

Dgroup Discussion Guide for August 20, 2018  
**50 Shades of Love**

**Scripture: Ephesians 5:29**

We tend to associate love with feelings, but love is so much more than an emotion. The Lord actually commands us to love one another (John 15:12), so this tells us that contrary to popular belief, love is an action or decision on our part.

One “shade” of love is self love. Jesus tells us in Matthew 22:39 to **‘love your neighbors as yourself.’** You cannot give to others what you do not have, so how can we expect to love others if we do not first love ourselves? One thing we have to remember, however, is that this definition of “loving yourself” is different from being a “lover of self,” as is described in 2 Timothy 3:2. The term in 2 Timothy 3:2 is *phil*, for “friendship,” and *autos*, for “self.” In this context, “lover of self” refers to self-serving people whose “purpose in life is to satisfy their own ungodly desires” (Jude 1:18). Biblical self love, such as in Ephesians 5:28, is *agape*, or selfless, love.

Apart from knowing that love is an action, we must also know what it means to love someone. Ephesians 5:29 says, **“No one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church.”** This is the simplest definition of love: to nourish (*provide*) AND to cherish (*protect*).

NOURISH

Love nourishes, or “brings to maturity,” through growth. Luke 2:52 says that during His time on earth, Jesus grew in:

- Wisdom (Mentally)
- Stature (Physically)
- Favor with God (Spiritually)
- Favor with men (Relationally)

Just as Jesus never stopped growing, we as His followers are also called to mature. The moment we stop growing, we regress.

CHERISH

To cherish means to protect from anything that could hinder one’s maturation process.

On that note, we can conclude that God is the perfect example of love. He provides for us, as evidenced in Jeremiah 29:11: **‘For I know the plans that I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans for welfare and not**

**for calamity to give you a future and a hope.'** He also protects us, particularly through his Commandments. Although they might seem to be in place to restrict us, they were actually given by God for our own good (Deuteronomy 10:13).

The Bible provides for us not only the definition of love, but a model of how we should love others. John 15:13 says, **Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.** We only love because God loved us first. He is then the best model of love that we can follow.

*“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”*  
Philippians 2:3-8

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Love Defined. Based on Ephesians 5:28-30 what is the kind of love that God wants from us? Are there instances that makes it difficult for you to practice this kind of love?
2. What is the difficulty of loving yourself? Are you truly able to love others as yourself?
3. How will you provide to and protect your spouse, children, spiritual children, and others, if you truly love them Biblically?

IMPORTANT

URGENT

NOT SO URGENT



**NOT IMPORTANT**