what are some words, phrases, quotes or song lyrics often used to describe love? *Good question to have everyone answer.*

1 John 4:8 tells us that God is love. Looking at the descriptions you gave in your answer above, if you were to replace "love" with "God," would the statements line up with what you know about God? Explain.

*Note: This can be silly and fun, or you could also land on some meaningful conversation, depending on your group's answers. Don't be afraid to have fun with it! Some quotes or lyrics will make sense when you replace "love" with "God" and some won't. For example: "Love is all you need." (God is all you need.) "You just need to love yourself." (You just need to God yourself. God is the only God; we are called to deny ourselves.) "Just a hunk, a hunk of burning love." 😊*

2. Think of a person in your life who loves others well. What about them or their actions demonstrates love?

What impact has this person had on your life?

*Note: This can be a powerful way to identify how loving others impacts people. How have you been impacted by this person's love? How might you being loving to others impact them? Even small things can make a difference in a person's life.*

## DIGGING DEEPER

1. This weekend, Larry explained that when something doesn't come naturally to us, we learn how to do it by "painting by numbers." 1 Corinthians 13 helps us break down the concept of love into smaller segments we can understand, much like painting by numbers. How might the principles of love laid out by Paul in this chapter be challenging for us to do or understand?

### **1 Corinthians 13 New International Version (NIV)**

*If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup> If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup> If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.*

*<sup>4</sup> Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. <sup>5</sup> It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. <sup>6</sup> Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. <sup>7</sup> It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*

*<sup>8</sup> Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. <sup>9</sup> For we know in part and we prophesy in part, <sup>10</sup> but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. <sup>11</sup> When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. <sup>12</sup> For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.*

*<sup>13</sup> And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.*

### **Additional Questions:**

- *Why doesn't loving others come naturally to us sometimes?*
- *1 Corinthians 13 starts with the idea that without love, we have nothing and gain nothing. Looking at the passage, what are some ways we can do what is described in verses 1-3 without love?*
- *If a life without love is worthless (v.1-3), why do some Christians treat it as an extra credit option (referring to Larry's sermon point)?*
- *Larry said this weekend that love is an action, not a feeling. Paul says in verse 3 I can give all I have to the poor, but without love, I gain nothing. Giving to the poor is an action and a good thing to do, but Paul indicates it isn't enough. It seems there may be something else that is important for loving others, too. What do you think is another element involved in love (in addition to action)?*

Larry summarized the list of attributes from verses 4-7 with five questions:

- *Am I harsh? (love is patient, kind)*
- *Do I have to win? (does not envy, does not boast, is not proud)*
- *Am I self-centered? (does not dishonor, is not self-seeking)*
- *Do I have a short fuse? (is not easily angered, keeps no record of wrongs)*
- *Am I cynical? (does not delight in evil, rejoices with truth, protects, trusts, hopes, perseveres)*

Looking at these five questions, which one is hardest for you...

In your home?

With strangers?

With people you disagree with?

### **Additional Questions:**

- *What would the people who know you well say about your answers?*
- *If you were to read verses 4-7 but replace "love" with your name (Bill is kind, Bill is patient, Bill does not envy...), how accurate are these statements?*
- *Looking at the list of attributes Paul gives about love, would you describe them as actions, heart conditions or both? Explain.*

Have you noticed any of the elements of love in the list becoming more natural for you over time? If so, explain.

**Note:** *Everyone may not have an answer. This is an opportunity to reflect on how and where you've grown and to emphasize and celebrate the positives, not just talk about what's challenging. (Am I more patient than I used to be? Do I trust more than I used to?)*

**Creative Idea:** *Have everyone pick an analogy or metaphor and rewrite 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 through that lens. For example, if the analogy were...*

*Music:* Love does not rush the tempo (patient); love tunes itself to others (kind)

*Baseball:* Love cares less about being a home run hero and more about just getting on base so the team can win (does not envy, does not boast, is not self-seeking)

*Teaching:* Love does not raise its voice when students are distracted; love takes time to explain when they don't understand (is not easily angered, keeps no record of wrongs)

*Give everyone some time to think and write their answers, then have them share with the group if they'd like. Just know that some people may enjoy thinking creatively like this, and for others, it may not be their thing.*

2. Serve Your City's "Love Week" is about loving people with intention. It's an opportunity to bring people closer to Jesus by radiating His love. 1 John 4:7-21 describes the connection between God's love and our love for others. What words or phrases in this passage do you find most motivating for you to love others?

