

## Small Group Study Guide

“What Christmas Teaches us about Love” | World-Changing Words Advent Series | From Sunday December 8, 2019

### Appetizer:

**Question:** What is the most ridiculous way you have heard someone use the word love?

Read out Psalm 80:1-7;17-19. Have someone read it a second time, to allow the Scriptures to sink in by using a second voice.

#### A couple questions from the passage:

Share some observations from the passage. What words stuck out to you? Is the Psalmist angry? Upset? Sad? Hopeful?

When it comes to a Psalm, we are reminded that it is a form of poetry. When the writer states that his prayers make God angry, what do you think is happening here? What is he trying to say? And do our prayers make God angry?

### Main Course:

In the sermon it was mentioned that the Greek word for love that is used most often by the New Testament writers is the word agape. Agape has often been described as “God love” or “love from above.” It has long been connected with the Hebrew word “Hesed”, which is used in connection to God’s promises to his people, also called his covenant.

A definition that the pastor gave for agape was this: Agape love is when someone looks after the well-being of someone beyond ourselves.

**Question:** A thinking question: How does the definition of agape, and its connection to hesed and covenant? What does the coming of Jesus demonstrate to the people of God in this light?

Take a moment to read the love chapter (2 Corinthians 13). In context, it is describing the life of the Spirit and how Christians are to relate to one another. But it also teaches us about agape love. How did Jesus demonstrate 2 Corinthians 13 to the world?

### Dessert:

One of the great challenges that we are faced with when talking about love, is when Jesus tells us to love our enemies.

Who are our enemies today?

How are we to love them?

**Challenge:** To be a Christian is to be someone who loves. This may sound like a simple statement, but it’s not always easy to see how love is lived out. In fact, much of the animosity towards Christians today, it can be argued, is that they talk about love a lot, but they do not practice it amongst each other, or in the community, or towards those who are different from them. Love is more than good deeds. It’s more than words. And it is also more than acceptance and politeness.

If you could instantly influence the entire Christian population in Canada, that they would listen and obey joyfully whatever you told them, what would you tell them about the ways we should demonstrate Christ’s love to each other and the world?

End the small group time with prayer for one another. Also, brainstorm ways that you as a group can practice looking after the well-being of someone as a way to show Christ’s love. Identify a person or a circumstance, and see what creative ways you can come up with for loving on them.