CoMission

LEADER BOOK

Love God for Who He Is

From fear and need to real love. Come to know the God who already loved you first.

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DISCOVERY BIBLE STUDY

CoMission

Loving one another

1 John 4:7-20

1 Eat

Read the passage slowly, read it again, then retell it in your own words. If you can't retell it, read it once more.

☐ Read ☐ Reread ☐ Retell

2 Digest

Answer from what the passage actually says — stay in the text.

1. **What does this passage show me about God?**

   According to this passage, how did God show his love among us?

2. **What does it show me about people — and about myself?**

   What fear does God's perfect love need to drive out of you?

3. **What will I obey this week? (a concrete step, with a day)**

   Since God so loved us, whom will you love in a practical way this week?

4. **Who will I tell?**

   Who could you tell that love begins not with our love for God, but with his love for us?

3 Grow

Growth is God's part, not yours. Do the cycle faithfully and trust Him to give the growth (1 Corinthians 3:6–7).

✦ Pray

> *God, you loved me first and sent your Son when I could never earn it. Fill me with that love until it overflows to my brothers and sisters.*

This study online

The practice study

1 John 4:7-20 is bound in after this chapter — the whole passage the class has been walking through a few verses at a time. It is longer than the other studies, so plan a full session for it, or send it home as the first study people do on their own after the class. Ask, as always, what it shows about God first.

Close with the third exercise read aloud, and make sure every blank has a day and a name.

Reflect and Discuss

1. Take out the two-column sheet from chapter 1. Under "I want to learn to come to God because He is...", what can you add now?

2. Write your own prayer to God, honestly, in your own words.

3. Which of the six practices from chapter 7 will you keep going with, starting when? Whom will you tell what this class has shown you about God?

Contents

CHAPTER		PAGE
1	Why do I come to God?	2
STUDY SHEET	The one who came back to say thanks — Luke 17:11-19	5
2	From fear to love	6
STUDY SHEET	No condemnation — Romans 8:1-2	9
3	Seeking God, or what God gives?	10
STUDY SHEET	Seek first the kingdom — Matthew 6:33-34	13
4	Hard to love a God you can't see	14
STUDY SHEET	Living hope through trials — 1 Peter 1:3-9	17
5	Knowing God changes why you seek Him	18
STUDY SHEET	The Lord is my shepherd — Psalm 23:1-3	21
6	When God doesn't give you what you want	22
STUDY SHEET	But even if he does not — Daniel 3:17-18	25
7	When you want to love God but don't know how	26
STUDY SHEET	Love, obey, and receive the Spirit — John 14:15-21	29
8	How do I know my love is growing?	30
STUDY SHEET	Obey — 1 John 2:3-6	33
9	The question to sit with	34
STUDY SHEET	Search me, God — Psalm 139:23-24	37
10	He loved us first	38
STUDY SHEET	Loving one another — 1 John 4:7-20	41

Why do I come to God?

REMEMBER

> Do I need something from God, or do I need God?

WHERE PEOPLE START — MARK WHAT SOUNDS LIKE YOU

Most of us have more than one. None of these is a trick answer, and there is a line below for a reason of your own.

1. Fear	Out of fear of punishment, or of hell.
2. Help	Because I need God to help me with something.
3. Blessing	Because I want His blessing or His protection.
4. Knowing	Because I want to know Him.
5. Need	Because I have realised I need God.
6. Love	Because I love God and want to please Him.

FOR THE FACILITATOR

Time 25–35 minutes, with the two-column sheet

Before the session Answer the hard question in writing yourself first. Print or draw a two-column sheet for everyone, and read Luke 17:11-19 twice.

Watch for

- The right answers. A room of church people will mark "I love God" first because it is the expected box.
- Guilt arriving early. Say plainly that the class locates people; it does not grade them.

Note

1. Expect several boxes. Nobody should be steered toward the last two; the list only works if the first ones are safe to mark.
2. Do not name the pattern for them. If someone writes "I only pray when it goes wrong", that is the finding, and it is theirs.
3. A quiet "yes, probably" is the common honest answer. Receive it as information, not failure — it is what the class exists for.

Say the freeing thing first

Begin with the sentence the chapter begins with: you cannot force yourself to love God. For people who have spent years trying to feel more and mean it more, that sentence is a relief, and sometimes a surprise. Then say what they can do: come to know Him, come near, and let knowing Him change why they come.

Bring back the two columns

This is the revisit of the group activity from chapter 1. Hand out spare sheets for anyone who has lost theirs; they can rebuild the left column from memory. Ask everyone to look at the right-hand column, **"I want to learn to come to God because He is…"**, and add what they have learned about Him over these ten chapters.

Give it the same shape as the first time: a few minutes of silence, said in advance; then, if the group is ready, voluntary sharing; nobody called on. Ask anyone who is willing to read one thing they added. Expect the right-hand column to be fuller. Expect also that some people's left column has not shrunk, and say plainly that it does not need to. People still bring needs to God. The question was only ever where the relationship ends.

The prayer

The panel offers a way to begin, drawn from the worksheet the class grew from. Some people will use it word for word, and that is fine. Encourage anyone who can to write in their own words, however short. Give real quiet, as long as the room needs.

If the group is comfortable, end the writing time by inviting anyone who wants to pray theirs aloud. Do not go round the circle.

End on 1 John 4:19, then stop

Read the verse twice. Then stop talking. A final session can easily turn into a recap of all ten chapters; the room does not need it. It needs to leave with its own prayer, one practice, a day, and a name.

He loved us first

REMEMBER

I don't have to force it. He loved me first.

