



DAYS OF LOVE
with

SOMA
his body, your place

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Love the Adventure

“Love, true love, is what brings us together today”
Princess Bride

“What the world needs now is love, sweet love”
Burt Bacharach

“What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like.”
Augustine

“For love is as strong as death;
ardent love is as unrelenting as Sheol.”
Song of Songs 8:6

Love has to be one of the misunderstood ideas in our world today. Some people reduce it to the sentimentality you would see on a Hallmark card. Some confuse it with merely being sex. Others are very confused because the people who were supposed to love them abused them.

One thing that has been missed by many is that love is both nurturing and caring but it is also risky, dangerous and powerful. It is a choice. After all Jesus chose the risk of the cross to show God's love to the world. It is God's love that changed the world.

In this booklet we have some challenges and studies which will go with the talks and Gospel Community Discussions. We are not going to demand people do them, but doing them will be good for you. The reason we have challenges is that love is a choice and an adventure, these challenges will help go on that adventure.

By Easter I am hoping and praying that Soma, as a community, will be so captured by God's love and God's view of love that we will have no choice but to shine that love brightly to our dark world, to bring love to a world that needs it so badly.

Pete

40 Days

We seeking to spend a season as a community to dwell and mediate on the idea of love. We don't want to do this just as the Gatherings or at the Gospel Communities and so we have some challenges and some studies to do leading up to Easter. The 40 days leading up to Easter has been considered by some to be a season of lent, or denying yourself some thing to celebrate Easter. I want this to be a season of bringing God's love into the world to celebrate Easter.

The challenges are there to help you put love into action. You may want to team up with someone to help you and encourage you to do them. There may be circumstances that mean some of the challenges are hard to do, use your imagination to do something similar. We would love to know how you are going with them so please send us an email to let us know how you have found it: info@somachurch.org.au.

We have also written some studies for you. The studies are short, a few verses at the most, and are designed so you can do them quickly or on top of your other Bible reading program. They are written for you to mediate on a few verses that you might ordinarily skip over looking at big chunks of Scripture.

We have 6 studies and 6 challenges each week. The challenges, studies and talks don't always line up and you may find yourself being reminded of ideas later in the program. While we have dates next to them, that is only a guide.

We have suggested a week by week program for you to see your progress. You don't have to stick to it, but it might be helpful for you to see how much you have done and learned as you meditate and try to live out a life of love. The tracking is at the start of each week. The boxes aren't there for you to tick off and say "done that" but to remind you that was a conscious choice you made to do that.

Week 1

Date	Study	Done	Challenge	Done
14/3	Benchmark of Love	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pray for the 40 days	<input type="checkbox"/>
15/3	The Prodigal God	<input type="checkbox"/>	Review your day	<input type="checkbox"/>
16/3	God's Love Language	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pray for your day	<input type="checkbox"/>
17/3	Our Love Language	<input type="checkbox"/>	List people to love	<input type="checkbox"/>
18/3	God, our Dad	<input type="checkbox"/>	Deal with Dad	<input type="checkbox"/>
19/3	Nothing Separates us	<input type="checkbox"/>	Praise God	<input type="checkbox"/>

Things I learned from the talk:

Things I have learned from the studies:

Things I have learned from the challenges:

Studies

Study 1: God: the Benchmark of Love

Reading 1 John 4:19-20

1. In what ways has God shown his love for us first?
2. In what ways can we show our love for him?
3. What do you think the phrase “For the person who does not love his brother he has seen cannot love the God he has not seen” means?

Ponder

Spend the day dwelling on the idea that God loves *you*, and see how He has done it, at the cross, but also in other ways in your life.

Prayer ideas

Pray that God would show you how much he loves you through the day.

Study 2: The Prodigal God

Reading Luke 15:11-30

1. How does the father show his love for the younger son?
2. How does the father show his love for the older son?
3. Which of the two sons do you identify with the most?

Ponder

How would the story go if, instead if the two brothers, you were one of the characters?

Prayer ideas

Pray that God would show you how much he loves you through the day.

