

His Son First Study Guide

Key Concepts

1. **Christ-like Love and Sacrifice:**

- Jesus sets the standard for love by laying down His life for us. As believers, we are called to demonstrate this selfless love toward others, especially in our closest relationships, whether marriage, family, or community. **John 15:11-13 (AMP)** highlights the depth of love that we should emulate.

2. **Living Authentically:**

- God values the thoughts and intents of the heart, not just outward actions. Hypocrisy—living a life that is inconsistent in public and private—goes against God’s standard. Authenticity in our actions and responses is essential to aligning with God’s will.

3. **Response vs. Reaction:**

- When interacting with others, we have the choice to either react or respond. Reacting is impulsive and often leads to sin, while responding, guided by the Holy Spirit, allows us to align our actions with God’s principles. Responding involves prayer, thoughtfulness, and a calm spirit.

4. **Forgiveness and Forbearance:**

- Forgiveness and forbearance must be at the forefront of our interactions. By forgiving and allowing the Holy Spirit to work in us, we avoid bitterness, harshness, and other destructive attitudes, ensuring that our relationships reflect God’s love.

5. **Divine Accountability:**

- Every person, whether spouse or offender, is God’s child first. We are accountable to God for how we treat others. This divine perspective calls us to treat each other with respect and love, knowing that we will answer to God for our actions.
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Biblical References with Key Insights

1. The Example of Christ's Love:

- **John 15:11-13 (AMP):** *“No one has greater love [no one has shown stronger affection] than to lay down (give up) his own life for his friends.”*
 - **Insight:** Christ’s sacrifice sets the highest example of love. We are called to love one another with the same sacrificial, self-giving love.

2. Avoiding Hypocrisy:

- **Matthew 23:27 (NIV):** *“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean.”*
 - **Insight:** Outward appearances do not please God if our hearts and private lives are not aligned with His will. Authenticity in public and private is vital.

3. Returning Good for Evil:

- **Romans 12:17-21 (NIV):** *“Do not repay anyone evil for evil...Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”*
 - **Insight:** God calls us to rise above worldly reactions by responding to evil with goodness. This reflects God’s heart and can bring healing to relationships.

4. The Golden Rule:

- **Luke 6:31 (NIV):** *“Do to others as you would have them do to you.”*
 - **Insight:** This rule reflects the principle of sowing and reaping—how we treat others has eternal consequences and glorifies God.

5. Abiding in God’s Love:

- **1 John 4:12-13 (AMP):** *“If we love one another, God abides (lives and remains) in us and His love...is brought to completion in us.”*
 - **Insight:** The evidence of God’s Spirit in us is seen in how we love others. When we love authentically, God’s love is perfected in us.

Practical Applications

1. **Responding with Love:**

- In your interactions, practice responding rather than reacting. Take time to pray and listen for the Holy Spirit's guidance before you speak or act, especially in moments of conflict.

2. **Living with Integrity:**

- Reflect on how your private life aligns with your public behavior. Strive for consistency between what you profess and how you live, ensuring that both are guided by God's truth.

3. **Forgiving Others:**

- Consider how you view those who have wronged you, remembering that they are God's children first. Ask God to help you release bitterness and replace it with His love and forgiveness.

4. **Christ-Centered Relationships:**

- Treat your spouse, family members, and others with the awareness that you are accountable to God for how you interact with them. Seek to honor Him in every relationship by treating others with grace and love.
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Study Questions

1. In what ways does Jesus' example of laying down His life challenge you in your relationships with others?
 2. How can living with integrity and authenticity in both public and private strengthen your relationships with others and with God?
 3. What are some situations where you have reacted impulsively instead of responding thoughtfully? How could you handle those situations differently in the future?
 4. How does understanding that your spouse or offender is God's child first change the way you view and interact with them?
 5. What role does the Holy Spirit play in helping you respond with love and forgiveness in difficult relationships?
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Personal Reflection

1. Heart Check:

- Are there areas in your life where your public and private actions don't align? What steps can you take to live more authentically before God and others?

2. Forgiveness:

- Are you holding on to any bitterness or anger toward someone who has hurt you? Reflect on how you can release that and seek to respond with God's love instead of reacting with hurt.

3. God's Perspective on Others:

- Reflect on your relationships and how you treat those closest to you. Are you treating them as God's children first, or are you letting your personal grievances cloud your love for them?

4. Seeking the Holy Spirit's Guidance:

- How can you better listen to the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit in your daily interactions, especially in moments of conflict or disagreement?

This study guide encourages us to reflect on the profound call to love others as Christ has loved us, to live authentically in every aspect of life, and to allow the Holy Spirit to guide our responses in a way that reflects God's heart.