

Love Does, Session 1: WHAT LOVE DOES THIS WEEK

Love is not just a bunch of stuff we agree with. Love does.

Further explore the challenge of Love Does by engaging in any or all of the following activities between sessions. This part of Love Does is not about following rules or doing your homework. The following activities are designed to give you the opportunity to jump into the risk of God's kingdom with both feet.

DO: BE A QUITTER

In the video, Bob tells a compelling story about the time he quit high school and made a plan to move to Yosemite National Park to rock climb. Even though that plan did not work out very well, it led to an interesting discipline. Once a week, Bob quits something.

You are invited to do the same this week. Pick something you need to give up (i.e., texting while you drive) or something you enjoy but decide to put aside for a certain amount of time (i.e., breakfast and lunch for one day, television during the evening, checking email/Facebook after dinner).

Bob's point is that when we quit "stuff," it makes space for Jesus to bring "new stuff" into our lives. Don't rush to fill any new time or emotional space you have with replacement noise, activity, or entertainment. Pay attention in prayer to what Jesus brings into your life so you can say yes to it.

Reflection Questions:

- What did you quit?
- Why did you quit what you did and what was your experience like?
- Did you find anything new came into your life through this process?
- What did you learn about yourself by "being a quitter"? What did you learn about God?

REFLECT: BE SALTY

For the REFLECT sections, we will be going through portions of Jesus' epic teaching in Matthew 5-7, also known as the Sermon on the Mount. In this kingdom-of-God manifesto, Jesus gets extremely practical about what it means to live in God's world God's way and to bring about truth, beauty, and justice as we go.

This week, read Matthew 5:13-16 (NRSV)

13 *"You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.*

14 *"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. 15 No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.*

Jesus tells His hearers that they are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. You may be familiar with some of the background in these two metaphors. More than it was known as a flavoring, salt was primarily used to dry and preserve meats in the ancient Near East. Jesus' followers will act in ways that preserve and sustain the earth because God's mission is one of healing and restoration -- and that healing and restoration includes the creation itself. If the people of God aren't working to sustain that agenda, they are not doing much good and might as well be tossed out.

Furthermore, Jesus claims that His people are the light of the world. He draws on the common image of a lamp to describe the way that, like light shining into a dark corner, God's people are supposed to reveal things as they really are. Christians believe that God's kingdom is here now, and that things can be here on earth as they are in heaven. This is something we don't simply assert with our lips but actually demonstrate with our lives.

What is so compelling about both of Jesus' metaphors here is how *functional* they are. Jesus seems to expect that the faith of His followers will manifest itself in lives of action that are useful to and positive for the here and now.

Reflection Questions:

- What else do you think Jesus meant when He talked about being salt and light?
- What are the good ways you have seen Christians be “salty” with their lives and faith?
- Is it possible to snuff out your light with the way you try to be salt?
- Where are you being “salty” in your life? Where do you want to grow?

READ: “JUST SAY YES”

Read Chapter 9, “Just Say Yes,” in the *Love Does* book.

Reflection Questions:

- Did you have a positive or negative reaction to Bob’s story?
- In this chapter, Bob says, “I think God sometimes uses the completely inexplicable events in our lives to point us toward Him” (p.64). Do you think this is true? Why or why not? Have you ever had an “inexplicable event” point you toward God? What inexplicable events are happening in your life right now?
- Is it hard or easy for you to say yes? Why did you answer as you did? Has saying or not saying yes affected your faith for the last year?