

# THE BIG GIVE

Group Discussion Guide // Week 2

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## WARM-UP

1. If someone who didn't understand English asked you to explain the word "love" to them, what would you say?
  2. What are three things in life that you love?
  3. What's the most costly thing you've ever done for love?
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## TRUTH

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

We're all familiar with the story of Christmas – wise men, manger scene, angels singing – but we can't let our familiarity with the story make us miss the meaning of it. Jesus coming to earth shows us God's love for the world. But what kind of love are we talking about? After all, we use the word "love" to describe how we feel about pizza one second and our spouse the next. By sending Jesus into the world, God shows us the nature of his love... and why it's good news.

### Love That's Given

"For God so loved the world, that he gave..."

God's love isn't reciprocal in nature. Your life isn't an audition to see if you'll earn his love. It's in God's nature to give himself to you. In a culture that primarily understands love as an emotion, it's important that we take this to heart. It's likely that we've experienced love that was felt but withheld. That's not God's love. God's love is certainly an emotion, but it's so much more. God's love is an action.

- ▶ People have different pictures of who God is and what he's like. What are some popular preconceptions about God that this truth contradicts?

## Love That's Honest

"For God so loved the world..."

We'll often hide parts of our past from people we love for fear of losing their love, but there's nothing about us God doesn't know. In John's writing, the word "world" doesn't refer simply to the planet. "The world" refers to humanity in all its broken rebellion against God. We might be able to hide shameful parts of our lives from others, but God knows it all. He still gave us his love. We are fully known and fully loved.

- ▶ What kind of life experiences make it difficult to believe that God would love us despite our rebellion and brokenness? What life experiences help us understand that this is possible?

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## GRACE

## Love That's Costly

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son..."

Engagement rings are so expensive because they are a sign of love for another person. We equate love with sacrifice. What God was willing to give up shows us the immensity of his love for us. God didn't keep his love a secret either. His love was on display when Jesus hung on the cross. There will be times in life that bring God's love under doubt. But when we look at Jesus, we can see God's love. Even though we will experience imperfect love in this life, his perfect love is constant.

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## CHANGE

"... that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

Love can't be coerced, only given. God's love is an invitation to us all to share in the eternal life of fellowship with God and each other. Accepting God's invitation means living in that love.

- ▶ Would you say that you've been experiencing God's love in your life? In what ways have you been, or what has made this difficult?
- ▶ Jesus told us that we abide in his love by obeying him. Are there ways you're not obeying him?
- ▶ How does it change your mental and emotional life to know that you're loved by God?

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## PRAYER

- ▶ Pray for a revelation of the love of God.