

Greater Pleasant Branch Baptist Church
November 2020 Sunday School Lesson Plan

Unit III. Godly Love among Believers

Quarterly Goal. The membership of Greater Pleasant Branch Baptist Church will explore the power of godly love and demonstrate a selfless and inclusive love toward others.

Focus Question to be answered and applied from these lessons: How can the members of Greater Pleasant Branch Baptist Church demonstrate Godly love in practical ways?

The following questions and application suggestions are provided for discussion and decisions during the study of this unit.

Lesson 9. Upside-down Love

Central Truth. Godly love for others is demonstrated in (selfless and sacrificial) service to others.

Use the following questions for discussion with your “Godly Love Cell” team and leader. [Please read the lesson Introduction on pages 50-51 and the Biblical Context to get an idea of the spiritual discipline this lesson teaches and should be practiced.]

A Reversal of Roles [John 13:1-5]

1. Page 52, paragraph 1. How did Jesus demonstrate the principle of selfless and sacrificial love?
2. Page 52, paragraph 2. How was His action an example of “Upside Down Love?”
3. Page 52, paragraph 2. What is the lesson believers are to learn and apply from Jesus’s act of selfless service?
4. Summarize the spiritual discipline taught in this section of the lesson. Note this principle applies to leaders in the church as well.

Misunderstanding and Rejection of Roles [John 13:6-15]

5. Page 53, paragraph 1. Why were Peter and the other disciples unable to understand the meaning of Jesus’s washing their feet?
6. Page 53, paragraph 1. What does Jesus’s response to Peter teach about salvation?
7. Pages 53, 54, paragraph 2. In the context of this lesson, what is the spiritual discipline required to maintain a relationship with Christ and humbly serve others?
8. Top of page 54. Respond to What Do You Think?

A New Kind of Love [John 13:34-35]

9. Page 54, paragraph 1. What was the final proof that Christ selflessly and sacrificially loved His disciples to the end? How does this relate to showing Upside Down Love for others?
10. Page 54, paragraph 1. How were the disciples to survive following Jesus's physical departure?
11. Page 54, paragraph 1. What is the ultimate result of following Christ's example of selfless, sacrificial love for one another?
12. Page 54. Respond to What do You Think? Also, discuss the personal requirements for each of us practicing the spiritual discipline this lesson teaches.

Summarize what this lesson has taught us to do if we are Christ's disciples.

Application.

- **“Godly Love Cells”:** As a cell (group), brainstorm practical ways to humbly serve others. Agree on and select one way and do it this week. You will be asked to provide a report of your project next week. It may become an ongoing one, but the most important thing is to “practice” this lesson if we are going to strengthen our spiritual growth and the witness of Greater Pleasant Branch.
- **Individual:** From the discussion your cell had or from your personal reflection of the requirements for demonstrating Godly love to others, what are your “grow” areas? Select an area of personal growth you need to improve and commit to begin working to improve or reinforce it. You are encouraged to ask a member of your cell to pray with you about your choice [you do not need to reveal the area of growth to them.]

Lesson 10. The Love Connection

Central Truth. Godly love for others requires abiding in Christ (or progressive spirituality).

The central truth is the spiritual discipline believers must practice to demonstrate Godly love for others consistently: the “Love Connection” taught.

Use the following questions for discussion with your “Godly Love Cell” team and leader. [Please read the lesson Introduction on pages 56-57 and the Biblical Context to get an idea of the spiritual discipline this lesson teaches and should be practiced.]

Abiding in Christ Produces Fruit [John 15:4-8]

1. Page 58, paragraph 1. What are the two requirements for remaining in Christ?
2. Page 58, paragraph 1. What is the meaning of remaining in Jesus?
3. Page 58, paragraph 1. If we remain, that is, are continually obedient to Him, what is the result?
4. In the context of this lesson's focus, what is the spiritual fruit?
5. Page 58, paragraph 1. What are the spiritual disciplines required to ensure bearing fruit?

