



EVERLASTING

THIS BOOK BELONGS TO:



Making Disciples...Developing Leaders

Everlasting: John 3:16

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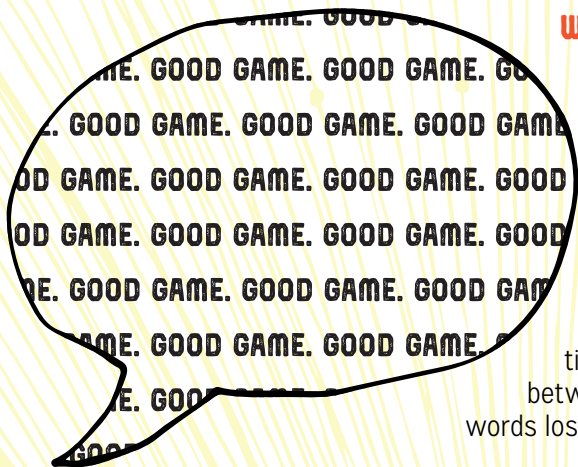
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WELCOME TO EVERLASTING!

From little league to the high school state championship, soccer games all end the same way. The team members line up and high five each opponent, saying “good game” over and over again. By the end of the line, it’s been said so many times you can barely distinguish between words and grunts. The words lose their meaning.

The same thing can happen in Christian culture when we hear the same things over and over again—even good things. Phrases like “WWJD” (What Would Jesus Do), “walk the talk,” and “to the glory of God” can become empty phrases because they’ve been used so many times. The words themselves aren’t bad; we’ve just become numb to them.

John 3:16 is a verse many have grown numb to. From Sunday school to banners, sermons, and mission trips, it makes a lot of appearances. And quite frankly, it should. The entire story of the universe culminates in this verse. It clearly lays out the mystery of God’s rescue plan. John 3:16 is to Christianity what “I am your father” is to Star Wars. It helps everything else make sense.

But in some ways, we have gotten numb to it. “Everlasting life” has lost its meaning and its impact. The biggest thing that’s ever happened on the planet has become background noise. That’s why this study is taking you back to the basics. You’re going to get beyond the static to learn the big deal about “everlasting life.”

HERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW AS YOU GO THROUGH THIS STUDY:

1. God wants to connect with you. In fact, he’s looking forward to it. But how ready are you to connect with him? As you go in and out of the sessions and devotional times, make sure you are willing to listen to him and learn from him. He promises that he will come near to you if you come near to him (James 4:8). Try it!
2. What you put into this study is what you’ll get out of it. There are people all around you who have spent a lot of time praying for you and getting ready to invest in you. You’ll probably meet some new people, hear some new speakers, and get a chance to spend some quality time with God and with friends. Take advantage of it! Ask hard questions. Commit to being authentic and honest. God wants to use this time and these people in your life.

The first six words of John 3:16 may be the easiest to skip over, but the rest of the verse makes no sense without them. “For God so loved the world ...” is the foundation holding up everything that comes after it. So it’s worth spending some time digging into what God’s **love** actually looks like. After all, the word love can mean some very different things. Does love mean the same thing in these different scenarios?

A PERSON’S LOVE OF KETCHUP OVER MUSTARD. A MOTHER’S LOVE OF HER CHILD. A PET OWNER’S LOVE OF THEIR DOG OR CAT. A BOYFRIEND’S LOVE OF HIS GIRLFRIEND. AN ATHLETE’S LOVE OF FOOTBALL.

What kind of love does God have for the world? How does God love us? The truth is, God’s love is greater and more complicated than any of the examples above. What you’re about to hear will give you a better idea of God’s love for humanity and for you, specifically. But while you’re waiting, here are a few dimensions of God’s love that make it so amazing:

- ▷ **Fatherly Love:** “See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!” –1 John 3:1
- ▷ **Sacrificial Love:** “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” –John 15:13
- ▷ **Enormous Love:** “Your love, Lord, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies.” –Psalm 36:5
- ▷ **Corrective Love:** “Do not lose heart when [God] rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines the one he loves.” –Hebrews 12:5-6
- ▷ **Unconditional Love:** “God demonstrates his love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” –Romans 5:8
- ▷ **Unending Love:** “Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you.” –Psalm 143:8
- ▷ **Contagious Love:** “We love because [God] first loved us.” –1 John 4:19
- ▷ **Active Love:** “This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.” –1 John 4:9
- ▷ **Pure Love:** “God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.” –1 John 4:16

SESSION ONE INTRO

LOVED

FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD
THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN
SON, THAT WHOEVER BELIEVES
IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH
BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE.
JOHN 3:16

LARGE GROUP ONE LOVED

These two pages are designed so you can take note of anything that stands out to you and that you think is worth remembering during the Large Group talk. This talk will set the stage for the rest of the session. Consider writing down main points, quotes, Bible verses, and any questions that pop into your head.