THE VERSE UNDERNEATH THE WHOLE CLASS

1 John 4:19

We love Him only because He first loved us.

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A place to begin your prayer, if you want one: "God, I want to learn to love You for who You are. I admit that I've often come to You out of fear or for what I need. Today I want to know You..."

FOR THE FACILITATOR

Time 30–40 minutes

Before the session Bring spare two-column sheets for anyone who lost theirs. Fill in your own right-hand column again. Read 1 John 4:7-20 for the bound study.

Watch for

- A final session that turns into a summary lecture. Let the sheet and the prayer carry it.
- Anyone who feels they did not "get there". The road keeps going after the class; say so.

Note

1. This is the revisit of the opening activity. Silent first; sharing only if offered.
2. The starter in the panel is optional. A prayer in their own words, however short, is better than a copied one.
3. The class ends with an "I will" like every chapter. A name and a day, or it is not finished.

Open with chapter 9's "I will". Who wrote their answer and prayed it back? Do not ask what anyone wrote. Ask only whether it happened, and how it was to do.

This last chapter carries the line the whole class has rested on: *we love Him only because He first loved us.* It does not add new teaching. It brings people back to where they started and lets them see how far the road has run.

Watch this chapter

NOTES

This chapter does one thing: it lets each person see their own reason for coming to God before anyone tells them anything about it. Everything later in the class depends on that seeing being theirs. If you announce the diagnosis — that most believers are running on fear, or treating God as a supplier — you will get agreement, and agreement is not the same as finding it.

Who is in the room

This class is written for sincere people. Many have been in church for years. Some learned their faith with a threat underneath it, *if I don't love God, I go to hell*. Others learned to come when something needed fixing. Both are real starting places, and God meets people in both. Hold that in your own head before you open your mouth, because a room can hear contempt for its starting point in a single sentence.

The group activity: two columns

Before the exercises, hand out a sheet with two columns. On the left: **"I come to God because I need..."** On the right: **"I want to learn to come to God because He is..."**

Give a few minutes of silence. Say how long, so the quiet reads as room rather than as waiting. People write whatever is true — the left column is usually fuller, and that is fine.

Then, only if the group is ready for it, invite anyone who wants to share one line. **Never call on anyone.** Nobody owes the room their motives, and a person pressed to speak will give you the tidy answer instead of the true one. If nobody speaks, that is an answer too; move on without comment.

Tell everyone to keep the sheet. You will bring it back at the end of the class, in chapter 10, when the right-hand column should have more in it.

The hard question

Read it aloud slowly and then stop talking. *If God could give me everything I want, but I could never know Him, would I be satisfied?*

Answer it first yourself, honestly, in a sentence or two. If your honest answer once was "probably, yes", say so. That gives the room permission to be truthful, which no amount of reassurance will.

Watch this chapter

NOTES

Locate, never condemn

Somebody will feel guilty. They have just seen that most of their prayers are requests. Answer with the class's running line: we love Him because He first loved us. He moved first; He meets people where they are. Fear and need are real first steps, and Jesus healed people who only wanted to be healed.

What the passage is doing here

Luke 17:11-19 is bound in after this chapter. Ten men came for healing, and all ten got it. Do not tell the group what to notice. Read it twice, retell it, and let them find who came back, and why that one is different.

End with an "I will" with a name and a day, and open chapter 2 by asking how it went.

Reflect and Discuss

1. **Which of the reasons above sound most like you? Write them down, and add any reason of your own in your own words.**

2. **What did you notice about your reasons for coming to God?**

3. **If God could give me everything I want, but I could never know Him, would I be satisfied? Write your honest answer, not the one you think you should give.**

Search me, God

Psalm 139:23-24

1 Eat

Read the passage slowly, read it again, then retell it in your own words. If you can't retell it, read it once more.

☐ Read ☐ Reread ☐ Retell

2 Digest

Answer from what the passage actually says — stay in the text.

1. **What does this passage show me about God?**

2. **What does it show me about people — and about myself?**

3. **What will I obey this week? (a concrete step, with a day)**

4. **Who will I tell?**

3 Grow

Growth is God's part, not yours. Do the cycle faithfully and trust Him to give the growth (1 Corinthians 3:6–7).

✦ Pray

> *God, I am asking you to look where I would rather not. Show me what is there and lead me the other way.*

This study online

The “I will” this time is simple: write the answer, pray it back to God as it was written, and choose whether to share what was learned.

Reflect and Discuss

1. **Take ten minutes. Write your honest answer to the question above. Nobody else needs to read it unless you want them to.**

2. **If you kept the two-column sheet from chapter 1, look at it again. Has anything moved? What?**

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The one who came back to say thanks

Luke 17:11-19

1 Eat

Read the passage slowly, read it again, then retell it in your own words. If you can't retell it, read it once more.

☐ **Read** ☐ **Reread** ☐ **Retell**

2 Digest

Answer from what the passage actually says — stay in the text.

1. **What does this passage show me about God?**

   What is different about the one leper who comes back?

2. **What does it show me about people — and about myself?**

   What good gifts from God have you failed to thank him for?

3. **What will I obey this week? (a concrete step, with a day)**

   How will you return thanks to God this week for what he has done?

4. **Who will I tell?**

   Who could you thank, and to whom could you tell what God has done?

3 Grow

Growth is God's part, not yours. Do the cycle faithfully and trust Him to give the growth (1 Corinthians 3:6–7).

✦ Pray

> *Jesus, thank you for the mercy I so easily forget. Make me like the one who returned to give you thanks and praise.*

This study online

From fear to love

REMEMBER

> Fear brought me to God. Knowing Him is what keeps me near.