Study 3: God’s Love Language

Reading Psalm 136

1. What is the obvious refrain?
2. Why is it surprising in the light of events weaved between it?
3. In what way is God’s *hesed* (see below) his love language?

Ponder

Why not write out the major points in your life and then add the refrain in between.

Prayer ideas

Praise God that his love language is his *hesed*.

Pointer

The refrain in Hebrew is literally “for his loving faithfulness (*hesed*) is eternal” *hesed* is hard word to understand in English and harder to understand in this culture. It means a sure, reliable, trustworthy love through thick and thin, no matter what. Something we might be skeptical about coming from someone else.

Study 4: Our Love Language

Reading Ephesians 5:22-33

I want you to read this not in its primary intention of being about husbands and wives (v33) but about you being a part of the bride of Christ, the church (v32).

1. In what ways is the relationship between Jesus and the Church like a husband and wife?
2. How is the church to show its love for Jesus in this passage?
3. How is that an act of love?

Ponder

If you loved Jesus, as a wife would love a husband, what would look different in your life? How do you feel about being loved by Jesus as a bride?

Prayer ideas

Praise Jesus for his love for his church, us.

Study 5: God our Father

Reading Romans 8:15

1. Reading around the verse, what is the point that Paul is making about our relationship with God?
2. Why would he use the Abba (see below) as opposed to other words we could use to address God?

Ponder

This is very important. Our earthly fathers, even good ones, are fallible and pale reflections of our heavenly father. List the ways your earthly father is different from your heavenly one. Are there things you need to forgive your father for? Are there ways your relationship with your earthly father affects your heavenly father?

Prayer ideas

Praise God that no matter our relationship with our earthly father, we have a perfect heavenly father.

Pointer

The word Abba is an Aramaic word used to address a father in an intimate way. "Daddy" is probably the best and closest English word. It is a "word of endearment" and a "personal name" used in the "family circle".

Study 6: "Nothing Separates Us"

Reading Romans 8:35-39

1. What sorts of things does Paul address that might separate us from God?
2. How does he address these issues?
3. Has anything changed from when Paul wrote to now?

Ponder

How are you tempted to think you may be unloved by God? How does this passage help you?

Prayer ideas

Praise God for His love, and how much he has shown his love to you this week.

Challenges

Challenge 1: Pray for 40 days

Take some time today to pray for the next 40 days of your life. Pray that God would change you and change Soma as a community. Pray that love would infuse every aspect of our lives.

Challenge 2: Review your day

At the end of the day, run through the things that happened in your head. Were there things you could have done better in terms of loving people? This is not a difficult challenge, but it is one that we hope you keep doing throughout the 40 days. If we don't think about how to do things better, there is no point doing things at all.

Challenge 3: Pray for your day

Before you do anything tomorrow pray that God would help you be better at loving people. We can't do anything without God's help. This is likewise is not a difficult challenge, but it is also one that we hope you will keep doing through the 40 days.

Challenge 4: List the people you need to love

Sometimes we even lost track of who we are supposed to love. List out the names of people you know you need to love, don't forget family!

Challenge 5: Deal with Dad

We have a heavenly father and most of us have an earthly father who is not quite as good as our heavenly father. There maybe ways your earthly father has hurt you, seek to forgive him for that.

Challenge 6: Praise God

We have been dwelling on God as the source and example of love, but we often take that love for granted. Take 15 mins, turn off your phone, you may need to leave the house and do nothing but praise God for his love.

Week 2

Date	Study	Done	Challenge	Done
22/3	God loves enemies	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pray for an enemy	<input type="checkbox"/>
23/3	Character of Love	<input type="checkbox"/>	Be Patient	<input type="checkbox"/>
24/3	Character of Love	<input type="checkbox"/>	Be Humble	<input type="checkbox"/>
25/3	Character of Love	<input type="checkbox"/>	Be Repentant	<input type="checkbox"/>
26/3	God loves His people	<input type="checkbox"/>	Apologize	<input type="checkbox"/>
27/3	God's Tangible Love	<input type="checkbox"/>	Help someone	<input type="checkbox"/>

Things I learned from the talk:

Things I have learned from the studies:

Things I have learned from the challenges:

Studies

Study 7: “The God Who Loves Enemies”

Reading Romans 5:6-11

1. What does it mean that we were “still helpless”? (v6)
2. How can your life reflect the idea that without Christ, you are helpless?
3. Do you love your enemies like your God loved you?

