



**I LOVE MY CHURCH**  
BUILDING A STRONGER CHURCH

**Presented by**  
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The **I LOVE MY CHURCH** Campaign will help us:

- To embrace the love of God.
- To deepen the love of God within our church.
- To reach out to our neighbors with the love of God in practical ways.
- To find fulfillment and spiritual growth through loving God and his church.

Whose Church are we? We are **His Church**.

*“And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock **I will build my church**, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” Matthew 16:17-19*

## LESSON #1 – I LOVE MY CHURCH – INTRODUCTION

### Primary Verses for Study

*“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” —John 13:34-35*

### Guiding Thought/Central Truth

Jesus' command to us as Christians is that all of our interactions must be bathed in love. How do our actions project love to one another in our church, and how will the love we have for those in our church affect the way we interact with our world?

### Getting Started

You will need a note card and pen. As you start your time together, write down:

- Your name
- How long you have been attending the church
- The reason you decided to attend this Bible study
- What is most meaningful to you out of these choices: a special gift, time with a friend, a kind word, a big hug, or an unexpected helping hand

### Introduction

Our church has never been about the building where we meet or the programs that we conduct or even how great the preaching and music are, but it's about the people who gather together there. It's about us. Over the next few weeks, we will be focusing on how we as a group of believers can love our church more. How can we meet the needs of the individuals in our congregation? What does it look like to the community around us when we love each other the way that Jesus loves us?

### Think It Through

*Read John 13:34-35.*





- What effect does a congregation's behavior have on people who do not attend that church?

Loving one another is risky. It can get personal. It can make us vulnerable. It can also give us insight into our Christian walk, provide us opportunities to serve, and open us up to irreplaceable friendships. Jesus commanded it for us. And by our love for one another, the world will know Jesus' love for them.

### **How Does This Apply to Me?**

What is the biggest obstacle you personally need to overcome in order to show love to the people in this church?

What steps are you willing to take to overcome that obstacle?

### **How Does This Apply to Our Church?**

If half of the people in this small group decided to extend an act of love within our church this week, how would it affect the congregation? How would it affect the congregation if they committed to an act of love every week for a month?

What steps can we take to make our church renowned for its love?

### **What Am I Going to Do with What I Know Now?**

Take a moment to pray and ask God to bring to mind one person in your church. If you know the person's name, write it down on a piece of paper. If not, write down a few words describing the person. Now ask God to show you one way that you can love that person this week. He may give you something simple like pray for them every day, or He may give you something riskier like meeting a need they have.





## LESSON #2 – LOVE IN COMMUNITY

### Primary Verses for Study

*“Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”* —Hebrews 10:22-25

*“So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.”* —Romans 12:5

*“The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him.”* —1 John 2:10

### Guiding Thought/Central Truth

We need each other. As Christians traveling the same path and experiencing similar life challenges, why wouldn't we want to learn from those who have walked the path before us? They act as the GPS in our lives. They can show us how to successfully navigate the journey even when there is heavy traffic ahead! This week focuses on how building relationships—from the smallest of exchanges to the deepest friendships—can spur us on in the journey.

### Getting Started

You will need a note card and pen. Mark an “x” on the card to represent the start of your journey with Jesus. Draw a line from the “x” to represent the ups and downs of your spiritual journey. The line will have hills and valleys depending on each person's story. End the line on the other side of the card to represent where you feel you are spiritually at this moment.

At each peak or valley, write the name of someone who helped you through the valley or encouraged you to reach the peak. Once this is done, spend some time sharing your journey with the group.

Focus on the people who have helped you in your spiritual journey. Try to answer some of these questions:

- Did this person know they had helped you?
- How well did you know them personally?
- Are you still in contact with this person?
- Do you think your journey would have looked different if this person had not been there for you?

### **Introduction**

As a body of believers, we come together with a common need for salvation. Our past and our present bind us in unity with each other. Our journeys may not look the same, but our destination is common. As we strive to be more obedient to Jesus, we need those who have traveled the road before us to help show us the way.

### **Think It Through**

*Read Hebrews 10:22-25.*

- How does Hebrews 10:22 remind you of your life before Christ?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- In what ways can you hold on to your faith without wavering? Can this be accomplished without the encouragement of the church?

- What significance does the church have in helping you to avoid the habits of your life before Christ?

- List the ways these verses say the church should intervene in a Christian's walk with Jesus.

- In what ways does our church exemplify these traits?



- How has someone encouraged you without even knowing they did so?

- How can loving the people in our church help us to avoid stumbling in our Christian walk?

Love requires action. Jesus intended for us to come together as one body in unity to withstand the difficulties that would come our way as we follow after Him. In the book *The Lord of the Rings* by J. R. R. Tolkien, nine characters are thrown together on a dangerous quest. The characters are all very different from each other. Some of the group are strong in might, and others are strong in character. Some seem useless but later show a hidden attribute. Several of them show weakness, and the group helps them to overcome it. In the end, it's obvious that not one in their party would have survived without every one of the others helping along the way. Jesus has planned for our survival. We need each other to accomplish His will. The first step on the journey is learning to love our church.

### **How Does This Apply to Me?**

What are some things you are good at doing? How can you share that skill with someone in the church?