THE PASSAGE — READ IT TWICE, THEN SAY IT BACK

1 John 4:18–19

> There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love Him only because He first loved us.

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The road this class walks: Fear → Need → Knowing → Trust → Love. Nobody skips a step, and none of them is to be despised.

FOR THE FACILITATOR

Time 25–35 minutes

Before the session Read 1 John 4:7-21 through twice and be able to retell verses 18-19 without looking. Read Romans 8:1-2 for the bound study.

Watch for

- Fear treated as the enemy. John says love casts it out; he does not say the frightened are lost.
- "So I just need to love God more." That misses verse 19, which puts God's love first.

Note

1. Answers like "so He won't punish me" are honest. Thank people for them; do not correct them.
2. Often the warmest answers: "because He is the only one who can". Notice that this is already a sentence about who God is.
3. Some will leave this blank. Wanting to want it is a real answer; say so.
4. Watch for people placing themselves further along than their first two answers suggest. Do not challenge it in the room.

Open with last week's "I will". Who wrote their answer to the hard question? Who told someone they were working on this class? If it did not happen, ask what got in the way, and let them recommit with a day.

This chapter takes the sentence many people in your room were raised on — *if I don't love God, I go to hell* — and does two things with it. It honours what that fear did, and it shows that fear is not where God means the relationship to end.

Watch this chapter

NOTES

Use the class's image: the "you are here" dot on a map. It does not judge the spot. It tells you where you are standing so you can see which way to walk. This question locates; it does not condemn. Say that sentence, then say it again in your own words. The person in the room most afraid of the answer needs to hear it twice.

Then remind them of the line the class keeps returning to: *we love Him only because He first loved us.* Whatever anyone writes today, His love for them is not riding on the answer. They are not answering to earn anything. They are answering to know where they are.

Protect the ten minutes

Announce the length, start a timer, and then say nothing. Do not walk around reading over shoulders. Do not offer suggestions to someone staring at an empty page; an empty page for five minutes is often the beginning of an honest sentence. If you write your own answer alongside them, the room will settle faster than if you sit and watch.

Nobody is asked to read their answer aloud. If someone wants to say one sentence afterwards, let them, and thank them. Do not discuss it or improve it.

The two-column sheet

If the group did the two-column activity in chapter 1, this is the first time it comes back. Ask people to look at it privately and notice whether anything has moved. Do not ask anyone to share columns. The full revisit is in chapter 10; this is a glance.

When someone is shaken

Occasionally a person writes "no" and is undone by it. Do not argue them out of it. Point them to where the class began and where it ends: He loved first, and the road runs from fear and need toward love, a step at a time. Then make sure someone checks on them before the next session.

The practice study

Psalm 139:23-24 is bound in after this chapter: a prayer from someone asking God to search them and show them where they really are. Read it twice and retell it. Let the group find the connection to the question themselves.

The question to sit with

REMEMBER

> God already loved me first. I can afford to be honest.

THE QUESTION — READ IT SLOWLY, MORE THAN ONCE

If God gave me none of the things I am asking Him for today, would I still want to know Him, walk with Him, and have a relationship with Him?

FOR THE FACILITATOR

Time 20–30 minutes, ten of them silent

Before the session Write your own answer to the question, in full, a day or two before the session. Read Psalm 139:23-24 for the bound study.

Watch for

- Someone shaken by their own answer. Stay after if you can; the chapter's comfort is that His love is already settled.
- A group that wants to discuss instead of write. The writing is the session.

Note

1. Keep the full ten minutes, timed. Do not fill the silence, and do not collect or read anything.
2. Small movement counts. One new word in the right-hand column is a real change.

Open with chapter 8's "I will". Who did the one concrete thing they chose? If someone made the call they had been avoiding, let them say how it went, if they want to. If it did not happen, ask what got in the way and set a day.

This is the shortest chapter in the book and, for many people, the hardest. It asks one question and then gets out of the way. Your job is mostly to get out of the way too.

Watch this chapter

NOTES

Why the question is safe to ask

The question can sound like an exam: *if God gave you nothing you are asking for, would you still want Him?* For someone raised on fear, that sounds like a trap set to catch them out. Before anyone writes, take the threat out of it.

Do not shame the fear

There is a version of this teaching that makes frightened believers feel foolish for having been frightened. Do not give it. For many in the room, fear is what first made them take God seriously. Something real happened there. The passage itself is gentle on this point: fear "involves punishment", and perfect love casts it out. It names fear accurately and then promises something larger. It does not sneer.

So when someone admits they mostly come to God afraid, the right response is not correction. It is a question: what does verse 18 say happens to fear?

Let the order land

Verse 19 is the hinge of the whole class, and it is easy to read past. *We love Him only because He first loved us.* Ask the group who moves first in that sentence. Wait for someone to say it.

That answer removes a weight a lot of people have carried for years. If love for God were an achievement, the fearful would be right to keep measuring themselves. Because it is a response, the task changes. Nobody is asked to produce a feeling. They are invited to come to know the One who loved them first.

Teach the road without making it a ladder

Fear → Need → Knowing → Trust → Love. Write it where everyone can see it.

Two cautions. First, the road is not a ranking of people; no one in the room is "only at need". Each step is real, and God meets people on every one. Second, people do not move along it in a straight line. Someone who trusted God last year may be back at fear this month after a diagnosis. That is not failure. That is how roads work.

The sentence completions

Give quiet time. Then, if anyone wants to read one aloud, let them, but never call on anyone. Pay particular attention to the second line. People's reasons for bringing needs to God are often full of who He is, *He is faithful, He listens*, and pointing that out gently is the bridge to chapter 4.