Ponder

Do you ever feel somehow superior to people who oppose God? How does understanding this passage cause us to be humble?

Prayer ideas

Pray for someone you know who opposes God, perhaps someone whom you feel will never know Jesus, pray that though they are his enemy, God will take hold of them, as He has taken hold of you, and transform them into a repentant, ransomed and reborn Christian.

Study 8: “Character of Love”

Reading 1 Corinthians 13:1-3

1. Why is it that love is above all else? Why does Paul regard it so highly?
2. Are the things described (other than love) good or bad things? Or are they just things?
3. What does it mean to have love if it does not mean simply being generous or charitable?

Ponder

Do you feel that you do good things? Possess good traits? Why do you do them? Why do you aspire to them? Is it because of sincere selfless love? Or veiled selfish pride?

Prayer ideas

Pray that God would be before all else; before aiding you with finance, before giving you wisdom, before blessing you with spiritual gifts and before even bestowing you with all faith; teach you to love. Pray that he would teach you to first love himself, as Christ crucified, and then to love your neighbor, whoever they may be.

Study 9: “Character of Love”

Reading 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

1. When you tell somebody that you love them what do you mean?
2. How is your definition of love different to the Bible? How is it the same?
3. Have you been seeking to love anybody wrongly? (impatiently, selfishly etc)
4. How can you change this?

Ponder

We are told in this passage that “love never ends”. What are the implications of this?

Prayer ideas

Pray that God would change the way you understand love to fit the way He teaches it, that you may be patient, may be kind, rejoicing in the truth and enduring all things.

Study 10: “Character of Love”

Reading 1 Corinthians 13:9-13

1. How has your reasoning and understanding changed from when you were a child? What is the same?
2. Now we are on earth and growing more like Christ as we wait to be with him “face to face”; what are some things that will change when we are completed in him?
3. Of faith, hope, and love, how or why is love the greatest? How will these things change when we know God “face to face”?

Ponder

Faith and hope are to do with things unseen, these will change when the one whom we have faith and hope in comes, however our love for him will not, and love never ends (v8). Is it challenging to think that we ought love our creator now as much as we ought when we know him in full?

Prayer ideas

Praise God that he is working in us, transforming us and ultimately, has a plan for us. We will not be discarded, and we are precious to him, so pray that we would seek to love him as wholly as he is loving us.

Study 11: “The God Who Loves His People”

Reading Romans 8:28-39

1. How does the knowledge that God has been working in your life and preparing you, even before you were born, make you feel? Are you at all surprised that God would seek to glorify *you*?
2. What does it mean to be one of God’s “elect” (v33)
3. How does knowing that nothing can come between or separate you from God change the way that you view your relationship with him?

Ponder

God is working in all things for the glory of his own people, so much so that he even forfeited his own glory and put on our shame and nakedness on the cross. How might God be working in your life now? What are some things that are happening in your life that puzzle you and how could they be better understood by recognizing that God works in all things for the good of those who love him?

Prayer ideas

Pray that you would better understand God’s love for you and for His people and thank Him that you may trust His word, and find hope and joy in knowing that none can come between you and He. Pray for a brother or sister who doubts, that they will be given assurance and reminded that Jesus Christ will see them through.

Study 12: Love is Tangible

Reading Matthew 6:25-34

1. How does knowing that God loves you affect the way that you live your life and view your possessions?
2. In Matthew 6:25, 34 we are told not to worry because God will provide for us, how do we understand this in light of Christians who starve and go without?
3. What do you worry about? How can trusting the love of God help you to be at ease?

