

AMPLIFY our Weekly Message / 12.27.20

These **discussions** and recommended **spiritual practices** are designed to help **AMPLIFY** the impact of our Sunday morning teaching from God's Word. Choose the ones that fit best in your context.

Sunday Discussion

This is designed to be an extension of our Sunday worship service. Take a few minutes to have this conversation with those who watched the worship service with you. If you watched alone, give another friend who watched alone a call and have the conversation over the phone.

When God thinks of you, what expression is on His face? Why do you say this?
What opens or closes the influence of Christ's life in you?
In what ways might you be drifting from being anchored to God?
Take a moment to pray with and for the person with whom you just shared.

Daily Discussion

These are intended for conversation around the dinner table, in the car, or before bed at night (designed for ages 7 and up). Start each conversation by reading the passage listed.

Monday: Read Ephesians 3:14-19 and talk about the number of times the word "power" appears. What does this power help us do or experience? Where is it found and how do we access it?

Tuesday: Ephesians 3:18-19. On what does an experience of God's love that surpasses knowledge rest?

Wednesday: Ephesians 3:18-19. What does an experience of God's love that surpasses knowledge lead us into?

Thursday: To be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God is another way of saying that God's life flows into us without limit. What limits God's life in us? What promotes it?

Friday: If your life was like a leaf floating down the river, where would you be? In the center riding the strong current toward the ocean? A little off-center transitioning between current and calm? In an eddy? Stuck in debris?

Saturday: What is the difference between believing in God and knowing God, the difference between objective knowledge and personal knowledge? What things can you and your family or friends do to help one another deepen your personal knowledge of God?

Weekly Discussion

Spiritual friends are those who intentionally move into one another's life to spur one another on in spiritual growth for the Glory of God.

1. Share a moment when you were most aware of God's love for you. What was the impetus for that moment? How did that experience impact you?
2. We are not able to generate the commitment we need to remain anchored to God. God's love alone has the power to hold the anchor firm. Share a little of where you are drifting today or share some of what you are doing to rely on God's love to hold the anchor firm.
3. Many Christians can describe their understanding of God's love but struggle with describing their experience with God's love. Share your experience of God's love with a friend. What was easy about doing this? What was difficult about this? What did you see was lacking about your experience with God's love?
4. David Benner wrote, "It is the *experience* of love that is transformational. You simply cannot bask in divine love and not be affected." What do you think it means to bask in God's love? How could one do it?

What follows are some spiritual practices that we believe could feed your soul and advance His Kingdom this week.

An Inward-Focused Spiritual Practice

With experiencing God's love as the focal point, practice the Prayer of Examen three times this week. Where did you see God's love in your day? Where did you miss it? What steps can you take to heighten your awareness?

Further Reflection:

Ignatius' First Principle and Foundation (see below) is a concise and deep resource. Take the time to get to know it. Test it against scripture and then read about what it teaches. It goes much further than what Rob was able to share today. Alongside this, Rob suggests a trilogy of books, all by David Benner. Select the title that seems to speak to where you are today and ponder what the Lord might have for you.

Surrender to Love: Discovering the Heart of Christian Spirituality

The Gift of Being Yourself: The Sacred Call to Self Discovery

Desiring God's Will: Aligning Our Hearts with the Heart of God

The First Principle and Foundation

The goal of our life is to live with God forever.

God, who loves us, gave us life.

Our own response of love allows God's life to flow into us without limit. *(continued on next page...)*

All the things in this world are gifts of God, presented to us so that we can know God more easily and make a return of love more readily.

As a result, we appreciate and use all these gifts of God insofar as they help us develop as loving persons. But if any of these gifts become the center of our lives, they displace God and so hinder our growth toward our goal.

In everyday life, then, we must hold ourselves in balance before all of these created gifts insofar as we have a choice and are not bound by some obligation.

We should not fix our desires on health or sickness, wealth or poverty, success or failure, a long life or short one. For everything has the potential of calling forth in us a deeper response to our life in God.

Our only desire and our one choice should be this: I want and I choose what better leads to God's deepening his life in me.

—St. Ignatius as paraphrased by David L. Fleming SJ

An Outward-Focused Spiritual Practice

Seek to love those God places in your path. Be intentional to share Jesus's love through word or deed with them.

Go out of your way to show love to a person in need.

Step into one of our Shalom for the City initiatives and share Jesus with our local community.

Get on our weekly prayer email and start lifting these prayers and praises up to the Lord.