

# LOVE IS THE WAY

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

# WEEK TWO

Chapters 3&4: Can love really change the world?

*"I don't do great things. I do small things with great love." –Mother Teresa*

Welcome everyone to this second session. Read the quote above, and invite people to check in by sharing their response to the question below. This time, you might want to introduce the practice of mutual invitation where one person shares and then invites the next person to share and so forth until all have shared.

## Connecting:

Invite the group to reflect aloud on this question:

- Where have you experienced a small act of love this week that made a difference?

Close this section with prayer. You might use the prayer to the right as your weekly opening prayer.

## Covenanting:

Review the covenant developed last time, and ask the group if it still holds and whether there's anything they want to adjust after the last session. Ask them to say "yes" to this renewed covenant.

**Bible Study:** Romans 12: 1-2, 9-19 (MSG)

*"So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.*

*Love from the center of who you are; don't fake it. Run for dear life from evil; hold on for dear life to good. Be good friends who love deeply; practice playing second fiddle.*

*Don't burn out; keep yourselves fueled and aflame. Be alert servants of the Master, cheerfully expectant. Don't quit in hard times; pray all the harder. Help needy Christians; be inventive in hospitality.*

*Bless your enemies; no cursing under your breath. Laugh with your happy friends when they're happy; share tears when they're down. Get along with each other; don't be stuck-up. Make friends with nobodies; don't be the great somebody.*

Loving God, fill my heart with the love that you freely give. Make love my first and last thoughts. May I love others and freely give to them. Make my spirit a spirit of joy, happiness, and love for both my friends and my enemies. Help me love abundantly as you have loved me. Amen.

*Based on John 13:34  
DailyPrayerGuide.net*

*Don't hit back; discover beauty in everyone. If you've got it in you, get along with everybody. Don't insist on getting even; that's not for you to do. 'I'll do the judging,' says God. 'I'll take care of it.'*

*Our Scriptures tell us that if you see your enemy hungry, go buy that person lunch, or if he's thirsty, get him a drink. Your generosity will surprise him with goodness. Don't let evil get the best of you; get the best of evil by doing good."*

Read the scripture slowly and meditatively. Invite each person to underline the word or phrase that captures their attention. Invite the group to share their responses to these questions:

- What is your phrase and why is it speaking to you right now?
- What does loving from the center of who you are look and feel like? Can you think of a recent example when you did that?
- What do you find as the greatest stretch for you personally in this scripture?

**Video:** Watch this week's video with Rev. Fred Vanderwerf.

Depending on the size of your group, you may want to move into breakout groups/rooms of three to allow for deeper sharing.

### **Going Deeper:**

Invite the group to reflect aloud on these questions (courtesy of author Kate Bowler, written by Erin S. Lane):

- When describing his grandmother's cooking—and that of other Black migrants—Bishop Curry talks about "making do" and "making new." How could you participate in "making garbage gourmet" in your home, work, or community? What challenging ingredients have you been handed? What golden creations can you cook up with them? What will be your secret sauce?
- Dreamers may get dismissed as fanciful, ethereal, or naive but history proves that dreamers possess a certain tenacity. They're people who refuse to accept and acquiesce to the way things are and instead pray and work for the way things could be. Looked at this way, how are you a dreamer? What are the visions and dreams you are holding with tenacity?
- Consider Martin Luther King, Jr.'s 10 Commandments of Nonviolence at the end of chapter 4. Do these still stand the test of time 50 years later? How can the church re-form itself as a community of love grounded in these practices today?

### **Going Out:**

Invite the group to share responses to these questions:

- What is your takeaway idea from this week's reading/video?
- What is one thing that you commit to do to help you sustain the energy to love?

### **Closing:**

Show "Imagine" from "Glee" at <https://tinyurl.com/imagine-glee>.

Invite people to name one prayer they have for our world as their closing blessing.

Remind the group to read Chapters 5 and 6 for next week.