Ponder

When God tells us that he loves us, He is not referring to a simple affection or endearment, He is telling us that he will care for us. This love is like a parent’s love for a child, it is not just an abstract feeling but an active and tangible force of compassion, provision and forgiveness; this allows that the child

never fear, for they are cared for. Is this the way that you have understood God's love? If not or if so, how will this affect your life?

Prayer ideas

Pray that God would convict you to trust Him, that as you go out boldly proclaiming his love, you yourself would trust in it; that your trust would result in fearlessness; that your fearlessness would result in joy, and that this joy would characterize your life and be a light to all who look upon it.

Challenges

Challenge 7: Love your enemy

God loves his enemies (us) calls on us to love our enemies. Pray for someone who is 'an enemy', someone you would consider opposes you in some way.

Challenge 8: Be patient

One of the chief characteristics of love is patience. Find someone who drives you nuts and intentionally spend some time with them.

Challenge 9: Be Humble

Love seeks to be humble. Find a task that you expect someone else to do and do it. This might be something as radical as cleaning a public toilet.

Challenge 10: Be Repentant

Love seeks to be repentant. Take some time to write out your sins, being as specific as possible. Afterwards burn the paper, God has dealt with your sins at the cross.

Challenge 11: Apologize

Love seeks to reconcile relationships. Think of someone you have wronged in the past and apologize to them. You could write an email or a letter or you could do this face to face. This may not reconcile the relationship completely but may be a great first step.

Challenge 12: Help Someone

Love seeks to serve. Offer to help someone that you might be tempted to grumble about.

Week 3

Date	Study	Done	Challenge	Done
28/3	All of my Mind	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fill your mind	<input type="checkbox"/>
29/3	All of my Strength	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the Word	<input type="checkbox"/>
30/3	All of My Spirit	<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't Criticize	<input type="checkbox"/>
31/3	Not Money	<input type="checkbox"/>	Analyze your Bucks	<input type="checkbox"/>
1/4	Not Pride	<input type="checkbox"/>	Be Generous	<input type="checkbox"/>
2/4	Not World	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thank God	<input type="checkbox"/>

Things I learned from the talk:

Things I have learned from the studies:

Things I have learned from the challenges:

Studies

Study 13: All of my Mind

Reading Philippians 4:8

1. What sorts of things do you allow your mind to dwell on?
2. What are some of the tangible things that fit these categories? What ought you be aspiring to and dwelling on?
3. How can being disciplined in mind and dwelling on what is good bring glory to God?

Ponder

Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable.

Prayer ideas

Pray that God would fill you with passion for what He has passion for, that your heart may be after His own, and that you would come to desire what He would offer.

Study 14: All of my Strength

Reading Psalm 18:30-36

1. Where does David get his strength from?
2. What does he use his strength for?
3. What is the enemy that David speaks of (18:1)? What would we describe as our enemy (Eph 6:12ff)

Ponder

Do you wield the sword of the spirit which is the word of God? Or is your battle a futile one with those who are of the flesh, and your sword, a sword not of the word of God, but of slander and human argument?

Prayer ideas

Pray that God would strengthen and discipline you, that you may wear the full armor of God and stand strong against any lies, attacks and temptations with the strength He gives you.

Study 15: Spirit

Reading 2 Timothy 1:7

1. Paul refers to God's giving of his own Spirit to us, what does it mean to have God's Spirit?
2. What could be meant by God's Spirit in us being a spirit of power?
3. In what ways might power, love and sound judgement compliment one another?

Ponder

What or whom causes you to fear? The Spirit of our God in us ought remind us that when God stands for us, none can stand against us, and that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. When you are anxious through the week, if you are afraid, if you feel powerless, remember that the Spirit of God all-mighty has been sent to dwell within you, and that He is a Spirit of power, love and sound judgement.

Prayer ideas

Pray that the spirit of God would continue to transform you into the likeness of Jesus Christ, blessing you with sound judgement, teaching you to love and reminding you to rely upon his power for all of your needs.