6. Page 58, paragraph 2. What consequences result from failing to abide in Christ for believers? For unbelievers?
7. Page 58, paragraph 2. Identify the specific benefits of bearing fruit.
8. Page 58. Respond to What Do You Think?

Love Perfected [John 15:9-13]

9. Page 59, paragraph 1. Jesus assured the disciples that they would be the recipients of God's love just as He was. What was the spiritual discipline required to realize this blessing?
10. Page 59, paragraph 1. What is a possible reason some Christians are joyless and spiritually inconsistent in demonstrating Godly love toward others?
11. Page 59, paragraph 2. What is required to show Christ's kind of sacrificial love?

The Basis of Friendship [John 15:14-17]

12. Page 60, paragraph 1. How do we become God's/Jesus's friend? [By being obedient]
13. Page 60, paragraph 1. How does the believer gain the privilege of knowing what God the Father commands?
14. Page 60, paragraph 1. Why were believers chosen by Christ?
15. Page 60, paragraph 1. What spiritual disciplines are required to stay fruitful and show Godly love to others?

Summarize what this lesson has taught us to do as Christ's disciples if we are to demonstrate Godly love?

Application

- **Group: Make the "Love Connection" by identifying, planning, and carrying out a selfless act of love for someone or some worthy cause. This might be a repeat or continuation of your previous group assignment.**
- **Individual: The lesson taught the necessity of abiding in Christ in order to show Godly love to others. This week, spend at least thirty minutes of quiet time to "abide in Christ." During this time, draw a photo showing the interconnectedness of the vine, branch, fruit, and gardener in today's lesson text. Spend the remaining time writing about ways you set time aside to practice the disciplines associated with abiding in Christ or strengthen those disciplines already in place in your life.**

Lesson 11. Loving Others

Central Truth. Godly love for others proves the genuineness of our love for Christ and our salvation.

Use the following questions for discussion with your “Godly Love Cell” team and leader. [Please read the lesson Introduction on pages 62-63 and the Biblical Context to get an idea of the spiritual discipline this lesson teaches and should be practiced.]

A spiritual discipline taught by this lesson is we prove that we love Christ and verify our salvation by showing Godly love to others.

Love: The Evidence Test [1 John 3:11-15]

1. Page 64, paragraph 1. What distinguishes God’s children from Satan’s followers? Understand that this love is *agape* and literally means unselfishly seeking the best for others.
2. Page 64, paragraph 1. Why did John emphasize the importance of adhering to the command to love one another?
3. Page 64, paragraph 1. Why is hate abnormal behavior for Christians?
4. Page 64, paragraph 1. What is the spiritual discipline that prevents harboring hate? Pursuing Christlikeness is the process of developing spirituality. What are some other disciplines necessary in this lifelong process? Note that it is impossible to show Godly love unless we are becoming more like Christ!

Love Demonstrated [1 John 3:16-18]

5. Page 65, paragraph 1. How can believers put their unique brand into action?
6. Page 65, paragraph 1. What is the practical spiritual discipline about loving others taught in verses 17 and 18?
7. Page 65. Respond to What Do You Think?

Love Produces Confidence [1 John 3:19-24]

8. Page 66, paragraph 1. Summarize what verses 19-22 teach those who may condemn themselves for failing to live up to God’s standards?
9. Page 66, paragraph 2. What are the spiritual disciplines John identifies as evidence of obeying God’s commandments?

Application

- **Group: Discuss tangible ways to practice showing love through words and actions intentionally. Put a plan in place to follow through on concrete actions to demonstrate love toward your family members and members of this congregation (guests for your congregation).**

- **Individual: Contact one member of this congregation (or your local congregation) you may not know as a friend and show love for them. Examples: offer to pray with and for them; give a word of encouragement, etc.**

Lesson 12. Sharing Love in Truth

Use the following questions for discussion with your “Godly Love Cell” team and leader. [Please read the lesson Introduction on pages 68-69 and the Biblical Context to get an idea of the spiritual discipline this lesson teaches and should be practiced.]

