

HOW TO USE THIS GROUP GUIDE

CONNECT (10 MINS)

- Pick one or more of the warm-up questions and have all the group members give a response to the question(s).
- Make sure everybody gets a chance to speak. Don't let talkative people dominate the conversation, but graciously welcome everybody to participate.

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TRUTH (15-20 MIN)

- Read the scriptures and paragraphs in this section to clearly communicate what the Bible says about the week's topic.
- **"DISCUSS" sections:** These sections get people discussing the practical implications of the truth being discussed. Have one or two people give an answer, but don't spend too much time on these questions.

GRACE (5 MINS)

- Read the grace scripture and section which shows how the passage points to Jesus Christ and God's grace.
- This section is really important, because it shows that life change begins with the grace of God and not our own efforts.

CHANGE (10-15 MINS)

- Have everyone give an answer to each of the change questions.
- Take a good amount of time here. Really encourage people to think through how they can practically put truth into action.

PRAYER (10-15 MINS)

- Read through the prayer focus points and have one or two people in the group pray.
- Make sure not to rush through prayer. The things we want God to change in our lives will often happen through prayer.

DISCIPLESHIP CHECK-IN (2 MINS)

- This final portion aims to get people reading the Bible for themselves and thinking about engaging others with the gospel.



HOW TO
NEIGHBOR



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LONELY LOVED

CONNECT

BREAK THE ICE AND GET PEOPLE TALKING

- Describe one good memory of an experience you had with a friend or a group of friends when you were growing up.
- Do you enjoy spending time alone? Why or why not?
- What are some realities in our current cultural moment that make it easy to feel lonely?

TRUTH

UNDERSTAND AND DISCUSS THE SCRIPTURE'S MEANING

READ: John 15:12-17

Amazon saves you a trip to the store. Uber Eats brings the restaurant to you. And social media makes it possible to connect without seeing someone face-to-face. Regardless of whether you think these economic forces are good or bad, what we can't deny is the widespread experience of loneliness. This presents an opportunity for the followers of Jesus to be great neighbors, and Jesus gives us the framework to see how we can love the lonely.

WHAT IT TAKES TO LOVE

READ: John 15:12-13

DISCUSS: What practical sacrifices do you think make for good friendships?

Jesus makes a direct link between love and sacrifice. We see the ultimate example of this in his death, but Jesus made smaller sacrifices to love his disciples throughout his ministry. He sacrificed his time to be with them, even when they weren't easy to be around. He sacrificed his status as God the Son, and became a mocked teacher. He sacrificed composure, letting his disciples see his pain and agony before going to the cross. Loving the lonely isn't going to be easy, but it was worth it for Jesus, and it should be worth it for us too.

HAVING ALL WE NEED

READ: John 15:15-16

DISCUSS: Why do you think it's good news that Jesus let us in on what the Master is doing?

Knowing that love involves sacrifice can be sobering, because sacrifice rarely feels good. Jesus, however, says that knowing this and living it out means that you've become God's friend. It's the start of doing something great and meaningful together. He welcomes us into the journey of bearing fruit that makes for greater human flourishing, and although it's costly, God will give us whatever we ask so we can do his will.

GRACE

SEE HOW THE PASSAGE CONNECTS TO JESUS

A GREATER LOVE

READ: John 15:17

DISCUSS: When we hear the word “command” and the word “love,” we have a hard time understanding how those go together. Based on what Jesus has said so far, why do you think Jesus’s command to love is such good news?

Imagine being part of a community in which everyone only ever loved one another and sacrificed to serve each other. It would be amazing. Jesus gives disciples the commandment to love one another not to earn God’s favor – we already have that because of what Jesus did on the cross. He

gives this commandment so that people can live and thrive in a community where love creates a beautiful place to live. Jesus has welcomed us into his family and has healed our loneliness. Now we can extend that same invitation to others.

CHANGE

*APPLY THE PASSAGE TO OUR THOUGHTS, FEELINGS,
AND ACTIONS*

- What have you learned from this lesson and how can you apply it to your life?
- Do you feel lonely?
- What does it look like in your life right now to live out the kind of sacrificial love that Jesus is talking about?

PRAYER

RESPOND TO THE PASSAGE IN PRAYER

- Jesus said that “whatever [we] ask the Father in my name” will be given to us. Pray for ideas, money, and opportunities to sacrificially love the lonely.
- Pray for anyone in the group struggling with the reality of loneliness, that God and others would rally around them.

DISCIPLESHIP CHECK-IN

- Have you read your Bible consistently the past week?
- Who is someone you're praying to share Jesus with this week, and what's one way you can love them well?



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