The practice study

Romans 8:1-2 is bound in after this chapter: no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. Do not connect it to verse 18 for them. Read it twice, retell it, and let them find what it says to a person who is afraid of punishment.

Close with a dated "I will" — reading 1 John 4:7-19 twice this week is the chapter's own suggestion — and who they will tell.

Reflect and Discuss

1. **When I am afraid, I come to God because...**

2. **When I have a need, I seek God because...**

3. **I want to get to the point of seeking God because...**

4. **Where would you put yourself on the road today, and what makes you say so?**

Obey

1 John 2:3-6

1 Eat

Read the passage slowly, read it again, then retell it in your own words. If you can't retell it, read it once more.

☐ Read ☐ Reread ☐ Retell

2 Digest

Answer from what the passage actually says — stay in the text.

1. **What does this passage show me about God?**

   How does John say we can know that we truly know God?

2. **What does it show me about people — and about myself?**

   Where is there a gap between what you say you believe and how you live?

3. **What will I obey this week? (a concrete step, with a day)**

   What is one command of Jesus you will obey this week?

4. **Who will I tell?**

   Who could you walk alongside as you both learn to obey Jesus?

3 Grow

Growth is God's part, not yours. Do the cycle faithfully and trust Him to give the growth (1 Corinthians 3:6–7).

✦ Pray

> *Jesus, I want to know you, not just know about you. Help me keep your commands and walk as you walked.*

This study online

Celebrate small

When someone does name a sign starting, make something of it. A person who noticed they went toward God instead of away when something went wrong has seen sign three. That is His work, and it deserves to be said out loud.

The practice study

1 John 2:3-6 is bound in after this chapter. Its opening is close to the chapter's own question: how do we know? Read it twice and retell it. Ask what it shows about God before asking what it asks of us.

Close with an "I will" fitted to the sign they chose, a day, and who they will tell.

Reflect and Discuss

1. **Read the six signs slowly. Is any of them starting in you? Which one, and where have you seen it?**

2. **Which sign would you most like to see in your life?**

3. **Name one person you can see whom you find hard to love. What is one thing you could do for them this week?**

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No condemnation

Romans 8:1-2

1 Eat

Read the passage slowly, read it again, then retell it in your own words. If you can't retell it, read it once more.

☐ Read ☐ Reread ☐ Retell

2 Digest

Answer from what the passage actually says — stay in the text.

1. **What does this passage show me about God?**

2. **What does it show me about people — and about myself?**

3. **What will I obey this week? (a concrete step, with a day)**

4. **Who will I tell?**

3 Grow

Growth is God's part, not yours. Do the cycle faithfully and trust Him to give the growth (1 Corinthians 3:6–7).

✦ Pray

> *Jesus, there is now no condemnation for those who are in you. Quiet the voice that keeps re-reading my old record.*

This study online

Seeking God, or what God gives?

REMEMBER

> It is good to be near God.

THE PASSAGE — READ IT TWICE, THEN SAY IT BACK

> **Psalm 73:25–26, 28**
>
> Whom have I in heaven but You? And on earth, I desire nothing besides You. My flesh and my heart may falter, But God remains the strength of my heart and my portion forever. ... But as for me, it is good to be near God; I have made the Sovereign Lord my refuge, That I may tell of all Your deeds.
>
> The Open Translation Bible (OTB), openbible.uk, CC BY-SA 4.0.

Two prayers. Say them out loud and notice the difference: "God, I need you to help me with this." "God, I need You."

FOR THE FACILITATOR

Time 25–35 minutes

Before the session Read all of Psalm 73 twice, so you can tell the story of verses 2-17 in a minute before the group reads verses 25-28. Read Matthew 6:33-34 for the bound study.

Watch for

- The class heard as anti-asking. If anyone stops bringing requests to God because of this chapter, it has been taught wrongly.
- Someone who has just lost something. For them the psalmist's struggle in verses 13-14 is the point of entry, not verse 25.

Note

1. This is evidence, not confession. Nobody reads theirs aloud unless they choose to.
2. Most will find mostly requests. Here is where the word "transactional" belongs — in your head, never in theirs.
3. Health, a job, the children safe: all good things. Point back to verse 26 only if someone asks what the psalmist's portion was.
4. "Never" is allowed. It tells you where the next seven chapters need to go.

Begin with last week's "I will". Ask who read 1 John 4 twice and what they noticed about how God loves. If someone did not, ask what got in the way, and let them set a new day.

Watch this chapter

Start with chapter 7's "I will". Which practice did each person choose, and did the first step happen on the day they named? Celebrate the small ones. Where it did not happen, ask what got in the way and let them recommit with a new day.

This chapter answers a question that sincere people ask anxiously: *how do I know any of this is working?* Most of them have been measuring by feelings, and feelings are a poor gauge. Some of the most faithful people in history went through long seasons of feeling nothing toward God. The chapter offers six signs instead, and none of them is a feeling.

The danger in a list

Any list of signs can be turned into a scorecard, and a scorecard is the very thing this class is trying to lead people away from. A person who came to God afraid of punishment will very naturally read six signs as six tests. Say plainly, before you read the list, that it is not a test. It is a way of noticing what God is already doing. Then say it again after.

If someone finds none of the six starting in them, do not hurry to reassure them with a sign they do not see. Ask instead which one they would most like to see, which is the second exercise. Wanting it is part of the road.

Spend most of the time on sign five

Read 1 John 4:20-21 twice and have someone retell it. John is blunt, and the room usually goes quiet. The point is simple and practical: love for the God you cannot see shows up in how you treat the people you can.