Study 16: Not Money

Reading Matthew 6:24

1. How can someone be a "slave of money"?
2. Does this passage in any way reflect you? What or who do you serve?
3. If we love God, and not money, how may we better love others generously?

Ponder

If an outsider were to look into your life, all that you do, all that you spend, what would they see? Would they see a lover of God or a lover of money?

Prayer ideas

Pray that God will cause you to desire none other than himself, that you may better love him, and in doing so, fearless to all that the world can take from you, give extravagantly and be a blessing to all around you.

Study 17: Not Pride

Reading James 4:1-3

1. What does it mean to “ask wrongly” in regards to prayer?
2. Do your desires and demands cause conflict? Do you fight with people because they do not do what you want?
3. What ought you ask for instead of the fulfillment of selfish desires?

Ponder

What would the church be like if instead of seeking attention and selfish, personal gain, all of its people were attentive to one another’s needs and gave selflessly, seeking to gain the approval of none other than God. Is this the church you wish to belong to? How can you be a part of this change?

Prayer ideas

Pray that God would with haste humble the proud as he has already exalted the humble by calling them as Children of God. Pray that He would remind you not to think more highly of yourself than you ought, but rather to regard yourself as nothing, that you may give everything and live as a right follower of Christ Jesus.

Study 18: Not World

Reading 1 John 2:15-17

1. What does it mean that “the world is passing away?”
2. What is included amongst things of the world or belongings of the world?
3. How would loving things of the world cause problems for a believer and those around them?

Ponder

Are your passions and hobbies in temporal things your first love? Do they capture your attention? Do they distract you? Things we enjoy may not necessarily steal us away, in fact when they are employed as instruments of worship in our love for God they may be a blessing, but the test is this, do your passions, hobbies and loves help see you (and those around you) to maturity in Christ? Or are they simply perishing distractions that would have you fall with them?

Prayer ideas

Pray that Christ would so capture your every affection that you would not fall

pray to love of this world, and pray for your brothers and sisters who already have. Pray that as possessions, homes and even lives fall and perish, that these failings would resound to God's people as warning trumpets, reminding them to fix there eyes on things above and set themselves, marching ever onward, to the task at hand.

Challenges

Challenge 13: Fill your Mind

Choose to do something to fill your mind with something that is useful. E.g. listen to a podcast rather than watch TV. Read a book rather than facebook.

Challenge 14: Read the Word

Love comes from God and He reveals himself in His Word. Read through a whole book of the Bible in one sitting. E.g. 1 John is a good one to try.

Challenge 15: Don't Criticize

Sometimes it can be loving to discern the truth. But today try and spend the the whole day and without criticizing anyone. If there is something not going your way seek to fix it rather than seek to get stuck into someone about it.

Challenge 16: Analysis your bucks

Take a look at your credit card statement or timetable. If someone were just looking at this what do you think they say you love?

Challenge 17: Be Generous

Choose to do an act of generosity. It might be to buy a present for someone, give money to charity or buy someone a coffee.

Challenge 18: Thank God

God has been incredibly kind and loving towards us as He gives us life, peace, health and safety. Why not spend some time praising God for his provision to us.

Week 4

Date	Study	Done	Challenge	Done
4/4	Love from a pure heart	<input type="checkbox"/>	List to be thankful for	<input type="checkbox"/>
5/4	Love those in need	<input type="checkbox"/>	Buy someone a meal	<input type="checkbox"/>
6/4	Love covering sin	<input type="checkbox"/>	Praise Someone	<input type="checkbox"/>
7/4	Love correcting us	<input type="checkbox"/>	Meet someone's need	<input type="checkbox"/>
8/4	Love through the tongue	<input type="checkbox"/>	Learn to listen	<input type="checkbox"/>
9/4	Love better than riches	<input type="checkbox"/>	An act of sacrifice	<input type="checkbox"/>

Things I learned from the talk:

Things I have learned from the studies:

Things I have learned from the challenges:

Studies

Study 19: Love Sincerely

Reading 1 Peter 1:22-23

1. What's the command that Peter gives to his writers in these verses? What does it look like?
2. Why does he expect Christians to love like this?
3. What's the relationship between love, truth and the Word of God? (Try drawing the relationship if that helps).

