

## God's Heart for the Poor

("Remember the Poor" Small Group Discussion)

Names often were used to describe people or what they did, i.e. - Miller, Smith, Baker

**Ice Breaker:** Go around the room and have everybody give each member a new name that really describes them. Have fun with this! (See list attached at the end of the lesson)

**Q: What one word would you like to be used to describe you?**

**1 John 4:8** *"Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love"*

- This passage is one of the most profound scriptures in the Bible. One of a few that give a clear explanation of WHAT God is. There are many descriptions in the Bible of what God IS LIKE but this verse tells us what he IS.
- The word used to describe God is "LOVE"
- Imagine if the word used to describe God was "Anger" or "Judgment"

**Q: What does that (God is Love) mean to you?**

There are four different words in the Bible translated to "LOVE"

**Q: Can anyone think of what the four kinds of Love are?**

- Eros = Romantic Love
- Phileo = Brotherly Love
- Stergos = Affection love
- Agape = Unconditional Love

In 1 John 4:8, it uses the word "agape" to describe God

**Q: What does AGAPE really mean?**

*This is actually a bit of a mystery to scholars. Outside of Biblical texts, "agape" is a very uncommon word- there is relatively little context that is available to help us define it. In a sense, Jesus was able to define it himself. Now commonly understood as "Unconditional"*

**In essence God redefined the word LOVE!**

**Q: What does unconditional mean?** [No strings attached]

**Q: In contrast, what is worldly love like? What strings do people attach?**

- *If you love me back*
- *If you're nice to me*
- *If you respect me*
- *If you stay thin & attractive*
- *If you fulfill me*
- *If you make me happy*

## **Unconditional Love is very powerful**

Because no strings are attached, nothing you do can affect it? it is independent

Because it is independent, nothing you do can alter or change it? it is powerful

Because it is independent and powerful, nothing you do can stop it? it is everlasting

**Romans 8:37** *"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

### **Q: What does this scripture tell you about God?**

- Who do you LOVE that much????
- As much as we might love our closest relationships, God loves everyone even MORE! God loves us more than we love our closest relationships!
- Can you stop God from LOVING YOU? [NO]
- A person can throw away their soul and salvation but even that doesn't stop God from loving people. GOD LOVES ALL THE LOST TOO!

### **Let's talk about how he feels about the poor, hungry and suffering**

**Deuteronomy 10:18** *"He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing."*

**Psalms 68:5** *"A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling."*

**Psalms 146:7** *"He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets prisoners free"*

### **Q: What do these scriptures tell us about God?**

### **Q: What do these scriptures tell us about what it means for us to be godly?**

### **Q: What is the biggest challenge or hardest part of helping the poor?**

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| - Can be overwhelming            | - Can be too time consuming                |
| - Can be dangerous               | - Can "distract" from spiritual priorities |
| - Can be emotionally challenging |  |

### **Q: How do we overcome these challenges? [Be like Jesus!]**

### **Let's look at Jesus' ministry...**

**When he started his ministry, he quoted...**

**Isaiah 61:1** *"The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners."*

**Mt 9:35-36** *"Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd."*

**In general, how did Jesus blend helping the poor and meeting Spiritual priorities?**

- He did both- meet physical needs and spiritual needs.
- He did not let himself get stuck in one need but moved on from town to town.
- He chose what, when and where he would go.
- He helped the one or the many as he went.

**The most important step for all of us is having a heart for the poor and needy because God has a heart for them! Even if we can only do a little, a snowflake by itself is nothing; but when many come together watch out!**

I am only one  
But still I am one  
I cannot do everything  
But still I can do something  
And because I cannot do everything  
I will not refuse to do  
something that I can do

***1 John 3:17-18 "If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth."***

**Let us love with actions and in truth! LET'S PLAN! What can our small group do to be kind to the needy?**

**If you are not already doing so, find some way that your group can meet a need in your community or in the Global community. Start a project or join one whole-heartedly! Talk to a local HOPE *worldwide* chapter coordinator or check out the HOPE *worldwide* website and find something you can all get involved in.**

**Here are some ideas...**

- Clean a neighborhood park that needs it.
- Paint an elderly persons house.
- Visit a nursing home and sing songs.
- Serve at a local soup kitchen.
- Help a family in the church fundraise for their kids.
- Everyone take up a collection at work for your favorite HOPE *worldwide* program.

## Attachment:

### Meaning of Biblical Names

#### **A**

Aaron m. possibly means "high mountain" or "exalted."

Abraham m. May mean "father of many."

Amos m. "To carry."

Ari m. "Lion."

Ariel m.f. "Lion of god."

#### **B**

Baruch m. "Blessed."

Benjamin m. "Son of the south."

Boaz m. "Swiftiness"

#### **D**

Daniel m. "God is my judge."

Dara f. May mean "wisdom" or "compassion."

David m. Possibly "beloved."

Deborah f. "Bee."

#### **E**

Eli m. "Height" or "ascension."

Elijah m. "My God is Yahweh."

Emmanuel - Immanuel m. "God is with us."

Ephraim m. "Fruitful."

Esther f. May mean "star" (Persian).

Ethan m. "Solid, enduring."

Ezekiel m. "God strengthens."

Ezra m. "Help."

#### **F**

Freda - Freyde f. "Joy."

#### **G**

Gideon m. "Feller" or "hewer."

#### **H**

Hannah f. "Favor" or "grace."

Hillel m. "Praise."

Hyman - Hymie m. "Man."

#### **I**

Ira m. "Watchful."

Isaac m. "He laughs"

Isaiah m. "Yahweh is salvation."

#### **J**

Jacob m. "Holder of the heel" or "supplanter."

Jeremiah m. "Yahweh has uplifted."

Joel m. "Yahweh is god."

Joseph m. "He will add."

Judith f. "Woman from Judea"

#### **L**

Leah f. Probably means "weary."

Levi m. "attached."

#### **M**

Marni f. "Rejoice."

Maya f. "Water."

Menachem - Menahem m. "Comforter."

Miriam - Mary f. May mean "sea of bitterness," "rebelliousness," "wished for child."

Mordecai m. "Servant of Marduk (Persian)"

Moses - Moshe m. May mean "deliver" or "son."

#### **N**

Naomi f. "Pleasantness."

Nathan m. (short for Jonathan or Nathaniel or on its own) "Giver."

Nissa f. "Sign."

Noam m. "Pleasantness."

#### **O**

Ophrah f., m., "Fawn."

Oren m. "Pine tree."

#### **R**

Rachel f. "Ewe."

Raisa f. "Rose."

Reuben m. "Behold, a son."

Ron m., f. "Song, joy."

#### **S**

Sarah f. "Lady," or "princess."

Saul m. "Asked for" or "prayed for."

Shayna f. "Beautiful."

Shalom m. "Peace."

Shimon - Simon m. "Hearkening" or "listening."

Susanna f. "Lily."

Solomon - Sol - Solly m. "Peace."

#### **T**

Tamar f. "Date palm."

Tobiah - Tevye m. "Yahweh is good."

#### **U**

Uriel m. "God is my light."

#### **Z**

Zelda f. "Luck."