

Facilitator:

1. Open with Prayer
2. Welcome any newcomers
3. Try to keep your discussion to an hour and a half at the most.

CONNECT Group study questions for January 15, 2017

Title: *(Your name)*, do you love me?

Miscellaneous:

Remember to announce the Marriage to Cherish January 21st.

A training will be offered on the morning of January 28 from 10-11:00 a.m. for anyone interested in being a buddy for a child or youth with special needs. Child Protection Training will immediately follow from 11-12 for anyone who has not taken it or needs a refresher (CPT is required every two years for anyone working with children or youth) No prior experience required, but compassion, flexibility, and a willingness to serve are essential! If interested, please email Christine Young at christine@crossroads-summerville.org

Children:

In KidsConnect, we have been learning about Daniel and his friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. What are some ways that these young people showed their love for God even when it was difficult? How do you know that they loved God even more than they loved their own lives? (obedience in a foreign land among people who did not love God, refusing to worship Nebuchadnezzar's idol even though it meant being thrown in the fire, praying to and worshiping God alone even though it meant a night in the lions' den)

What are some ways we can give Jesus our best? (consider ideas that a child might think of, such as allowance, free time, attention, toys and games, etc.)

General:

Read Matthew 22:34-38

But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" 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. This is the great and first commandment.

Question: Is it important that Pastor Peppy's sermon series *to love God, love others, love ministry, and love the lost* begins with loving God? What happens if we do—even love doing—any or all of the other three without first loving God?

Read John 21:15-17

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep.

Question: What do you think you would say to Jesus if he asked, Do you love me?

Question: Go back to the last few verses of John 20 and read through John 21:15-17. Try to figure out what Jesus was referring to when he said to Peter, "Do you love me more than these?" Was Peter to love him more than the other disciples? More than fishing? More than a fish-fry breakfast on the beach?

Read Mark 12:41-44

And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. And he called his disciples to him and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

Question: Jesus' lesson for the disciples is clear, or is it? Discuss the practical aspects of giving out of abundance versus giving out of poverty. Then discuss the spiritual aspects of giving out of abundance versus giving out of poverty.

Read Malachi 1:6-8

“A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my fear? says the LORD of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name. But you say, ‘How have we despised your name?’ By offering polluted food upon my altar. But you say, ‘How have we polluted you?’ By saying that the LORD's table may be despised. When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that not evil? And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that not evil? Present that to your governor; will he accept you or show you favor? says the LORD of hosts. And now entreat the favor of God, that he may be gracious to us. With such a gift from your hand, will he show favor to any of you? says the LORD of hosts. Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might not kindle fire on my altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, says the LORD of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hand. For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations, says the LORD of hosts.

Question: In what way do we offer God our leftovers?

Question: We no longer offer animal sacrifices on the Lord's altar, but we do bring offerings to him. What offering would make people think we despise God? What offering would make his name “great among the nations?” **Facilitator:** Joni Erickson Tada has said she wants to “make God famous.”

Read Job 1:6-22

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. The LORD said to Satan, “From where have you come?” Satan answered the LORD and said, “From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.” And the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?” Then Satan answered the LORD and said,

“Does Job fear God for no reason? Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face.” And the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand.” So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

Now there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, and there came a messenger to Job and said, “The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, and the Sabeans fell upon them and took them and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.” While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, “The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you.” While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, “The Chaldeans formed three groups and made a raid on the camels and took them and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.” While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, “Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, and behold, a great wind came across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young people, and they are dead, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. And he said, “Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.”

In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.

Question: Why is Job's response to worship so surprising after experiencing these trials? Why do some people get bitter towards God when they experience a trial? **Facilitator:** The Lord had confidence in Job. Suggest that group members ask themselves if the Lord has reason to be confident in them?

Question: Look at this again: “*Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped.*” What purpose does worship have in the expression of grief? How do you suppose Job

worshiped? Did he sing praise songs? What can Job teach us about how to worship God?

Read Psalm 139:23-24

*Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts!
And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!*

Question: What is hypocrisy? Do you think hypocrisy exists in the church? Talk about the problem of having one foot in the world and one foot in the kingdom of God.

Question: Could it be that God knows our heart better than we do? What has to happen between “see if there be any grievous way in me” and “lead me in the way everlasting?”

Read Romans 12:1

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Question: What does it mean to present our bodies as a holy, acceptable and living sacrifice?