

Crazy Love – Study Guide

Chapter 6: When You're In Love

Life Change through Love Exchange

In this chapter I had to ask myself a convicting question, “Do I really love Jesus more than anyone and anything else in this world?” The Christians who can answer “yes” to this question are often times the ones who stand out in our minds. They are the ones who don't live perfect lives but embrace being forgiven. They are the ones who face struggles but have a peace about themselves. They are the ones who have “crazy” testimonies because they are the ones living by faith.

On the other hand, many of us are caught in the cycle of loving others and the things of this world more than Jesus Christ. We know we need to make changes in our lives, but we overlook our sins and get used to living a life in bondage to sin.

Francis writes, “God wants to change us; He died so that we could change” (103).

Do you *really* want to change?

Here's a simplistic flow of thought when we recognize our sins and see the need to change. We ask ourselves the question, “How do I break out of this sinful cycle of loving this world?”

Option #1: Be motivated by fear, which leads to guilt and duty. “I need to try harder to be a better Christian.” This works until the next time you sin.

Option #2: Be motivated by love, which leads to freedom and joy. “I need to ask Jesus to grow my love for Him.” This works because you want to obey and be changed because of the one you love. This is what it means to live in the grace of Jesus Christ and the gospel.

Milton Vincent wrote in “A Gospel Primer” about his burden in needing to maintain his righteous standing before God. When he stopped being led by fear and turned to Jesus' love found in the gospel he was able to write, “I also found the grace of the gospel producing in me a huge passion to love and obey God. In moments of temptation, I enjoyed saying to myself, *‘You know, I can commit this sin, and God's grace would abound to me all the more as He maintains my justified status . . . But it is precisely for this reason that I choose not to commit this sin!’*” (96). Liberating and freeing!

Our hope is that you will experience God's love and that you will be transformed by it so that you will experience what Jesus said in John 10:10, “I have come that [you] may have life, and have it to the full.”

Last Chapter's Key Thought: Examine my life as Christ's disciple.

Key Thought for This Chapter: Examine my love for Jesus.

For Your Mind

1. Write down the main point of the chapter.
 - a.
2. Define the word “love” from a Christian perspective. How is God’s definition different from the world’s definition of “love?”
3. Turn in your Bible to 1 John 4:7-21. Read these verses and underline or highlight when you come to the words “love” or “loved.” This passage can be broken down into three smaller sections.
 - a. *Section 1: Verses 7-12*
 - i. Verse 7: Why are we to love one another?
 - ii. Verse 8 contrasts the truth found in verse 7.
 - iii. Verses 9 and 10 are a description of what love is.
 1. Verse 9: Love is God sending

 2. Verse 10: Love is God sending

 3. Define the word, “propitiation”.
 - iv. Verses 11 and 12: God uses His church to be a visible example of His love. Is there someone at your church who you can “love?”
 - v. Verse 12 ends with two statements about believers. First, “God abides in us” and second, “His love is perfected in us.”
 - b. *Section 2: Verses 13-16*
 - i. Verses 13 through 16 are elaborating on the two statements from verse 12.
 - c. *Section 3: Verses 17-21*
 - i. Verse 17 speaks about what event to come?
 - ii. Verse 18: Re-write this verse. Christians do not have to fear what? (See verse 17). The Bible teaches that those who are genuine believers do not need to fear losing their salvation. Is it reassuring to know that John wrote verse 18? List what Jesus’ death on the cross provided for Christians.

iii. Verse 19 reminds us of where this love originated, not in us, but in God.

For Your Heart

4. Turn in your book to page 100 and re-read John Piper's quote from *God Is the Gospel*. How would you answer the question John Piper poses? Why?
5. Intimacy vs. Reverence: which do you struggle with in your relationship with God?
6. Is it hard for you to say, "I love you Jesus"? Why or why not?

For Your Life

7. Francis says, "There is nothing better than giving up everything and stepping into a passionate love relationship with God." Point to something in your life that indicates you believe those words. If you believe them, there ought to be some evidence in your life that you believe them. If there's nothing to point to, do you have the courage to be honest with God and your friends about it?
8. What kind of baggage do you carry around with you in your life? Make a quick list and then pick one to think about. Take some time searching the Bible and asking the Lord to begin to bring change in that one area of your life. Let that one area come under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
9. Turn to page 110 and begin re-reading the section on "SomeOne I Can Be Real With." Don't sprint, take a stroll. Read a sentence and then pause to speak with Jesus.

Challenge for the Week

After spending a number of weeks going through Jesus' seven sayings from the cross I was really looking forward to celebrating Easter. Jesus' death on cross and his resurrection from the dead were both absolutely necessary.

What comes to mind when you think of Easter? Eggs, lilies, candy, fake plastic grass, Peeps? I hope that we would also think about victory, celebration, new life, power, amazement, and love! I hope this past Easter helped deepen your love for Jesus and all that He went through in order to save us.

What can you do this week to respond to Jesus' love for you as shown on the cross and by being raised from the dead? Do something tangible.

Be ready to share in your group what you did and the result.