This is where the class turns outward. Up to now the questions have been between a person and God. Here the evidence is in the kitchen, the workplace, the family group chat. Ask the group what that might look like in an ordinary week. Let them give the examples; they will be more concrete than yours.

The third exercise

Give real quiet for it. People will write the name of someone they find hard to love, and that is private. Never ask who it is. Do ask, if anyone volunteers, what the one thing is. Often it is a phone call they have been avoiding.

Watch this chapter

NOTES

How do I know my love is growing?

REMEMBER

Love for God shows up in how I treat the people I can see.

THE PASSAGE — READ IT TWICE, THEN SAY IT BACK

1 John 4:20–21

If someone says, “I love God,” and yet hates his brother or sister, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother or sister whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And this is the commandment we have from Him: that the one who loves God must also love his brother and sister.

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1. Knowing	I want to know God more, not only get things from Him.
2. Pleasing	I want to please Him, not only avoid punishment.
3. Trusting	I am learning to trust Him when I don't understand.
4. Obeying	Obedience is becoming a response of love.
5. Loving others	I am beginning to love others as an expression of my love for God.
6. Wanting Him	God Himself is becoming my greatest desire, not only His blessings.

FOR THE FACILITATOR

Time 25–35 minutes

Before the session Before the session, pick the sign you can honestly see starting in yourself and the one you cannot. Read 1 John 2:3-6 for the bound study.

Watch for

- The list used as a test. Someone who finds none of the six may leave worse off than they came.
- Warm feelings offered as evidence. Ask what changed in what they did.

Note

1. Help people name a specific moment, not a general improvement.
2. This becomes the week's "I will".
3. Keep names on paper. Never ask anyone to say who it is.

This chapter exists to make one distinction without making anyone ashamed of praying for things. Get the first half wrong and the room hears “stop asking God for help”, which is not true and does real harm. Get the second half wrong and the room hears nothing at all.

Clear the ground first

Say it before you say anything else: God invites requests. Jesus told His disciples to ask, seek and knock. Most of the Psalms are somebody asking. A believer who brings God a bill, a diagnosis, a son who will not call is doing exactly what they were told to do.

The question is only where the relationship ends. If every prayer is a request, God becomes someone we visit when something runs out. It is no wonder people feel far from Him in between.

The two prayers, out loud

Have the whole group say both prayers aloud, one after the other: “God, I need you to help me with this.” Then: “God, I need You.” Leave a moment of silence. Do not explain the difference. People feel it in their mouths, and that is more persuasive than anything you can add.

Tell the psalm before you read it

Verse 25 lands only if people know what came before it. In a minute or two, retell verses 2-17 in your own words: a man who had kept himself clean, watched the arrogant prosper, and nearly let go — *my feet nearly stumbled*. Then he went into God’s presence and saw it differently. Then read verses 25-26 and 28 twice, and have someone retell them.

Ask: what did he get in the end? What did he not get? Let them find that he never received what the others had, and still calls God his portion.

The word “portion”

It is an old word for a share, what you end up with when things are divided. Explain it plainly. Many people have been treating God as the way to get their portion. The psalmist calls God the portion. Do not press that into anyone. Let the exercise ask the question and leave it open.

NOTES

The practice study

Matthew 6:33-34 is bound in after this chapter — seek first the kingdom, and these things will be added. Read it twice and retell it. Let the group notice for themselves what comes first and what follows, and what Jesus says about tomorrow.

The chapter's suggested "I will": pray "God, I need You" once a day, on its own, before any requests. Get a day to start and a name to tell.

Reflect and Discuss

1. **Think back over the last few things you said to God. Write down two or three of them, as near to your own words as you can.**

2. **Which of the two prayers do they sound more like? What do you make of that?**

3. **A portion is your share, the thing you end up with. What have you been hoping your portion would be?**

4. **The psalmist says, "it is good to be near God." When, if ever, have you found that to be true?**

CoMission

Love, obey, and receive the Spirit

John 14:15-21

1 Eat

Read the passage slowly, read it again, then retell it in your own words. If you can't retell it, read it once more.

☐ Read ☐ Reread ☐ Retell

2 Digest

Answer from what the passage actually says — stay in the text.

1. **What does this passage show me about God?**

   What does Jesus say those who love him will do, and whom does he promise the Father will send?

2. **What does it show me about people — and about myself?**

   What does it mean to you that God's Spirit comes to live in you, not just near you?

3. **What will I obey this week? (a concrete step, with a day)**

   Which command of Jesus will you obey this week as a way of loving him?

4. **Who will I tell?**

   Who needs to hear that Jesus does not leave his people alone?

3 Grow

Growth is God's part, not yours. Do the cycle faithfully and trust Him to give the growth (1 Corinthians 3:6–7).

✦ Pray

> *Jesus, thank you that you do not leave me as an orphan but give me the Spirit of truth to be with me forever. Help me show my love for you by keeping your words.*

This study online

If you are in a group, pairs work well here: each person tells a partner their practice and their day. A name and a date said aloud to another person is far more likely to happen.

The practice study

John 14:15-21 is bound in after this chapter, the fuller passage around the two verses in the panel. Read it twice and retell it. Ask first what it shows about God — the Father, the Son and the Helper He sends — before asking what to obey.

Close by reading the third exercise aloud, and make sure every blank is filled.

Reflect and Discuss

1. **Which one practice will you choose this week? Why that one?**

2. **My first step this week will be…**

3. **I will do it on (day), and I will tell (name) that I did it.**

CoMission

Seek first the kingdom

Matthew 6:33-34

1 Eat

Read the passage slowly, read it again, then retell it in your own words. If you can't retell it, read it once more.

