



NAC-USA  
DEVELOPMENT  
INSTITUTE

The True  
Meaning of  
Love

Love in  
Action

Every Piece  
Matters

# MIDWEEK GUIDE

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**2016**

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September

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Your small group does not need to answer every question provided in the Midweek guides. There are a range of questions so that each group can answer questions that are applicable to them and that they are comfortable with. Also, take your time with discussing the questions and don't feel the need to rush through them in order to answer every one.

# 2016 September MIDWEEK GUIDE

## Session 1: The True Meaning of Love

### Bible References

1 John 4:7-8

1 Corinthians 13

James 2:26

1 Corinthians 16:14

Romans 5:5

1. How often do you use the word "love"? In what context do you use it?

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2. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 lays out a definition of "love." What parts of this definition are something you haven't considered before?

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3. What is the difference between the love God has for us and the love we have for others?

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4. How do we grow in our knowledge of God's love?

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5. How do we increase our love for our neighbors and our enemies?

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6. In 1 Corinthians 13 it says that love does not envy. What does that mean? Could it mean being envious of the love God has for others? Why would someone feel that way?

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7. The script asks you to think about how Christ's display of love through His sacrifice has transformed your own life. In what ways has His sacrifice transformed your life?

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8. Can you think of a time you have really felt the grace and forgiveness offered through His sacrifice? How did that experience impact how you extended love and grace to others?

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9. What does the phrase "faith without works is dead" mean to you? What does it tell you about faith?

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10. What relevance does Romans 5:5 offer with respect to our ability to love?

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11. PERSONAL TAKE HOME: Read 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7 out loud and every time you see the word love, replace it with your name. How does that make you feel? Are those statements true?

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## Session 2: Love in Action

### Bible References

Matthew 25:31-46

James 2:15-16

John 6:27, 35

Acts 2:44, 45

Acts 4:32-35

Acts 16:25-34

John 12:8

1 John 4:20-21

1. Do you think people generally perceive themselves more in need of natural help than spiritual help?

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2. Do you think people are more receptive to natural help or spiritual help? Does your thinking affect your willingness to offer either?

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3. Do you find it harder to help strangers versus people you know? Why?

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4. Which is easier for you to provide: natural help...food, clothing, and money? Or spiritual help through sharing the Gospel? Can you explain why? Come up with ideas on how to become more comfortable with both natural and spiritual charity.

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5. Both groups are puzzled when Jesus says to them, "When I was hungry" and "When I was sick." Neither group can remember Jesus being that way. Recall the beatitude, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). Is there a connection here as to why one group might have acted and the other not?

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6. Those who helped seem genuinely surprised when the Lord says to them, "inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me." Their response was, "Lord, when did we see you hungry . . .?" Their motive for acting doesn't seem to be that they were doing something for the Lord. What, then, was their motivation?

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7. What is your motivation behind getting involved and helping others?

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8. Jesus says to the group that failed to act, “inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.” Have you ever considered that failing to help another would have such dire consequences?

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9. In your eyes, what is the connection between our figurative and literal responsibilities as Christians? Should the two always be linked?

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10. How does convenience play a role in your helping others? Is a sacrifice ever convenient?

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11. Jesus didn’t include any information about the wealth, social class, giftedness, or passions of the people in His story. What do you think about that? What could this lack of information teach us about helping others?

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12. Our NAC congregations tend to be close-knit and can be potentially intimidating to those coming for the first time. Do people feel welcome in your congregation?

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13. Jesus never mentions the word “love” in this teaching. Where does love fit in here?

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14. Each of the people Jesus described to the two groups had some sort of need. Do you think that people generally look down on those in need? Do you think that people generally feel that those in need did something “wrong”, resulting in their need? Do you think that has an effect on the willingness of people to help or the attitude with which they help?

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## Session 3: Every Piece Matters

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### Bible References

Matthew 14:13-21

Mark 6:30-42

Romans 12:4-6

1. What do you feel you need in order to help someone? Do you use this deficiency as an excuse? Or can you think of ways to work around it?

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2. How can you engage the Holy Spirit to find encouragement to overcome obstacles in helping others?

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3. What is so important about the boy stepping aside? Have you ever gotten in the way of God doing His work?

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4. Do you think people take on too much when trying to help others? Why?

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5. What are your bread and fish? Think about and make a list of the things that God has given you in your life that you could turn and help others with.

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6. When faced with an enormous need, like feeding 5,000 people, why is it easier to consider yourself helpless? Do you think it's possible to fulfill what seems like an insurmountable need by starting in a small way? Can you think of any examples (in your communities, charities that you are familiar with, etc.)?

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7. The young boy seems to be the only one who prepared, no one else seems to have brought anything with them. Have you ever thought about being "prepared" to serve? What are ways you could do this? (Example: setting aside a certain amount of money each month and ask God to give you the opportunity to use it, etc.)

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8. The disciples did what the Lord asked them to do – serve the 5,000. The report of the event doesn't tell us anything about the disciples' attitude, how long it took them to finish the job, etc. Do you think people today are generally willing to serve the Lord the way He wants them to, or do they limit their willingness to serve to those things they feel particularly passionate about or enjoy?

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