Central Truth. Unselfishly sharing with others demonstrates Godly love among believers.

The spiritual discipline related to this lesson’s purpose is genuinely or honestly sharing with others shows Godly love for them.

Truthful Sharing [Acts 4:32-37]

1. Page 70, paragraph 1. Describe the characteristics of the early church in Jerusalem.
2. Page 70, paragraph 1. What was a contributing factor to the phenomenal growth of this church? What practical discipline is suggested for our congregation to follow if we are obedient to the command to share with others?
3. Page 70, paragraph 1. In what ways did the early church practically demonstrate their love for one another?
4. Page 70, paragraph 1. What spiritual discipline was behind their attitude toward communal sharing?
5. Identify the spiritual disciplines taught in this section believers must practice to follow the example of the early church.

Counterfeit Sharing [Acts 5:1-11]

6. Page 71, paragraph 1. What spiritual disciplines are taught by Barnabas’s generosity?
7. Page 71, paragraph 1. Why was Ananias’s and Sapphira’s sin unnecessary, and what was their suggested motive?
8. Page 71, paragraph 1. Identify this couple’s real sin.
9. Page 72, paragraph 2. The consequence of their sin was immediate judgment ending in their deaths. Why was this the Lord’s discipline and not church discipline?
10. Identify a spiritual discipline believers must maintain as a result of God’s discipline concerning His Church.
11. Page 72, paragraph 2. What are the messages to Greater Pleasant Branch and all local congregations?

Application

- **Group:** Choose someone within this (or your) congregation to share a special blessing with this week.
- **Individual:** Create a personal “Time, Talents, and Treasures” list. Include specific ways that you will pledge to be more generous in all three of these areas.

Lesson 13. A Community of Equals

Use the following questions for discussion with your “Godly Love Cell” team and leader. [Please read the lesson Introduction on pages 75-76 and the Biblical Context to get an idea of the spiritual discipline this lesson teaches and should be practiced.]

Central Truth. Godly love among believers requires treating everyone equally.

The spiritual discipline related to this lesson is the requirement of showing Godly love without partiality or favoritism.

The Problem [James 2:1-4]

1. Page 77, paragraph 1. What test of faith does James instruct believers to avoid.
2. Page 77, paragraph 1. What biblical principle supports refusing to show partiality or favoritism?
3. What examples similar to James’s have you been guilty of either secretly or openly?
4. The following questions are more discussion starters:
 - Why do people tend to base their attitudes and treatment of someone upon a person’s skin color, ethnicity, health, age, sex, popularity, etc.?
 - Are we comfortable interacting with members or visitors in our congregations who visibly belong to a different social or economic class than ourselves? Why or why not?
 - When we show favoritism, what does it disclose about our own spiritual condition?
 - How do we dishonor God by playing favorites?
5. Page 78, paragraph 1. Why is favoring the rich opposed to God’s standards?
6. Page 78, paragraph 1. What does James say the poor value most in contrast to the rich?
7. Identify a spiritual discipline believers must develop to avoid this attitude.
8. Page 78, paragraph 1. Why was showing favoritism toward the rich by the poor misguided?
9. Page 78, paragraph 1. Why is showing partiality toward the poor dishonoring Christ?

Violating God’s Law [James 2:8-13]

10. Page 79, paragraph 1. Why is showing partiality a sin?
11. Page 79, paragraph 1. Cite two reasons loving our neighbor without partiality is called the royal law.

12. Page 79, paragraph 1. What is the danger of selective obedience to God's Law?
13. Page 70, paragraph 1. How does selective obedience relate to showing partiality?
14. Page 70, paragraph 1. What spiritual discipline must believers practice to avoid judgment for showing partiality?

Application.

- **Group. Brainstorm ways to honor the poor and then commit to carrying out a group selected idea this week.**
- **Individual. Identify 3 to 5 people who are spiritually poor, that is, unsaved. Write down their names as a reminder to pray for their salvation at least weekly.**