☐ **Read** ☐ **Reread** ☐ **Retell**

2 Digest

Answer from what the passage actually says — stay in the text.

1. **What does this passage show me about God?**

2. **What does it show me about people — and about myself?**

3. **What will I obey this week? (a concrete step, with a day)**

4. **Who will I tell?**

3 Grow

Growth is God's part, not yours. Do the cycle faithfully and trust Him to give the growth (1 Corinthians 3:6–7).

✦ Pray

> *Father, you told us to seek your kingdom first and not to borrow tomorrow's worry. Take the worry I woke up with.*

This study online

Hard to love a God you can't see

REMEMBER

I come to love God by coming to know Him.

THE PASSAGE — READ IT TWICE, THEN SAY IT BACK

1 Peter 1:8

And though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy beyond words and full of glory.

The Open Translation Bible (OTB), openbible.uk, CC BY-SA 4.0.

Peter had walked with Jesus. The people he wrote to had not. He is not telling them to try; he is telling them what is already happening.

FOR THE FACILITATOR

Time 20–30 minutes

Before the session Read 1 Peter 1:3-9 twice; it is the bound study and gives verse 8 its setting of trials. Think of your own far-away person and what you know about them.

Watch for

- Feelings used as the measure. Peter's readers rejoice; the chapter says that grows from knowing, not from trying to feel it.
- Head knowledge mistaken for knowing. Long-time church members may have many answers about God and little sense of Him.

Note

1. Concrete answers win: how she prays for me, that he called on my birthday. Those are character, not facts.
2. "I'm not sure I do" is a legitimate answer. Peter's readers were told they already did; some in your room have not got there yet.
3. Collect these if people are willing. They become the attributes people look for in chapter 5.

Open with the “I will” from chapter 3. Who prayed “God, I need You” on its own this week? What happened, or did not? If it slipped, ask what got in the way and let them pick a new day.

This chapter takes an objection that many people carry and almost nobody says aloud: *how am I meant to love someone I have never seen?* Your job is to let it be said. A room that has been told for years that it should love God will often feel the question is disloyal. It is not. Peter’s readers had the same problem, and he wrote to them about it.

Watch this chapter

NOTES

Open with chapter 6’s “I will”. Did people write their request and the truth about God beside it? Who prayed both? Some will have found that hard, and that is worth hearing. If it did not happen, ask what got in the way and set a day.

By this point in the class many people arrive at the same place: *I want this, and I have no idea how to do it.* This chapter is the answer, and it is deliberately practical. Your job is to keep it that way. The temptation is to turn six concrete practices into a sermon about devotion. Resist it. People need a first step and a day, not more inspiration.

Start by honouring the wanting

Before any of the six, say the thing the chapter says: wanting to love God is already a kind of love. Some people in your room have felt like failures for weeks. Hearing that their desire counts is often the moment they relax enough to choose something.

Walk through the six quickly

Take a minute on each, no more. The panel carries a one-line version of every practice; the class chapter has the longer one. Three deserve a sentence of explanation.

Ask nothing. For many believers, coming to God without a list is genuinely strange. Say so. If it feels odd, that oddness is worth noticing; it may be the first time someone has come with empty hands on purpose.

Remember. The move is from the gift to the Giver: the provision shows His faithfulness, the second chance shows His patience. Use the attributes people named in chapter 5 if you collected them.

Obey. This is the one most easily misheard. Read John 14:15 and 21 twice. Ask the group what Jesus promises to the one who keeps His commands. Let them find it: He reveals Himself to them. Obedience is not a way of earning love; it is one of the roads along which love grows and He makes Himself known.

Then narrow to one

The chapter’s whole design is to end with one practice, one first step, and one day. Watch the room for people writing three. Ask them which one they would keep if they could only do one.

Watch this chapter

NOTES

When you want to love God but don't know how

REMEMBER

I can't force love. I can come near, and obey the next thing.

SIX THINGS YOU CAN DO — CHOOSE ONE

John 14:15, 21

For if you love me, you will obey my commands. ... Whoever has my commandments and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and reveal myself to them.

The Open Translation Bible (OTB), openbible.uk, CC BY-SA 4.0.

1. Be honest	Tell God where you really are, and how you feel.
2. Read for Him	Read the Bible asking who God is, not only what to do.
3. Ask nothing	Spend time with God without asking Him for anything.
4. Remember	Recall what God has done, and what it shows of His character.
5. Obey	Do the next thing He says, even when the feeling isn't there.
6. Notice	Look for His work in ordinary days.

FOR THE FACILITATOR

Time 25–35 minutes

Before the session Try one of the six yourself this week and be ready to say how it went. Read John 14:15-21 for the bound study.

Watch for

- Obedience heard as earning. Jesus ties it to love and to His self-revealing, not to a score.
- "Ask nothing" heard as a rule against requests. It is an occasional practice, not a ban.

Note

1. One. A list of three is how nothing happens.
2. Push gently for something observable: "ten minutes before work on Tuesday", not "be more honest".
3. Both blanks filled, or it is a wish. Next session opens here.

Say the objection on their behalf

Do not ask who finds this hard. Say it for them: “Some of us love our children because we can hold them, and God isn’t in the room like that. So how does anyone love Him?” Then read 1 Peter 1:8 twice and have someone retell it.

Ask what Peter says is already true of them. Wait for someone to notice that he does not command love here. He describes it. That is the first piece of hope in the chapter: it can be done, by people who never saw Him.

