



# Brown Community Group

## Discussion Guide

Love Jesus, Live Sent – Value 4: Compelling Love – Dec 5, 2021

### I. Starter Questions:

- Discuss a time when you've experienced exceptional hospitality. What is it that made you feel so welcomed and loved?
- What do you think made people want to follow Jesus and leave everything they were doing? Why were so many in the early church willing to endure great suffering, and even death, for the sake of following Jesus?

### II. Explanation of Value:

Values for an organization define its culture. They serve as the guardrails for how it goes about its mission and how it pursues its vision. Values keep the organization on the pathway toward its purpose.

Our fourth reframed value is **Compelling Love**: We demonstrate the love of Jesus by respecting the dignity of every person, sacrificing for our neighbors, and cultivating unity with our faith family. (Genesis 1:27; Matthew 22:36–40; Ephesians 4:1–6; Hebrews 13:1–3; 1 John 3:16–18; 1 John 4:7–12). Based on this church value, then, we believe that *an individual disciple is demonstrating love to others*. As we are compelled to love Jesus and others because of his love for us, others are also compelled to love Jesus as they see our love for him and them. This trait is an attribute of a disciple toward which we want to equip one another.

### III. Discussion of Scripture:

**Context:** In this passage, we see the creation of man and woman in God's image, a high point in God's creation, God himself describing it as "very good" in verse 31. Because all people are made in God's image, we are reminded of the importance, value, and dignity of all person's lives.

#### Genesis 1:27 (ESV)

<sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

### Discussion Questions:

1. **How is the dignity of every human affirmed by the fact that all people are made in God's image?**
2. **Why is this an integral foundation and truth to demonstrating love to others?**

**Context:** In the midst of the rabbis debating the greatest commandment, they ask Jesus which commandment he considers the greatest, seeking to trap him in his words. Jesus responds with a two-part answer. First, that loving God is the first and greatest commandment, which expresses our total devotion to God. But, being so closely connected and intertwined with loving God, he goes on to say that the second is like it, and that we are called to love others as well, recalling what God instructed Moses to say to the people in Leviticus 19:18.

**Matthew 22:36–40 (ESV)**

<sup>36</sup> "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" <sup>37</sup> And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. <sup>38</sup> This is the great and first commandment. <sup>39</sup> And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. <sup>40</sup> On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

3. **How are we called to love God? What does it look like to love God as described here?**
4. **Why does Jesus answer the rabbis by immediately continuing on with the second commandment, and not just stopping with the first commandment? Why is loving our neighbor so closely tied to loving God?**
5. **In what ways can we love others well here at HHBC? At home? At work? At school? In the community?**

**Context:** Paul, writing to the church in Ephesus, encourages them towards unity and peace—not a false sense of unity and peace, but a unity and peace that comes only through the Holy Spirit and the common faith in God that they share. In this, Paul gives some practical instructions as to how the church can pursue and walk in this type of loving unity and peace with one another.

**Ephesians 4:1–6 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, <sup>2</sup> with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, <sup>3</sup> eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup> There is one body and one Spirit--just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call-- <sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

6. Paul calls us toward a “HGPF” love to maintain this loving unity (humility, gentleness, patience, and forbearance). Why are each of these critical to maintaining unity within the church? Why are each critical to loving others well?
7. How might the effectiveness of the church’s witness be increased as unity and peace increase?
8. How might obeying this instruction compel others—especially outside the church—to love Jesus?

**Context:** The author of Hebrews closes out the letter by providing some practical application and encouragement to spur us on toward greater love, hospitality, and care for others. Both “brotherly love” and “show hospitality” have as a root the Greek word “*phileo*,” which refers to the aspect of love that is more relational, rather than “*agape*” which is more sacrificial and deep (like Christ’s love for us). The specific word for “brotherly love” is the love for a fellow believer, while the specific word for “show hospitality” means “to treat a stranger as if they are a friend” (also see Romans 15:5–7).

**Hebrews 13:1–3 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Let brotherly love continue. <sup>2</sup> Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. <sup>3</sup> Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body.

9. What makes “brotherly love” a uniquely Christian love? Why is this so?
10. Think of someone in your life who shows great hospitality. How is showing hospitality a way of showing love? In what ways can we love others well by showing hospitality? What does hospitality require? What does it not require?
11. In what ways are you loving and caring well for those that are forgotten, neglected, or mistreated in your life? How can we better remember and love these people in our lives?

**Context:** John provides instruction to Christians to avoid sinning and instead to love one another. This love for others, however, is only from God in that He first loved us.

**1 John 3:16–18 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. <sup>17</sup> But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? <sup>18</sup> Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

**1 John 4:7–12 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup> In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

- 12. John's instruction in chapters 3 and 4 is for us to avoid sinning and evil deeds. He goes on then to mention the word "love" more than 30 times in these two chapters. Why do you think he puts this emphasis on love as a response to avoid sinning and evil deeds?**
- 13. Where does love come from? How does Jesus's love for us compel us towards loving him and others?**
- 14. What sort of love are we called to? What are some ways we can love "in deed and in truth"?**
- 15. Since God has loved us, what are we instructed to do? How might our families, church, community, city, nation, and world be changed if we love others well?**

#### **IV. Responding in Prayer**

- Pray for each of us to be compelled to love Jesus because of what he's already done for us (1 John 4:9–10).
- Pray that each of us would demonstrate Jesus's love by respecting the dignity and value of every person.
- Pray that each of us would sacrificially love and serve our neighbors and that they would be drawn to a love for Jesus as a result.
- Pray that our church's unity would be increased as we show a HGPF-love to one another, and as a result our witness to others would increase.

Continue to pray that our church grows in our pursuit of glorifying God by becoming a hub for an all-ages disciple-making movement, equipping one another to