

## GROUP Guide: "LOVE" – The Sweet Life

This week we're exploring LOVE as the foundation of Spirit-empowered living. Before we dive in, take a moment to think: Where do you feel the most pressure to prove yourself?

### Living From Approval, Not For It

When you start striving for God's approval, you stop living from God's approval.

Most of us are wired to earn approval through performance. Our families, jobs, and culture all reinforce this: do better, achieve more, prove yourself. But God offers something radically different—unconditional approval that's already yours in Christ.

Read together: Galatians 1:6-7 | 1 Thessalonians 2:4

Discussion starter: How has the performance treadmill shown up in your own life? What does it cost you?

### The Fruit That Flows from the Spirit

Spiritual fruit isn't achieved through self-effort—it's received through yielding to the Holy Spirit.

Here's the paradox: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness—these aren't generated by willpower or determination. They flow from the Holy Spirit as you yield to Him. Love is foundational. When love is at work, all the other fruit naturally follow.

Read together: Galatians 5:22-23 | Galatians 5:26

Discussion starter: What's the difference between trying to be more loving and yielding to the Spirit's love flowing through you?\*

### Love Expressed Through Forgiveness

When you receive God's love, forgiveness naturally grows in your life.

Forgiveness is releasing the debt someone owes you. It sounds simple, but it's only possible when you grasp how much you've been forgiven by God. You can't give away what you haven't received.

Read together: Galatians 5:13-15 | Genesis 33:3-4

Discussion starter: Who is hardest for you to forgive right now? What would it look like to extend to them the forgiveness God has extended to you?

## Love Expressed Through Self-Sacrifice

Self-sacrifice is love taking action for the sake of others.

Jesus gave everything for us. But self-sacrifice isn't about martyrdom or burning yourself out. It becomes natural and joyful when you're secure in God's approval—you're free to give yourself away because your worth is already established in Christ.

Read together: John 15:13 | 1 Corinthians 13:1-8a

Discussion starter: Where is God inviting you to move from forgiveness into active sacrifice? What would that cost you—and what might it gain?

### Closing Reflection

Return to where we started. Where did you feel pressure to earn approval? Now imagine living from God's approval instead. What shifts?

### For Next Week

Reflect on one area where you can practice receiving God's approval instead of striving for it. Notice what changes when you yield rather than strive.