The far-away person

The first exercise does more teaching than any explanation you can give. People write about a grandmother, a brother who went north, a friend overseas. Ask a few to share what they wrote, voluntarily. Then ask, plainly: did you see them this week? How do you love them anyway?

Let the room arrive at it: by knowing them. That is the chapter’s whole argument, and it is much stronger when it comes out of their own mouths.

Knowing about versus knowing

Some of the people in your room know a great deal about God — doctrines, verses, the correct answers — and still find Him distant. Be careful here. Do not suggest that their knowledge is worthless. It is not. But knowing a man’s height, birthday and address is different from having talked to him.

The chapter’s list is the bridge: His character, what He loves, what He values, His faithfulness, mercy, justice and holiness. These are things you discover about a person by watching what they do. That is exactly what chapter 5 asks people to do with the Bible.

The practice study

1 Peter 1:3-9 is bound in after this chapter. It gives verse 8 its setting: people suffering trials, who have not seen Him and love Him anyway. Read it twice and retell it. Ask the group what the passage shows them about God before anyone asks what to do.

Close with a dated “I will”: the chapter suggests writing answers to the two questions and talking them over with one person.

Reflect and Discuss

1. Think of someone you love who lives far away. What do you know about them that makes you love them?

2. What does it mean to me to love someone I cannot see?

3. What do I need to know about God so that I can love Him more?

CoMission

But even if he does not

Daniel 3:17-18

1 Eat

Read the passage slowly, read it again, then retell it in your own words. If you can't retell it, read it once more.

☐ Read ☐ Reread ☐ Retell

2 Digest

Answer from what the passage actually says — stay in the text.

1. What does this passage show me about God?

2. What does it show me about people — and about myself?

3. What will I obey this week? (a concrete step, with a day)

4. Who will I tell?

3 Grow

Growth is God's part, not yours. Do the cycle faithfully and trust Him to give the growth (1 Corinthians 3:6–7).

✦ Pray

> *God, they trusted you to rescue them and obeyed you either way. Give me that kind of obedience when the outcome is not promised.*

This study online

The practice study

Daniel 3:17-18 is bound in after this chapter: three men before a furnace, saying what they will do even if God does not rescue them. Read it twice and retell it. Let the group connect it to Habakkuk on their own.

Close with the chapter's "I will": write the request, write the thing that would still be true, pray both, and name who they will share it with.

Reflect and Discuss

1. **Think of something you are asking God for right now, something real. I am asking God for...**

2. **If God's answer is "no", what would be hardest for me?**

3. **Can I keep trusting who God is, even if I do not get what I want? Write what is true today, not what you hope to feel.**

4. **Write one thing you know about God that would still be true if the answer were no.**

CoMission

Living hope through trials

1 Peter 1:3-9

1 Eat

Read the passage slowly, read it again, then retell it in your own words. If you can't retell it, read it once more.

☐ Read ☐ Reread ☐ Retell

2 Digest

Answer from what the passage actually says — stay in the text.

1. **What does this passage show me about God?**

   What has God given us new birth into (v. 3)?
   Why do trials come, and what do they prove (vv. 6-7)?

2. **What does it show me about people — and about myself?**

   What trial are you facing that this living hope speaks to?

3. **What will I obey this week? (a concrete step, with a day)**

   How will you hold on to hope and joy in a hard place this week?

4. **Who will I tell?**

3 Grow

Growth is God's part, not yours. Do the cycle faithfully and trust Him to give the growth (1 Corinthians 3:6–7).

✦ Pray

> *Father, when trials come, hold my faith firm and fill me with the living hope I have in Jesus.*

This study online

Knowing God changes why you seek Him

REMEMBER

First ask who God is. Then ask what to do.

A SMALL PASSAGE, AND FOUR QUESTIONS TO BRING TO IT

1 John 4:9–10

This is how the love of God was revealed among us: God sent His only Son into the world so that we might live through Him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

The Open Translation Bible (OTB), openbible.uk, CC BY-SA 4.0.

1. Who is He?	What does this passage show me about who God is?
2. His character	What does it reveal about His character?
3. What He does	What is God doing here, and what does that teach me about Him?
4. How He treats people	What can I learn from the way He treats people?

FOR THE FACILITATOR

Time 30–40 minutes, including the short study

Before the session Practise the full Eat step on 1 John 4:9-10 yourself — read, re-read, retell — and write what it shows you about God. Read Psalm 23:1-3 for the bound study.

Watch for

- Application racing ahead of observation. The group is used to "what should I do?" and will get there in thirty seconds.
- A competing image for the method. Keep Eat, Digest and Grow as they are, and keep Grow as God's part.

Note

1. If answers turn into applications ("so I should love more"), ask again: what does it say about Him?
2. One is enough. A person who picks all four usually keeps none.
3. Faithfulness, patience, mercy and holiness are common. Accept their own words; it need not be a theological term.
4. The answer often names a wound: "because I'm not sure He'll stay". Receive it quietly.

Ask the question once, plainly

Do I love the Giver, or only His gifts? Read it aloud and leave it. Do not add illustrations straight away. A question like this does more work in silence than it does surrounded by stories.

Then name the easy days honestly: the job came through, the scan was clear, the money arrived just in time. Nobody struggles to say “God is good” on those days. What a person truly holds on to shows up on the other ones.

Go first, briefly

Before the exercises, say one sentence about a real “no” or long “wait” in your own life, and what it did to you. Not the resolved version with a tidy ending. The honest one. A room takes its cue from the leader, and if your story is neat, theirs will be too.

