

life groups

NLC Life Group Through the Bible Study
Extension Campuses

Week of September 24, 2017

Sermon: Real Love in an Angry World
—*Squiggly Lines Are Not Real Love*



Life Group Schedule

15 MIN Eat, Meet & Greet

15 MIN Ice Breaker Game: **Name That Person.** Divide into two teams. Give each person a blank card and ask each person to write five little known facts about themselves on their card. Include all leaders in this game too. **Ex:** I have a pet iguana, I was born in Iceland, my favorite food is Spam, my grandmother is called Doris and my favorite color is red. Collect the cards into two team piles. Draw one card from the opposing team pile. Each team tries to name the person in as few clues as possible. Five points if they get it on the first clue, then 4, 3, 2, 1, 0. The team with the most points wins. (**Note:** if you select the most obscure facts first, it will increase the level of competition and general head scratching!)

OPENING PRAYER (PLEASE PRAY FOR PS RICK AND HIS FAMILY)

45–60 MIN *Real Love in an Angry World—Squiggly Lines Are Not Real Love*

- The world is getting darker and angrier, but so is the church—angry, frustrated, and not very good at loving people who are in trouble.
 - › It is common to want to express a lot of love, because you feel like you have to make up for all the judgmentalism.
 - › But there is also currently a trend to redraw the lines of what the Word of God says in the name of love, but this is not love.
- It's obvious that we love people.
 - › It also needs to be obvious that we adore the Word of God and not try and redraw it with squiggly lines, no longer reflecting the Word's original intent.
- A lot of people know they need God, but if we don't tell them the truth, how will they know how to settle their relationship with God?
 - › Some of us walk over like fools to share what happened to us in Christ. Others act like it never happened.
 - › Some of us bring over a lot of truth with anger and frustration in it, and others don't even know what the truth is anymore.
- Grace without truth is not grace; truth without grace is not truth.
- We don't want to be foolish in the way we talk to others about the truth, but we also don't want to pretend like we don't know anything.
 - › Like Pastor Rick's story about the dead cat. It wasn't the best idea the way he presented the truth to his neighbor, but it also wouldn't have been wise—and he would have been lying—if he had pretended he didn't know what happened.

HAVE OTHERS TAKE TURNS READING 1 PETER 3:15-18

- Pastor Rick talked about a man who was in adultery who was also

avoiding Rick. Rick finally said to him, “I saw you hiding from me. It’s clear I haven’t loved you well in this season, and I’m sorry.”

- › Pastor Rick still called what the man was doing sin. He didn’t go to the man’s Instagram account and comment about how cool his picture was with his lover. Instead, he loved the man and kept the truth clear.
- Many Christians today are so in love with themselves that they are no longer in love with the Lord.
 - › It gets to a point where we think we love people more than God does, because we give more grace than the Word does. But more grace is not more love. There has to be truth in it, too.
- On one occasion in particular—the story of the woman caught in adultery—Jesus demonstrated a beautiful balance between standing firm in the truth of who he is, while treating everyone around him with kindness and respect.
 - › Jesus called things that were right right and things that were wrong wrong, because you can’t have hope without that.
 - › Jesus said to woman in adultery – “Neither do I condemn you...” but he didn’t water down sin. He called sin “sin” and said, “Go, and sin no more.”
 - › Jesus demonstrated love to her by speaking the truth.
 - › “There are times when you need to speak the truth. In those times, take a cue from Jesus and remain calm, communicate slowly and clearly, and maybe even with a quieter tone than you normally use. You certainly don’t raise your voice, and you definitely don’t walk out on someone, even if you really disagree with them. If you feel like your blood is about to boil over or you’re about to say something ridiculous or embarrassing, take a cue from Jesus and doodle on a napkin until you calm down.”—
From *Real Love in an Angry World*
- Example: God invented sex, but only within the context of marriage, not before marriage.
 - › A Biblical marriage is extremely clear. Marriage is God’s intellectual property between a man and a woman.
- People want to talk about how “love” means including and accepting everybody.

HAVE SOMEONE READ JEREMIAH 6:14

ASK OTHERS TO TAKE TURNS READING 2 TIMOTHY 3:1-5

- With racism, riots, and white supremacy, people are rising up in anger, and when you think about how Jesus would respond, you just want to walk over to someone and show love!
 - › But if they have crossed the boundaries of what the Word says, and they want to know what it says, you can’t just kick out truth.

HOW DO YOU HAVE JESUS-TYPE LOVE IN A COMPLEX WORLD?

- You have to know what the truth is, which means you need to know what the Word of God says. Take Biblical marriage, for example:

REVIEW GALATIANS 5:19-21, HEBREWS 13:4, MARK 10:6-9, 1 THESS. 4:3-5, 1 COR. 6:19-20

- There's not a righteous person in this room. We all need grace, yet the Scripture is impeccably clear:

(1 COR. 6:20B) "...therefore, honor God with your bodies."

- If just over the next hill the road drops off 300 feet, and all you say is "I love you!," that's not love. Maybe you say, "I love you, so you better stop. Now!" That's love.

Q1. Do you believe you know the Word of God with confidence? If not, discuss ways you can grow in your understanding of God's Word.

HOW DO WE LIVE WITHOUT SQUIGGLY LINES?

1. Don't be dumb.

PROVERBS 11:30 "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who is wise wins souls."

- It's never up to us to argue to change people's minds.
 - › The Bible doesn't ask us to change minds. It asks for us to change hearts through His Name. The only way that can happen is through wisdom. Check out this verse:

COLOSSIANS 4:5-6 (NLT) "Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversations be gracious and attractive, so that you will have the right response for everyone."

- God has an incredible plan to reach the person you're trying to love.

2 SAM 14:14 "All of us must die eventually, then our lives are like the water spilled out on the ground and cannot be gathered up again. But God does not just sweep life away; instead, He devises ways to bring us back when we have been separated from Him."

Q2. What are practical ways you can practice using wisdom in your approach to someone who hates Christians, is an atheist, or has their own ideas?

2. Don't be a tyrant.

- Don't be the church that pickets military funerals. Instead,

remember this promise from the Word:

2 PETER 3:9 “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

3. Don't compromise.

- The Word of God is the standard to show us when we have drifted.

HEBREWS 2:1 (NLT) “So we must listen very carefully to the truth that we have heard, or we may drift away from it.

HEBREWS 4:12-13 (MSG) “God means what he says. What he says goes. His powerful Word is sharp as a surgeon’s scalpel, cutting through everything, whether doubt or defense, laying us open to listen and obey. Nothing and no one is impervious to God’s Word. We can’t get away from it—no matter what.”

ROMANS 12:2 (NLT) “Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.”

- Look at any squiggly lines you may be drawing. Even right now, ask the Lord to search your heart and show you anything inside of you that is not like Him.
 - › He gives us clear lines again because some of our lines have gotten way too squiggly. That’s not Real Love in an Angry World.

Q3. Are there areas in your life, in your relationships with others, where you’ve backed away from the truth in the Word of God?

Q4. If so, do you know why? Maybe you feel intimidated, because you think you don’t know as much as others do. Maybe you tend to get mad, and then you back off because you might say something you’ll regret or that you’ll end up in an argument. Talk about it with your group.

PRAY OVER NEEDS.

ANNOUNCEMENTS