### **1 John 4:7-21 New International Version (NIV)**

*7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.*

*13 This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. 15 If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. 16 And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.*

*God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. 17 This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. 18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.*

*19 We love because he first loved us. 20 Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. 21 And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.*

**Additional Verses:** [1 John 3:11-24](#)

### **Additional Questions:**

- *After reading the verses, why do you think God's love for us and our love for others are so closely tied together?*
- *How does our love represent Jesus to others?*
- *How will others know we are loving them with God's love?*
- *Why is loving others so important and non-negotiable for Christians? (Or as Larry said, not an extra credit option?)*
- *What's most challenging about this Love Week for you?*
- *What are some possible hurdles that might keep you from engaging in this Love Week?*

As you think about the community around you (family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, etc.), is there someone in your life or on your path who might benefit from an intentional act of love this week?

**Note:** *This is the most important part of your Love Week discussion. Be aware that depending on when in the week your group meets, some people may have put something into action already and some may not have yet. If people have done so already, you can take some time to talk about how it went, and if they haven't yet, you can help brainstorm, encourage and keep them accountable by following up throughout the week or next week in group to check in and ask how it went. You may also want to create a text chain to remind each other, etc.*

What are some practical ways you might be able to give of yourself or your time for someone else this week? (See ideas at the end of the Study Questions for inspiration.)

Finding a simple, easy way to love someone is good—do it! Is there something that would also stretch you more and have a bigger impact?

*Note: There is nothing wrong with a simple act of love or kindness—oftentimes things that are so easy for us to do can bless someone else more than we know. This question is an opportunity to think of something that might just be one step harder for you to do but would take the challenge to the next level. (For example, calling up a difficult family member to ask how they're doing might be more challenging for you than surprising your coworker with coffee. Would you be willing to try both this week?)*

## TAKING IT HOME

1. As we round out our three weeks in Serve Your City with focusing on intentionally loving others this week, what has been your biggest takeaway from the Give, Serve or Love weeks?

Which of the three has been most challenging or exciting for you to take part in?

Have there been any moments in which you have seen God move or have been encouraged?



### LOVE WEEK IDEAS

To give you some inspiration and ideas, here is a list of possible ways you can intentionally love someone around you this week.

- Write a letter or an email encouraging someone. Include a verse that gives encouragement.
- Reach out to a new neighbor and invite them to dinner or coffee.
- Share your story with someone about how you came to a relationship with Jesus. Tip: Share more if they're interested and less if they're not.
- Surprise a friend with a gift on their doorstep.
- Invite someone to church or send them the Daily Dose or the sermon.
- Ask your husband or wife how you can be praying for them. If unmarried, offer to pray for a coworker or friend. Follow up with them a few days later!
- Donate a meal to a homeless shelter or meal train.
- Leave a Post-it note with words of affirmation for your co-worker or someone in your household that says "You are\_\_\_\_\_."
- Buy a meal for someone who is asking for money.
- Spend time mending a relationship that could use a little work.
- Stop for someone on the side of the road (always be safe). Ask about their story while you help.
- Take on a major task for someone at work or in your household.
- Give your time to a grandparent. Ask them about their life. If the opportunity presents itself, ask them about their faith.

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## Men's Breakfast



### MEN'S BREAKFAST

Join us for a manly breakfast, great worship, fellowship and an inspiring message from Chris Brown. Men of all ages from all campuses are invited to join us on Saturday, May 15 from 8:15-10:00am. Free breakfast with tons of pancakes and Lil' Smokies in the Vista Plaza! RSVP at [northcoastchurch.com/mens-breakfast/](http://northcoastchurch.com/mens-breakfast/).



## Love: *How To Paint By The Numbers*

### Christianity Made Simple:

Matthew 22:36-40

(1) Love **GOD**.

- Do what He **SAYS**.

John 14:21 & 14:15

(2) Love **OTHERS**.

John 13:34/ Galatians 5:14 & Luke 10:29-37

- This includes:

**FAMILY & LOVED ONES**

**OTHER CHRISTIANS (All of them!)**

**STRANGERS GOD PUTS IN MY PATH**

**OPPONENTS & ENEMIES**

### PAINTING BY THE NUMBERS

#### *A Practical Primer: What Loving Others Looks Like*

(1) Love is not an **EXTRA CREDIT OPTION**.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3/ Revelation 2:1-7

(2) Love is an **ACTION** not a **FEELING**.

Mark 14:31-42/ 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

(3) Love puts the **NEEDS** and **INTERESTS** of others first.

Philippians 2:3-8/ Ephesians 4:2 & 1 John 3:16-18/ Proverbs 10:12/ Luke 10:33-35  
Revelation 3:19 & Proverbs 3:11-12

(4) Love takes the **FIRST STEP**.

1 John 4:19/ Romans 5:8