The passage

Read Habakkuk 3:17-18 twice. Ask someone to retell it. Point out, if nobody does, that this is a farmer listing everything he lives on, and then saying *yet*. Ask what the prophet rejoices in. Let someone notice it is not the harvest.

Be careful not to make Habakkuk a standard to meet by Friday. He is a picture of where love can grow, not a test the group has to pass in this session.

The exercises

Give real quiet. The first answer is private by default; never ask people to read out what they are asking God for. The third question is the centre of the chapter. If someone writes “no” or “I don’t know”, that is the honest answer the class asked for, and it is further along than a forced yes.

Mature love is not resignation

Someone may hear this chapter as “stop wanting things” or “pretend it does not hurt”. Say plainly that neither is true. The sentence the chapter offers keeps both: *even if I don’t understand what God is doing, I still want to know Him, trust Him and walk with Him.* It holds the not-understanding and the wanting together.

When God doesn't give you what you want

REMEMBER

I want the Giver more than the gift.

THE PASSAGE — READ IT TWICE, THEN SAY IT BACK

Habakkuk 3:17–18

Though the fig tree does not blossom, and there are no grapes on the vines; though the olive crop fails, and the fields produce no food; though the flock disappears from the fold, and there are no cattle in the stalls, yet, I will find joy in the Lord, I will delight in God my Saviour.

The Open Translation Bible (OTB), openbible.uk, CC BY-SA 4.0.

The question this chapter asks: Do I love the Giver, or only His gifts?

FOR THE FACILITATOR

Time 25–35 minutes

Before the session Name to yourself one real "no" or long "wait" in your own life, and be ready to say a sentence about it. Read Daniel 3:17-18 for the bound study.

Watch for

- Someone in fresh grief. This is not the week to tell them to rejoice; sit with them and let the passage wait.
- Easy answers from the comfortable. "I'd still trust Him" is cheap when nothing is at stake.

Note

1. Private by default. Some of these will be a marriage, a child, a test result.
2. Often the answer is not the loss itself but what it would seem to say about God. That is worth noticing, not resolving.
3. "Not yet" is an honest place on the road. Never press for a yes.
4. This is where chapter 5's attribute pays off. Point back to it if someone is stuck.

Begin with chapter 5's "I will". Which attribute of God did people look for? Where did they see it? Collect a few answers; they will be useful later in this session. If someone forgot, ask what got in the way and let them set a day.

This chapter is where the class gets real, because it moves from motive in the abstract to the thing a person is asking God for right now. Handle it with care. Somewhere in your room is a person whose prayer has had a no, or a wait that has run for years. For them this chapter is not theory.

Watch this chapter

NOTES

Start with the "I will" from chapter 4. Who wrote answers to the two questions? Who talked them over with someone, and what came out of it? If it did not happen, ask what got in the way and set a new day.

This is the practical heart of the class. Chapters 1 to 4 asked why people come to God and argued that love grows out of knowing Him. This chapter answers the obvious next question — where do I get to know Him? — and the answer is the Bible, read the other way round.

Name the habit without blaming anyone

Most believers were taught to read for instructions, often by very good teachers. Do not mock that. The Bible does tell us what to do, and the class ends every chapter with an "I will" for exactly that reason. The point is order. A person who only ever asks "what should I do?" can read for years and come away knowing the rules and very little about the One who gave them.

Where this sits in the method

If your group has done a Discovery Bible Study, connect it to what they know. They **eat** a passage by reading it, re-reading it and retelling it. The retell is the swallow, and it comes before any questions. Then they **digest** it with the questions, and the first is always *what does this teach me about God?* **Grow** is the growth God gives; it is not a step the reader performs.

If the group has never done one, do not teach the whole method now. Just do the first half on 1 John 4:9-10 together, and point them to a Discovery Bible Study class later.

Run it on the small passage

Read the panel passage aloud twice. Ask someone to retell it with the page turned over. Then ask only the first question: what does this show us about God? Hold the room on that one question longer than feels comfortable. People will keep sliding into what they should do. Each time, ask again, gently.

The passage is generous to this question. God moves first. He gives what costs Him most. He does it for people who had not loved Him yet. Let the group find those three things, in whatever words they use, before anyone mentions application. If they find two, that is fine.

Watch this chapter

NOTES

One attribute, all week

The exercise asks for one thing about God to look for. Keep it to one. The aim is not a complete theology; it is a week of noticing. Next session, ask what they saw.

The practice study

Psalm 23:1-3 is bound in after this chapter. It is three verses, and almost every line is a sentence about who God is. Read it twice, retell it, and ask the first question first. Do not let anyone skip to the fourth.

Close with the attribute as their "I will", a day to start, and who they will tell what they find.

Reflect and Discuss

1. **Read the passage twice and say it back in your own words. Before thinking about what to do, write what it shows you about God.**

2. **Which of the four questions do you want to start asking when you read the Bible this week?**

3. **One thing about God I want to know better this week is...**

4. **Why would knowing that about Him help you love Him?**

CoMission

The Lord is my shepherd

Psalm 23:1-3

1 Eat

Read the passage slowly, read it again, then retell it in your own words. If you can't retell it, read it once more.

☐ **Read** ☐ **Reread** ☐ **Retell**

2 Digest

Answer from what the passage actually says — stay in the text.

1. **What does this passage show me about God?**

2. **What does it show me about people — and about myself?**

3. **What will I obey this week? (a concrete step, with a day)**

4. **Who will I tell?**

3 Grow

Growth is God's part, not yours. Do the cycle faithfully and trust Him to give the growth (1 Corinthians 3:6–7).

✦ Pray

> *Shepherd, you make me lie down and you restore what is worn out in me. I will let you lead today.*

This study online