Ponder

When we are born again we are given a pure heart to love our brothers and sisters earnestly. Like most encouragements of love in the Bible, this is a command, not an optional extra of the Christian life. Are you seeking to earnestly love your brothers and sisters? What is stopping you?

Prayer ideas

Pray that God would open your eyes and your heart to love your brothers and sisters with a sincere and earnest love.

Study 20: Love God, but hate brother?

Reading 1 John 4:20-21

1. What is John saying about the importance of loving our brothers and sisters?
2. Why would someone say they "love God, but hate their brother?"
3. How does this tie the two great commandments together (Mark 12:29-31)

Ponder

People have been made in the image of God. To hate the image is to hate what the image reflects. If we rip up a photo then it says something about the person in the picture. How does that effect how you now see people?

Prayer ideas

Pray that God would convict you of any hate you may have stored in your heart against someone that you may repent of it.

Study 21: Love covers all

Reading Proverbs 10:12

1. In what sense does love cover all offenses?
2. What the difference between 'love covering offenses' and just forgetting about sin?
3. Why would this be an important thing for Christians to address?

Ponder

We can't live in a world where we can avoid being hurt by others. This is why love is so important, it is how we chose to deal with that hurt. Are there things you need to address in where people have hurt you?

Prayer ideas

Pray that God would show you how to love those who have who hurt you.

Study 22: Love Correction

Reading Proverbs 15:12

1. Why would a mocker not love the one who corrects him?
2. Does this mean some who does not receive correction?
3. Why is it hard to receive or even give correction?

Ponder

Often when we receive correction our first reaction is to defend ourselves and point out why the other person is wrong. But if it is a Christian brother or sister who is correcting us often they are doing it out of love. How can you better react to someone who is seeking to correct you?

Prayer ideas

Thank God for those who have corrected you in the past and pray that God will help you love those who correct you now.

Study 23: Love through the Tongue

Reading Proverbs 18:21

1. What is the writer saying about the power of the tongue?
2. How can the tongue be used to love?
3. How can the power of tongue be loved?

Ponder

What we say and even how we say things can have a profound effect on those around us. How can you be more loving using your tongue?

Prayer ideas

Thank God for the way He has been loving to you in His Words of the Gospel and how you can in turn be more loving in your speech.

Study 24: Love more than Riches**Reading Proverbs 15:17**

1. How would you write this proverb in a modern day context?
2. Why would someone chose a meal of a fatten ox over a meal of vegetables?
3. In what ways would you be tempted to chose the equivalent of a meal over love?

Ponder

There are times when we might want to chose comfort over love, selfishness over selflessness. But this is an unwise thing to do. How do you chose love over comfort? When have you done this?

Prayer ideas

Pray that God would help you to seek love in the lives of those in your community.

Challenges

Challenge 19: List to be Thankful for

Love remembers what has been done for us. Write out a list of people you are thankful for and pray for them, thanking God for their influence on your life.

Challenge 20: Buy a Meal

Find someone in need and buy a meal for them OR simply pay for someone else's coffee in a coffee shop.

Challenge 21: Praise Someone's Actions

Take some time to praise someone for their actions, particularly someone who may not get thanked for what they do.

Challenge 22: Meet Someone's Need

Spend the day looking for someone whose need you can meet and do it. It might be as simple as helping pick up something for someone.

Challenge 23: Learn to Listen

Take some time to listen to someone. Don't try and fix their problems, just listen and try and understand where they are coming from.

Challenge 24: Choose an act of Sacrifice

Choose to sacrifice something. It might be time that you would rather be doing something else. It might be money you had for something. As you sacrifice it consider the sacrifice that was made for you at the cross.

