



God's True Desire for His Children Bible Study

[Please provide: copies of this study for attendees, Bibles, copies of the LWML Pledge (found in the last section of this *reSOURCEs* manual), and hymnals]

It can be said that God's true desire for us, His children, is more in our recognition of Whose we are rather than in what we do. As His servants here on earth, God desires that *through love* [we] *serve one another* (Galatians 5:13b). In this study, we will focus on Whose we are and on what God desires for us, so that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we may serve others with the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Opening Prayer: Lord God, send Your Holy Spirit to work in us so that we might better understand who we are in You and how we might better reflect You as we serve others through Your love. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Who We Were

Read Psalm 51:5, Romans 5:12, and Ephesians 2:1–3. Based on these verses, describe what you were like before faith in Jesus. _____

Separated from God by both the sin we inherit and by the sins we commit, we are in need of rescue. Without faith in Jesus, we are God's enemies who justly deserve eternal suffering and death.

Read John 3:16. Why did God rescue us? _____

How did He do so? See also 1 Peter 2:24. _____

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for having rescued us from eternal death through the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Whose We Are Now

Jesus died so that we "might live with Him and for Him in peace and joy, now and forever" (*Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*, CPH ©2017, Question 176, p. 189).

Through the faith given to us through God's Word and the water of Holy Baptism, we no longer belong to the world and to our sinful flesh. Instead, we are united with Christ by faith. Jesus is ours and we are His.

What do each of the following verses say concerning what it means to belong to Jesus?

Romans 14:8: _____

Galatians 2:20: _____

Titus 2:14: _____

1 Peter 2:9: _____

God desires that as His children we live by faith for Him. By the power of the Holy Spirit as His redeemed people, we are to proclaim Him and to do good works in His name.

Prayer: Dear God, thank You for making us Yours through faith in Jesus our Savior. As Your children, help us to live for You as we serve You and others. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Serving As Jesus' Servants

As we remember that we belong to God, how does God desire us to be as we live for Him? How does knowing who He desires us to be empower us as we serve Him and others?

To begin thinking about how God desires us to be, read Ephesians 4:32 out loud with the others in your group. According to this verse, what are three things God desires us to be?

1. _____ to one another,
2. _____,
3. _____ one another as God in Christ _____ you.

What does it mean to *be kind* to one another? _____

Why is being kind an important attribute? _____

Name some specific ways you can show kindness as you serve the Lord by serving others.

Prayer: Lord God, daily You show amazing kindness to us as You love and forgive us. May You work in us so that we daily show this same kindness to all. Amen.

God also desires us to be *tenderhearted*. What does this mean? _____

Another word for tenderhearted is compassionate. Compassion can be defined as "two hearts pulling at one load." How is Jesus the perfect example of being tenderhearted? (See also Matthew 11:28.) _____

What special element does being tenderhearted bring to the serving opportunities God places before us? _____

Prayer: Lord God, inspire our hearts to be tenderhearted towards all with whom we come in contact today, just as You are tenderhearted to us. Amen.

Read Colossians 3:13. When we *bear(ing) with one another*, we understand the struggles of others because of our own struggles with temptation and sin (*The Lutheran Study Bible*, CPH ©2009, study note for Colossians 3:13, p. 2047). How does having such an understanding help us serve others? _____

Prayer: Lord God, thank you for sending your Son, Jesus, to die for our sins so that we might be forgiven. Help us to forgive others as You forgive us. Amen.

Read Ephesians 5:1–2. According to verse 1, how does God desire us to be? *Be _____ of God, as beloved children.*

According to verse 2, in what specific way does God want us to imitate Him? _____

Why is sacrificial love at the heart of serving God? _____

What can make sacrificial service in love so difficult? _____

Read Ephesians 4:24. How is it possible for us to serve others in the way that Jesus serves us?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank You for giving Your life to save ours. Please work Your sacrificial love in our hearts so that we may imitate You by unselfishly serving others. In Your name we pray. Amen.

Read Ephesians 5:18b-21. With Whom are we to be filled? _____

How is this possible? _____

What is possible when the Holy Spirit works in us? _____

Name some specific situations where you can serve others with *psalms and hymns and spiritual songs* (v. 19). _____

What does it mean to submit to another person? _____

Read Philippians 2:3–8. Jesus set aside the glory of heaven to submit to His Father’s will when He came to earth to serve us and to save us. How does knowing this help us to look to the needs of others as Jesus’ servants today? _____

Prayer: Dearest Jesus, You set aside Your glory to come to earth to humbly serve and to give Your life for us. Fill us with the Holy Spirit so that we may submit to Your will and submit to the needs of others. Put Your Word and Your song in our hearts so that we may serve others with the joy that comes from trusting You. Amen.

Read Colossians 3:15–17. While these verses are similar to those you previously read from Ephesians 5, some additional elements for serving others through love are added. What are we to let rule our hearts (v. 15)? _____

How does God desire us to be? _____

What is to *dwell in us richly* (v. 16)? _____

How are we to *do everything* (v. 17)? _____

How might knowing that this is what God desires change the way in which you currently serve Him? _____

Prayer: Dear Lord God, give us the desire to be of the same mind and having the same love so that others will want to know You. Replace our grumbling and complaining with an attitude of gratitude. Let us not be anxious but come to You in prayer with all our needs as You work in us so that we might serve others through Your love. Amen.

Read Romans 12:2. God desires that we *do not be conformed to this world, but to be _____ by the renewal of your mind.* When does God begin this transformation process in us? _____

When we study God’s Word, the Holy Spirit works in us to transform our thinking so that we will no longer be conformed to our own passions or to this world. How is this evident in your own life? _____

How does the transformation God is working in you allow you to be a servant for Him? _____

In a sentence or two, describe what God’s true desire is for you as His child? _____

Read Luke 1:37 and Philippians 4:13. What comfort and strength do these verses give you as you serve others as Jesus’ servant? _____

Closing Prayer: Lord God, Heavenly Father, in Your Word you tell us what Your true desire is for us. Help us, gracious Lord, to be all that You want us to be so that others will see Jesus in our acts of service and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, be drawn to faith in You, our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. In Jesus' saving name we pray. Amen.

Hand out copies of the LWML Pledge and say it together.

Sing: "May We Thy Precepts, Lord, Fulfill," LSB 698, TLH 412, LW 389.

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