



Discovery Series #4

Experiencing The Love of God



**Growing in my relationship with God, and allowing His
love to fill me and to flow to the people around me.**

Pastor Stan Lubeck

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Spiritual Growth Track

Our desire is that our church will be a warm healthy spiritual environment where everyone is actively seeking to grow to spiritual maturity in Christ. We take the command of Jesus very seriously that instructs us to make disciples (students) of Christ to the ends of the earth. The following materials are the tools we use to help people to begin this lifelong process of obediently following our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. There is no homework in this series of four sessions. It is designed to be covered in four separate one hour time segments in a personal one on one setting.

Base Camp #1: 1 on 1 Discovery Series Topics:

- 1) Knowing Jesus as Lord
- 2) Experiencing God's Forgiveness
- 3) Experiencing God's Power
- 4) **Experiencing God's Love**

The Lord Jesus Christ wants to be our closest friend. He is a friend who sticks closer than a brother, and changes us into people who please our God and Father. Congratulations on taking the first step in this life transformational process of obeying Jesus as Lord of all.

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“The Three Loves of God’s Church”

“But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.” (1 Timothy 1:5 NASB)

God wants to teach us how to love at the deepest level. Many people do not have a clue about commitment in a love relationship. All they have even known is disappointment and letdown. This is why we must go to God Himself in learning what it means to love. God is the source of true and lasting love. “We love, because He first loved us.” (1 John 4:19)

These are the three loves of the church. Some have said, “the Christian life is really very simple. All I have to do is 1) love God, 2) love others in Christ, and 3) love those outside of Christ.” As simple as this is, there is a lifetime of room for learning its implications. Let’s get started!

I. What Is On God’s Heart?

A. The Great Commandment

Read Matthew 22:36-40, “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” 37 Jesus replied: ”“_____ the Lord your God with _____ your heart and with _____ your soul and with _____ your mind.’ 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor _____ yourself.’ 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

There are over 600 commands in the Old Testament. Why do you think Jesus considered these two commandments so important?

God has always been on one plan. He desires to have a love relationship with His people. At the core of His being God loves us and desires to be our closest friend. Amazing isn’t it!

B. The Great Commission

Read Matthew 28:18-20, “Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and _____ disciples of _____ nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to _____ everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you

always, to the very end of the age.”



God wants to spread His love to people at every corner of the world. Knowing that His time on earth was short, Jesus gave the disciples their marching orders. It is called the “Great Commission”. He did not stutter or hesitate in giving this clear directive. There are few passages of Scripture that are better known, and yet less heeded.

We are to make disciples (learners, students) of Christ of all nations. God is not "wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." (1 Peter 3:9 NIV) We are to spread the love of God to all people.

The majority of Christians admit that no one has ever taken them under a wing and disciplined them. At the most basic level, this is what the church is to be about. Somehow we have bizarres and car washes, bingo and bicycle trips, but do not find the time for making disciples of Christ to the ends of the earth.

It has been said, "A church that obeys the **Great Commandment** and **The Great Commission** is a great church!"

II. What does it Mean to Grow?

Jesus said "You must be born again." Every Christian starts with that new birth as a babe in Christ. However, God does not want anyone to stay as a babe, but to grow to full maturity in Christ. Maturity in Christ involves choosing to **trust** Christ over an extended **time** period. There are no shortcuts. But how do we know if we are growing in Godliness? When we are growing spiritually, we will be growing in love!

Where do you see yourself in the spiritual growth process? A babe? Child? Young person? Parent?

Read John 14:21.

What will be the result of your growing love for God?

Read Ephesians 4:14-15 "Then we will no longer be _____, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in _____, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ." NIV

"Speaking the truth in love" as been likened to going to a Dentist to have a cavity filled. A Dentist can do the job without novocaine and take care of the problem with the tooth, but may have to replace the ceiling tiles where the patient shot through



the roof. This is a good picture of those who speak the truth in a harsh fashion with no compassion or love. On the other extreme are those who are ear ticklers, goosching with love but unwilling to deal with the truth. Neither extreme is acceptable. We help one another grow up in Christ as we lovingly speak the truth to one another, being committed to each others success.