Week 5

Date	Study	Done	Challenge	Done
11/4	Promote Love	<input type="checkbox"/>	Save the World	<input type="checkbox"/>
12/4	Bear with One another	<input type="checkbox"/>	Go Visit	<input type="checkbox"/>
13/4	Love and Delusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improve the World	<input type="checkbox"/>
14/4	Fruit of the Spirit	<input type="checkbox"/>	Text Some Love	<input type="checkbox"/>
15/4	Unity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improve Soma	<input type="checkbox"/>
16/4	Love in the Church	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pray for Soma Love	<input type="checkbox"/>

Things I learned from the talk:

Things I have learned from the studies:

Things I have learned from the challenges:

Studies

Study 25: Promote Love!

Reading Hebrews 10:24-25

1. What is the writer asking people to do?
2. How is he asking them to do it?
3. Why is he asking them to do it?

Ponder

Church is a team game, we need to be cheering each other on in learning to love each other. How can you cheer someone on today?

Prayer ideas

Pray that God would cheer you on to love and good works and that he will show you how to promote love in others.

Pointer

The Greek word here for “promote” (HCSB) or “spur on” (NIV) is the idea of “stirring up or provoking”. It is the cheer leader, the barmy army on the hill, the crowd getting behind you.

Study 26: Accepting in Love

Reading Ephesians 4:1-3

1. What do you think Paul means by the “calling you have received”?
2. Why do you think Paul picks these things to start with living out your calling? Why the accepting in love so quickly?
3. What do you think it means to ‘accept in love’?

Ponder

Often when we read this part of the Bible and jump to v4. But this is an important hinge in the whole book. Paul has reminded us of our calling and now he turns to how this calling needs to be lived out.

Prayer ideas

Pray that God would help you understand your calling and help you live it out, especially to live out what it means to ‘accept in love’.

Study 27: Love and Delusion

Reading 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12

1. What's the one thing that stops people from following the 'Man of Lawlessness'?
2. Why might the delusions and deceptions be so powerful?
3. What do you think "love of the truth" means?

Ponder

How might you be tempted to love something other than the truth? Why do you think the people Paul was talking about would be tempted to love something other than the truth?

Prayer ideas

Pray that God would help you to develop a love for the truth.

Pointer

It is easy when looking at 2 Thessalonians to get distracted trying to work out the identity of the Man of Lawlessness. Don't get too worried about it for this study, it does not make a huge amount of difference, the only thing you need to worry about is that he is a servant of the devil.

Study 28: Fruit of the Spirit

Reading Galatians 5:22-23

1. Where does love come in the order of the fruit of the Spirit?
2. How does love relate to the other fruit?
3. Why are these called the fruit of the Spirit?

Ponder

If the Spirit of God resides in you, to what extent would you expect to see His fruit in your life?

Prayer ideas

Pray that the fruit of the Spirit would be so evident in your life that you stand out to other people so clearly.

Study 29: Love in Unity

Reading Philippians 1:9-11

1. What do you think it means that love grows in knowledge and discernment?
2. What's the aim the growth in love?
3. Why is it important that love grows in knowledge and discernment?

Ponder

In what way are you helping your love for Soma grow in knowledge and discernment?

Prayer ideas

Pray that God would help you grow your love in knowledge and discernment.

Study 30: Love in the Church

Reading Colossians 3:12-17

1. There are a number of instructions in this passage, what are they?
2. Why does love fit above all of these instructions?
3. What would a church look like obeying these instructions? How would Soma compare to that church?

Ponder

Of the instructions and characteristics that Paul mentions here, which are missing from your life? What would others you know say?

Prayer ideas

Pray that God would help you to play your part in helping the church to look like what Paul has in mind in this passage.

Challenges

Challenge 25: Save the World

Through the week go without something, like buying coffee or lunch (bringing your own from home), and donate the money you have saved to a charity like Compassion.

Challenge 26: Go Visit

Some people have trouble getting out and about. Go and visit someone who might want some company.

Challenge 27: Improve the world

God loves the world so much he gave His Son for it. Creation reflects his glory (Psalm 19:1). Do something to improve his world. Pick up some rubbish, plant a tree.

Challenge 28: Text Some Love

Technology makes things easier to communicate, so communicate some love. Send a text to share some love.