In what ways have you personally helped someone along in their Christian journey?

What can you do to make it easier for someone to connect with you at church?

**How Does This Apply to Our Church?**

How can we as a church be more intentional about helping people in their walk with Jesus?

What can we do to make it easier for people to find connections in our church?

If we made the assumption that everyone who sits around us in church needs some kind of encouragement, how would our actions change?

### **What Am I Going to Do with What I Know Now?**

This Sunday morning challenge yourself to assume that everyone sitting around you desperately needs encouragement. Think of one small way to show them that you sincerely care about them. It may be a hug, a kind word, a smile, or simply trying to learn their name. Allow yourself to be open to sharing someone's journey.





## LESSON #3 – LOVE BY SERVING

### Primary Verses for Study

*“Our people must also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful.” —Titus 3:14*

*“Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.” —James 3:13*

*“For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” —Galatians 5:14*

*“Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.” —1 Peter 2:12*

### Guiding Thought/Central Truth

As Christians, we must learn how to act in good deeds. This shows others the depth of our love for Jesus and for each other. It helps us grow in wisdom and truth. It's a protection for us and serves as a witness to a world that would slander us and portray Christians in negative ways. Our behavior becomes our defense when we serve others.

### Getting Started

You will need a note card and pen. Write down a need you know of from someone within the church. Keep the person anonymous; just write down the need. If you can't think of something, it's okay. Once the cards are collected, someone should read them out loud. After each card is read, assess if anyone in the group—or someone you know—has the skill or ability to meet that need. Write down the solutions on the note card. Some needs may be bigger than we can easily solve. Take time to pray for God to meet these needs.









- What are some ways that we can support Christians in our church who are under attack?

### **How Does This Apply to Me?**

If I don't share my needs with people in my church, how does it impact their spiritual walk?

Are there people in my life with needs that I have the ability to meet currently?  
What is preventing me from serving them?

### **How Does This Apply to Our Church?**

Has there ever been a time in your life when you desperately needed help but you didn't tell anyone about it? How would you suggest that our church meet the needs of people who don't tell us what they need?

What can we do as a church to encourage one another to continue to serve despite the fact that our character has been misrepresented by the world?

How can we make it easier for people to recognize opportunities to serve and meet needs within our church?

**What Am I Going to Do with What I Know Now?**

Make a plan to follow through to help the church members in need. Do everything you can to meet the needs before your small group meets again. Allow God to teach you to love through this act of service. Be ready next week to share with the group about your experience.





## LESSON #4 – LOVE BY GIVING

### Primary Verses for Study

*“And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them. And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales and lay them at the apostles’ feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need.” —Acts 4:32-35*

*“But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either.” —1 Timothy 6:6-7*

*“And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.” —Hebrews 13:16*

### Guiding Thought/Central Truth

Loving your church means giving to meet needs. It also means authentically making your needs known so that others can express love to you. God uses these acts of sacrifice to show the world the testimony of Jesus. Our money and possessions only hold value when they are used to build upon our riches in heaven.

### Getting Started

As a group, share testimonies about how you met the needs that were shared last week. Be sure to share what you learned from this experience.

If time allows, discuss these questions as a group:

- What is your most meaningful possession (sentimental)?

- What is your most valuable possession (monetary)?
  - Are these two items the same?
    - How easy would it be for you to part with your most valuable possession? Your most meaningful possession?

### **Introduction**

Sometimes our love for the church prompts us to sacrifice our money and possessions. When we understand the value of our earthly goods versus the value of contentment in Christ, giving to those in need becomes much easier.

### **Think It Through**

*Read Acts 4:32-35.*

The early church understood that their possessions only held value because they provided them the ability to love those with needs in the church. They were willing to sacrifice what they had so that a Christian brother or sister would not be needy. Their faith made it possible for the apostles to preach about Jesus with great power because the world had evidence that He could change lives.

- Among the people who attend our church, how many do you think may have a financial need?

- In your opinion, what prevents churches from making sure that no one among them is needy today?
  
- Do you think this level of sacrificial giving is relevant in the modern church? Why or why not?
  
- Do you think that if everyone here pooled everything we have, there would be enough money to meet the financial needs of every person in the room?
  
- How do you think that act of love would be perceived by the world around us?



*Read Hebrews 13:16.*

In our society, we honor those who risk their lives to save other people. Sacrifice attracts attention from the world. It also attracts attention from God. It pleases Him when we give to those in need and seek godliness as our contentment.

- What do you think we lose as a church when we withhold financial blessings?

- What do we gain as a church when we freely give in love for one another?  
What do we gain as individuals?

- What would make it easier for you to sacrifice your possessions and money?

- What kinds of spiritual growth do we deny to people in our church by not sharing our genuine needs with them?

The first church knew that love meant sacrifice. They used their possessions to make sure that everyone's needs were met in their congregation. They shared what they had, and because of their love, no one among them was needy. They relied on godliness to make them content. The generosity of the church in meeting all of the needs among them allowed the apostles to preach with great power. The actions of the church bore witness to the change that Jesus could bring to a life. Everyone was experiencing God's grace, and it was a compelling witness to their world.