The background of the entire page is a repeating pattern of large, stylized, yellow 'X' marks on a white background. The 'X' marks are slightly irregular and hand-drawn in style.

How did God create you uniquely? In other words, what makes you special?

What do you think God created you to do?

SMALL GROUP ONE LOVED A SECOND LOOK

Tucked in the wall of a far room of Pastor Lee's house is a box. This is no ordinary box. It doesn't contain fancy shoes or expensive jewelry or beautiful Christmas decorations. One side of this box opens to the street, and another side opens into the pastor's laundry room. It's heated and lined with a baby blanket. Why? Because hundreds of babies have shown up in this box since 2010.

Pastor Lee's story started three decades ago, when his wife gave birth to a son with severe disabilities. They practically lived in a hospital for 14 years, seeing other kids just like their son. But these other children had no parents. This fueled a love in Pastor Lee for the unwanted and the abandoned.

In South Korea, a horrifying number of babies are abandoned each year, a lot of them left in the streets to die. Many of these babies have disabilities and need constant attention. That's why Pastor Lee created the baby box. Instead of abandoning their children to die, parents can place their baby in this box on the side of Pastor Lee's house. Each baby that comes through that box is loved. They are cared and prayed for. They are treated as priceless.

But Pastor Lee didn't stop there. He adopted 10 of them, as many as the government would allow. Some of these adopted children will never be able to say "thank you" or even feed themselves. But that didn't stop Pastor Lee from helping these children. His love was bigger than that.

**Put yourself in Pastor Lee's shoes.
What sacrifices would you make in order to help these children?**



What makes an abandoned baby valuable?



What sacrifices does God make in order to love people?



Why does God think you are so valuable?



SMALL GROUP

ONE

LOVED

A LITTLE DEEPER

Take a look at each of these Bible passages and get ready to talk through the following questions with your group.

ROMANS 8:38–39: FOR I AM CONVINCED THAT NEITHER DEATH NOR LIFE, NEITHER ANGELS NOR DEMONS, NEITHER THE PRESENT NOR THE FUTURE, NOR

ANY POWERS, NEITHER HEIGHT NOR DEPTH, NOR ANYTHING ELSE IN ALL CREATION, WILL BE ABLE TO SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF GOD THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD.

Have you ever felt far from God's love? When and why?

What difference does it make to know that the Creator of the universe loves you?

PSALM 139:7–12: WHERE CAN I GO FROM YOUR SPIRIT? WHERE CAN I FLEE FROM YOUR PRESENCE? IF I GO UP TO THE HEAVENS, YOU ARE THERE; IF I MAKE MY BED IN THE DEPTHS, YOU ARE THERE. IF I RISE ON THE WINGS OF THE DAWN, IF I SETTLE ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE SEA, EVEN THERE YOUR HAND WILL GUIDE ME, YOUR RIGHT HAND WILL HOLD ME FAST. IF I SAY, "SURELY THE DARKNESS WILL HIDE ME AND THE LIGHT BECOME NIGHT AROUND ME," EVEN THE DARKNESS WILL NOT BE DARK TO YOU; THE NIGHT WILL SHINE LIKE THE DAY, FOR DARKNESS IS AS LIGHT TO YOU.

When are you tempted to hide from God?

What does this passage say about where he will be when you hide?

ZEPHANIAH 3:17: THE LORD YOUR GOD IS WITH YOU, THE MIGHTY WARRIOR WHO SAVES. HE WILL TAKE GREAT DELIGHT IN YOU; IN HIS LOVE HE WILL NO LONGER REBUKE YOU, BUT WILL REJOICE OVER YOU WITH SINGING.

What image comes to mind when you picture God?

How do you think God feels when he thinks about you? (Be honest; don't just give the "churchy" answer.)

APPLY IT

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO REMIND YOURSELF OF GOD'S LOVE AND/OR SHOW SOMEONE ELSE GOD'S LOVE? THINK ABOUT SOMETHING YOU CAN DO WITHIN THE NEXT 24 HOURS!

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?



WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO DO IT?



IS THERE SOMEONE WHO CAN KEEP YOU ACCOUNTABLE?



A large, stylized yellow sunburst graphic with many thin, radiating lines, positioned at the top of the page.

NOTES