Challenge 29: Improve Soma

God loves his church, his Son's bride. Think of something you can do to improve Soma.

Challenge 30: Pray for Soma Love

Pray for Soma from what you have learned about love and pray we will be a loving community and keep putting into practice the things we have learned about love.

Week 6

Date	Study	Done	Challenge	Done
18/4	"If you love me..."	<input type="checkbox"/>	Offer to pray	<input type="checkbox"/>
19/4	Loving the Unloveable	<input type="checkbox"/>	Offer to help	<input type="checkbox"/>
20/4	Love and Knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>	Offer to help 2	<input type="checkbox"/>
21/4	Love the Outsider	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pray for the World	<input type="checkbox"/>
22/4	Good Friday			
23/4	Review of Love	<input type="checkbox"/>	Give Some Blood	<input type="checkbox"/>

Things I learned from the talk:

Things I have learned from the studies:

Things I have learned from the challenges:

Studies

Study 31: If you love me...

Reading John 15:19-20

1. What's the choice that this passage gives us?
2. So if we are seeking to show God's love to the people of this world, how will this work?
3. How is Jesus an example to follow here?

Ponder

We, as followers of Jesus, are seeking to love like He loves. This means loving people in a world that may not love us in return. How does that make you feel? How will you seek to love a world that may hate you in return?

Prayer ideas

Pray that Soma, as a church, will seek to love Jesus, and not this world, and as a result seek to show God's love to the world.

Study 32: Loving the Unloveable

Reading Hosea 1:2

1. Why does God ask Hosea to take, and presumably love, an promiscuous wife?
2. What does this say about the depth of love that God has for his people?
3. How would you feel if you were Hosea (or his wife) being given this command?

Ponder

As people who want to reflect God's love to the people of this world we may need to love people who appear to be unloveable, and yet are loved by God. Do you find it hard to see some people as being loved by God because of what they do?

Prayer ideas

Pray that God will help us to see people as people who are love by Him, no matter what they have done.

Pointer

We have taken a verse from the book of Hosea that sets up the rest of the book. If you have the time try and read the whole book in a single sitting to get the rest of the story.

Study 33: Love and Knowledge

Reading 1 Cor 8:1

1. In what way can knowledge puff up, but not build up?
2. In what way can love be empty of knowledge and not build up?
3. What do you think Paul is asking of the Corinthians here?

Ponder

Knowing the truth of the Gospel can mean we may be tempted to merely show people how they are wrong in their thinking, but how can we be more loving in the way we speak the truth of the Gospel?

Prayer ideas

Pray that we will be both loving and truthful about our knowledge of the Gospel?

Pointer

This begins a section on loving people who think differently to us, whether it is someone who does not know God, or a 'weaker brother'.

Study 34: Love the Outsider

Reading Colossians 4:2-6

1. What is Paul asking the Colossians to pray for? What is he asking them to do?
2. Though love is not mentioned here, why would this be an act of love?
3. What do you think 'seasoned with salt' means?

Ponder

The best way to love someone is to share with them the good news of Jesus. Who are you praying for and asking God to reveal his message to?

Prayer ideas

Pray for people who don't know Jesus, where you can, use specific names.

Study 35: Review

Go back over your studied over the last few weeks:

1. What have you learned?
2. What has changed?
3. What would you like to keep changing?
4. What do you need to learn more about?
5. What has surprised you?
6. What can you praise God for?
7. What challenges did you find hard?
8. What challenges do you need to do more of?

Challenges

Challenge 31: Offer to pray

Find someone who doesn't know Jesus and offer to pray for them

Challenge 32: Offer to Help

Find someone who doesn't know Jesus and ask them what you can do for them.

Challenge 33: Offer to Help

Find someone who doesn't know Jesus and ask them what the church can do for them.

Challenge 34: Pray for the World

Take 15 mins and walk around your neighbourhood, shopping centre or workplace and pray for all the people that you see that Jesus would make himself known to them.

Challenge 35: Give Blood

Jesus gave blood to save, why don't you do the same thing.