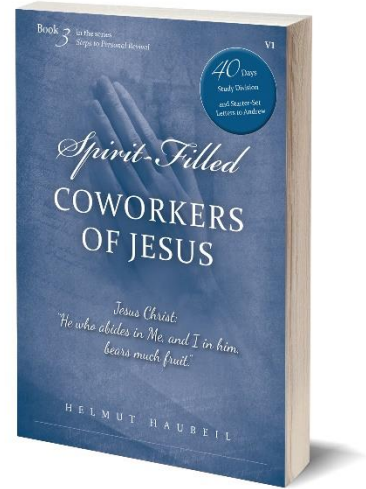


Seeking REVIVAL



DAY 2 – GRASPING THE GIFT

“How wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ” (Ephesians 3:18, NIV).

Receive, Surrender, Grow

How can we experience the fullness of God’s love?

Read what the apostle Paul says in Ephesians 3:14-21 (NIV).

1. First, we need to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. “I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being” (verse 16).
2. Next, we surrender our lives to Christ and live in a close, continual relationship with Him “so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith” (verse 17).
3. Then our faith grows and matures through Christ and the Holy Spirit in us. We are “rooted and established in love” (verse 17).

The result? We experience the fullness of God’s love. He gives us the power “together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ” (verse 18).

God’s Love Passes Every Test

Consider the parable of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15:11-32. One day the younger son went to his father (who symbolizes God) and declared that he wanted to leave home and live his own life. Evidently his father’s household rules (God’s

commandments) didn't suit him. The son demanded his inheritance, which he wasn't even entitled to at that time, but the father gave him his portion. The father gave him complete freedom because he loved him and respected his choice (just as God does with us).

Then the son journeyed to a faraway place and proceeded to spend his money on wild parties and loose women. As the money dwindled, his circle of "friends" became smaller, and eventually he had nothing left. To make matters worse, a famine hit the region where he lived. Desperate to survive, he looked for work, but the only position he found was working as a swineherd. Hunger tormented him, but he wasn't even allowed to eat the pig feed. As often happens during hardships, he began to consider his life. He realized all of his father's workmen had enough to eat while he was starving, so he vowed to return to his father and say,

"Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants" (verses 18, 19).

The son started home with mixed feelings, but his father was already watching for him. Full of compassion, the father ran forward, fell on his son's neck, and kissed him, even though the son must have been dirty and smelly. Before the son could finish his whole confession, the father called servants to bring the best clothes and prepare a feast. Clearly, he loved his son just as before. In this story we hear the full story of salvation—the repentance and confession of the sinner, the Father who waits longingly, and the joyous welcome when we return. God loves us unconditionally! But we need to go to Him, just as the son went back to his father. The love of God passes every test!

He will not fail to welcome you. Only when the son returned could the father pour out all his love. Only then was the son open to receiving all that his father wanted to offer. At last nothing stood in the way of their intimate relationship, and the son could experience the complete goodness of his father, who had never stopped waiting for him.

Back to the question – **how can we experience the complete fullness of God's love?**

By living in full, daily surrender to Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. And when God's love fills our lives, we become channels of His love to others; the more we give, the more we receive. Ellen White says, "You need a daily baptism of the love that in the days of the apostles made them all of one accord" (Testimonies for the Church, vol. 8, p. 191). And why is it so important to understand this divine love? "Paul saw that the character of Christ must be understood before men could love Him or view the cross with the eye of faith. Here must begin that study which shall be the science and the song of the redeemed through all eternity" (The Acts of the Apostles, p. 273).

What a joy to study the matchless, many-faceted love of our Savior! Won't you choose today to turn your eyes on Jesus?

Praying God's Word

What is the greatest commandment?

"Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'... And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'" (Matthew 22:37,39).

Father, thank You for loving me. Please help me to love You with all my heart, all my being, all my emotions, all my strength. Thank You for already answering this request according to Your will. I want to love my neighbor with Your help. Make me a channel of Your love.

How can we grasp the depth of God's love?

"I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ" (Ephesians 3:16-18, NIV).

Father, I ask that You strengthen me from the inside out through Your Holy Spirit. May Christ live in me through faith and guide me so I can be firmly rooted in His love. Since this request is according to Your will, I thank You for hearing me and answering.

More texts to pray with: Romans 5:5 and 1 John 4:7-8

Personal Thoughts and Discussion Guide

1. *Why can we be sure that God is really love?*
2. *Why is it so important to know God's character? What are the possible consequences of having a false concept of God?*
3. *What difference is there between the general blessings and the special, supernatural blessings from God?*
4. *How can I "grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ"? (Ephesians 3:17 NIV)*

Our Prayer Time

Contact your prayer partner/s and discuss the topic.

Pray with your prayer partner ...

1. ... for an understanding heart to perceive God's character.
2. ... for a clean and obedient heart.
3. ... for divine love, which transforms us into His image.
4. ... for God's special, supernatural blessing

Additional notes for Group Leaders

from Helmut Haubeil

It is very valuable to read the relevant chapter before the group lesson. (See Reference)

It's about the love of God (Greek: agape). We don't naturally have this love. It only comes into our lives through the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5: 5). This love is what Jesus understands by loving like him.

Getting the biblical view of God's love is very valuable. It connects us much more closely with our wonderful God. Unfortunately, we are influenced by the spirit of this time.

God's love is inseparable from freedom. God totally respects our freedom. However, this also means that He can only give us His general love for all people as long as we have not fully entrusted ourselves to Him.

If we feel a lack of love in our life, then we may also pray for love. (Rom 5:5)

This topic is covered in more detail in:

" Spirit-Filled Coworkers of Jesus" by Helmut Haubeil

Chapter 1: God loves you!

How can I experience the fullness of God's love?

What role does my trust in God play?

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