III. How Can You Grow in Your Love for God?

A. Commit Yourself to Loving God Wholeheartedly!

Read Deuteronomy 6:4-5 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with _____ your heart and with _____ your soul and with _____ your strength."

What does it mean to love God wholeheartedly?

B. Determine to Seek Hard After God

Read Psalm 63:1-4 A psalm of David. When he was in the Desert of Judah. O God, you are my God, earnestly I _____ you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. Because your _____ is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands.

How do you seek to know God? How do you know that you have met God?

C. Let Christ Live through You

Read Ephesians 3:16-19 " I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the saints, to _____ how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that _____ knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God,"

How can you know something that surpasses knowledge? This is how the love of God is described! Why do you think that is so?

IV. How Can You Grow in Your Love for Others?

The test of our love for others is not in loving those who love us, but to the point of how loving we are to our enemies (Luke



6:32-36). Wow! Only as God fills us with His love will we be able to love one another in our humanness. Jesus sets the standard in how we are to love others:



Read John 13:34 "A _____ command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you _____ love one another.

In this new commandment we are to love according to Jesus' standard. He loves us even more than we love ourselves. We live in a consumer oriented world where a self-centered "entitlement" mindset is deeply rooted in many lives. Only as God invades our lives will we begin to learn what it means to give and serve with a heart full of genuine God inspired love.

The "body" of Christ is made up of all believers (1 Corinthians 12:14-27). However, the Bible emphasizes the importance of a local church, a "family" of believers where God's truth is proclaimed and believers are encouraged and equipped for ministry. It is in this family of believers that we grow in our relationship with God and with others.

The Bible speaks of our responsibility to one another:

Romans 12:10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.

Romans 15:7 Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

Romans 15:14 I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another.

Ephesians 5:21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Galatians 5:13 You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.

Galatians 6:2 "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."

Ephesians 4:16 "From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."

Philippians 2:2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.

Colossians 3:13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

The Greek word for fellowship, koinonia, means "partnership, sharing in common." As Christians we are to "share our lives in many different ways and receive from others as well. Without the fellowship of a biblically sound church, we disobey God and forfeit the giving and receiving of blessings.

Why do you think we request that everyone join a LIFEGroup? What is wrong with the Christian's thinking who says, "I don't need anyone else. I can worship God on a mountaintop all by myself?"

Read Hebrews 10:24-25 And let us consider how we may _____ o n e another on toward love and good deeds. 25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the _____ of doing, but let us _____ one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. NIV

What is a spur? What is the purpose of a spur for a cowboy? Why do you think this term was chosen in motivating one another toward love and good deeds?

V. How Can You Grow in Your Love for Those Outside of Christ

A. Realize that God wants to bless others through you.

You are blessed in order to bless others!

Read Genesis 12:3 All peoples on earth will be _____ through you. (God to Abram, the father of all nations)

Isaiah 49:6 I will also make you (Israel) a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.

God's people are described in the Bible as those who have been set apart for God's special use. He wants us to be tools that He can use to lead people to Him.

B. Jesus' Purpose is to Save People; Join Him.

John 3:17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

C. God Empowers us to Witness

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

D. Know What you Believe - Do Your Homework

1 Peter 3:15 "But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,"



You serve the Lost by knowing the Word of God! Remember that it is the gospel that has the power to save people (Romans 1:16). Realize too, that when tempted by the evil one, Jesus quoted Scripture.



E. Pray for Those Outside of Christ

1 Timothy 2:1 I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone - 2 for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. 3 This is good, and pleases God our Savior, 4 who wants — men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

Who can you pray for that does not know Jesus as their Lord and Savior?

Acts 2:42-47 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

How are the three loves of the church displayed in the early church in the above passage of Scripture? What explains your desire to grow in Godliness? Are you willing to meet with others who have a heart to be disciples of Christ?

Our church is described as a "Disciple-making" church. This means that we have many small groups organized to help people grow in Godliness, becoming disciples of Christ.

The Next Step: Join a LIFEGroup if you are not already connected. These groups will help you to develop spiritual disciplines enabling you to continue growing in Godliness! You will learn how to study your Bible effectively, how to pray, and about your unique, God given roll in building God's Church.

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