

Small Group Devotional Guide: “Loved at Our Worst”

Main idea summary: God loves the real, messy us. He loved us when we were powerless, sinners, and even enemies — and the cross proves that love. We don't need to “clean up” before coming to God; instead we receive a love we didn't earn, let that love redefine our identity, and accept that Jesus came for us as we are.

Read the passage:

- Read Romans 5:6–8 aloud.

Icebreaker:

- Share one small thing you did this week that felt “not cleaned up” — something imperfect but real (e.g., a mess you made, a conversation that went sideways). Keep it light and non-judgmental.

Discussion questions:

1. Observation: What stands out to you in Romans 5:6–8? Why?
2. Context: What does it mean that Christ loved us “when we were powerless,” “when we were sinners,” and “when we were enemies”? How do those phrases land for you personally?
3. Personal application: Have you ever felt like you needed to “clean up” before coming to God or community? What kept you from coming sooner?
4. Identity: How would your daily decisions change if you truly believed God's love defines you rather than your performance or past?
5. Barriers: What fears or beliefs make it hard for you to receive a love you didn't earn?
6. Action: What is one practical way you can receive and live out God's unconditional love this week (e.g., confess a burden, accept help, stop perfectionism, extend grace to someone)?

Deeper reflection prompts (for quiet time or journaling)

- Write down one phrase from Romans 5:6–8 that you need to internalize. Why does it matter?
- Name one area where you've been trying to “clean up first.” Pray and ask God to meet you there.

Memory verse suggestion:

- Romans 5:8 — “But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (ESV)