

Crazy Love — Study Guide

Chapter: 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? Let's be honest in our own strength this is impossible. But with the life of Jesus living within us His power and love makes us a person who can really love God with everything we are and ever hope to be.

Unfortunately we are easily caught in the cycle of loving others and the things of this world more than Jesus. We know we need to make changes in our lives. From time to time we try to be a better Christian, but when we look at other people, even other Christians, we find it easy to overlook our sins. In the end we get used to living a life in bondage to sin. We're trapped.

Francis writes, 'God wants to change us; He died so that we could change' (103). Do you and I really want to *be changed*? Read that question again. It asks if we really want to *be changed* not do we want to change.

Here's a simplistic way of looking at our thoughts when we come face to face with our sins and see our need to change. We begin by asking ourselves a question something like this: "How do I break out of this sinful cycle of loving this world?" Basically we have two choices.

Option #1: Be motivated by fear, which leads to guilt and duty. We say, "I need to try harder to be a better Christian." This might work until the next time we give into that same old temptation and sin again.

Option #2: Be motivated by God's love in us which leads to freedom and joy. We can pray, "Jesus grow my love for You and make it stronger." This works because the power of His Spirit living in us gives us the desire to obey His Word. This is a transformation of our hearts by the One who loves us most so we can truly love Him in return.

Milton Vincent wrote in "A Gospel Primer" about his burden to maintain his righteous standing before God. When he stopped being led by fear and turned to Jesus' love for him 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.

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." As you read this passage what one thing stands out most to you?

Why are we to "love one another" (vs. 7)? What do you think this means?

What does it mean if we don't have love others especially other believers (vs. 8)?

What has God's love done for us (vs. 9-10)?

What should be our response to God's love (vs. 11)? How does this happen (vs. 9-10)?

What does it mean for us to love one another (vs. 12)? Who does God want you to love like this in our church?

How is it possible for us to "know and rely" on God's love (vs. 16)? Look carefully at verses 13-15.

How is love "made complete among us" (vs. 17 – don't miss the connection back to vs. 16)?

What is the result of love being made complete or perfected within us (vs. 17-18)?

Why do we have the capacity to love (vs. 19)?

As a Christian what does it mean when we don't love one another (vs. 20)?

What is the final word (vs. 21)?

For Your Heart

4. Turn In your book to page 100 and re-read John Pipers quote from *God Is the Gospel*. How would you answer the question John Piper poses? Why?
5. **Intimacy** or **Reverence**: which do you struggle with more 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 sections "Someone I Can Be Real With." Don't sprint through this, take a leisurely stroll. Read a sentence and then pause to talk with Jesus.

Challenge for the Week

Think about Jesus' death and resurrection. Jesus didn't just die to pay the penalty for our sin; He rose again so we can live our lives in the power of the resurrection. As Paul said in Galatians 2:20, "*I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*" How many times do we need to kill a dead man? Trying harder or dying daily is not the answer. We died with Christ to live a new life through the power of the resurrection.

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? He lives in you and loves through you. Do something tangible.

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