

# ESSENTIALS FOR A NEW YEAR

**Definition of Essential:** Absolutely Necessary; extremely important

...love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'... Mark 12:30-31 (NLT)

**What Jesus says is essential:**

- Love **God** completely and love **others** intentionally.
- To love God less than most is to give my heart and love to something **inferior**.
- If I don't love other intentionally, I will not love them **sufficiently**.

Let's not just talk about love; let's **practice** real love. 1 John 3:18 (MSG)

- God says **love** is essential.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (NIV)

"...Love is not conceited or proud." 1 Corinthians 13:4 (GNT)

Pride is a **heart** issue.

Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the Lord; be assured, he will not go unpunished Proverbs 16:5 (ESV)

**Definition of pride:** A false assessment of our strengths and weaknesses based on our insecurities.

There are seven things that the Lord hates and cannot tolerate: A proud look... Proverbs 6:16-17 (GNT)

God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. James 4:6 (NLT)

I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High. Isaiah 14:14 (NIV)

For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and **you will be like God**, knowing good and evil." Genesis 3:5 (NIV)

- The sin of pride is our desire to be **self-sufficient**.

**Our expressions of pride are these:**

- We don't acknowledge our **need for God**.

In his pride the wicked man does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God. Psalm 10:4 (NIV)

- We don't accept our **need for others**.

Arrogant know-it-alls stir up discord, but wise men and women listen to each other's counsel. Proverbs 13:10 (MSG)

Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Ephesians 4:2 (NLT)

- When pride is great within us, so is the **distance** between God and us.

- The closer we are to God, the greater the **humility** in our lives.

Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land.

2 Chronicles 7:14 (NLT)

**How to work humility into our life:**

- Constantly acknowledge my **dependance** on God.

"God opposes everyone who is proud, but he gives grace to everyone who is humble. **So surrender to God!**"

James 4:6-7 (CEV)

Remain in me, and I will remain in you. A branch can't produce fruit by itself, must remain in the vine.

Likewise, you can't produce fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, then you will produce much fruit. Without me, you can't do anything. John 15:4-5 (CEB)

- Deny **myself**.

"...Do not let selfishness or pride be your guide. Instead, be humble and give more honor to others than to yourselves." Philippians 2:3 (NCV)

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. Matthew 16:24 (NIV)

"Don't push your way to the front... Put yourself aside, and **help others get ahead**. Don't be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand. **Think of yourselves the way Jesus thought of himself**. He was God...but he took on the status of a slave...an incredibly humbling process. He didn't claim special privileges. Instead, he lived a selfless, obedient life..." Philippians 2:3-8 (MSG)

- Open my **heart** to those around me.

Don't do anything for selfish purposes, but with humility think of others as better than yourselves. Instead of each person watching out for their own good, watch out for what is better for others. James 5:16 (NLT)

And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8



## TO CREATIVELY LOVE AND LEAD PEOPLE IN A GROWING RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS.

### Questions for Connection Groups:

*These questions also work well for personal time with God.*

- What scripture and/or point spoke most to you from the Talk on Sunday? Explain why?
- How does a divided heart cause us to direct out love to something inferior?
- Do you agree that intentional love leads to sufficient love? Explain.
- In your own words, why is pride a heart issue? What does that mean?
- What does the statement mean: "The sin of pride is our desire to be self-sufficient." Do you agree? Explain.
- What are some other expressions of pride not listed on these notes? How do they prevent us from Loving God completely and loving others intentionally?
- Why does the distance between God and us grow greater when we allow pride into our life?
- How can we acknowledge our dependance on God? What does that mean?
- How does denying ourselves work humility into our lives? What are we denying ourselves?
- How does opening our heart to others work humility into our lives? What are some ways to open our heart and "Belong" with others? How do Connection Groups help us in this area?

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