



INDUCTIVE LESSON FIVE

PRAY, LOVE, SERVE

It is a yearly ritual for most students and teachers to spend most of their summer vacation lazing around until early August, when they realize it's almost time to return to school. This realization prompts a flurry of activity to get projects completed and enjoy last-minute recreation. While we often squander or waste time, feeling we have an endless amount of it, we are shocked when we see this nonrenewable resource almost used up. This is why Paul reminds us to redeem, or make the most of, our time (Ephesians 5:16). Having a limited amount of time helps us to clarify values and determine what is most important to us as we carefully plan how to invest what remains of this resource.

Consider watching a professional football game. It has been said that if you record a three hour telecast of a game and fast forward to only the actual plays on the field, the action is condensed to less than twenty minutes. Watch the change in the game when the team with possession of the ball realizes time is almost gone and they are in need of a score to win. The team miraculously comes to life in what is called the two-minute drill, focusing only on what is essential to win.

I asked several coworkers the question, "If you knew you only had a week to live, what would you do?" I got some interesting responses: "I'd buy a big pick-up truck and pay back all of those people that cut me off on the freeway." "I'd quit my job and tell my boss off." "I'd cash out my 401k and head to Vegas." As you can tell from their responses, they were all nonbelievers.

By way of contrast, Peter informs Christians that our time is near and gives us a series of imperatives describing what our life should look like in light of eternity. One command stands out above the rest: "And above all things have fervent love for one another" (1 Peter 4:8). The Greek word for *fervent* literally meant "overstretched" and became extended in English.

In English, the word *love* has many shades of meaning. Part of the difficulty in seeing what is unique about truly Christian love is that something is lost in the translation from Greek to English. In English we have one word for *love*. I love my wife, I love to snowboard, I love the Lord, and I also love hot fudge sundaes (not necessarily in that order). The Greeks fine-tuned the concept of love into four separate words: *Storge* was the love between members of a family. *Eros* was a physical love and focused on

satisfying the flesh. *Phileo* was a tender affection focused on the object of that affection. *Agape* was an unconditional love unknown in classical Greek that flowed from a regenerated heart.

By contrast, *eros* can't wait to get while *agape* can't wait to give. In further contrast, *phileo* was dependent on the worthiness of the object being loved while *agape* was independent of the worthiness of the object. *Eros*, *storge*, and *phileo* are centered in emotion while *agape* is an act of the will, empowered by the Holy Spirit. In both our primary and secondary scriptures this week, the word used for love is *agape*.

As we soberly consider how to invest this finite resource called time, the words from a poem by C.T. Studd ring true: "Only one life, 'twill soon be past; only what's done for Christ will last."¹ We don't need a bumper sticker, jewelry, a large Bible, or a t-shirt to identify us as a Christian. The love of Christ—true Spirit-empowered *agape* love—should be the indelible watermark on our life that identifies us as followers of Jesus. The old chorus based on John 13:35 says it best, "They will know we are Christians by our love, by our love. Yes they will know we are Christians by our love."

Prayer

Start by praying over the passage and asking the Holy Spirit to give you fresh insights and wisdom in understanding it. Then read through the entire passage two or three times.

Memory Verse

And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins." —1 Peter 4:8

Inductive Method Step 1: Observation

My Observations: In the left column, write down observations you make directly from the text. Things to look for:

What are the promises?

What are the commands?

What are the sources of conflict?

What are the cause/effect relationships?

What are the repeated words and ideas?

What do we know about who is speaking and who is receiving the message?

What comparisons and contrasts can you identify and what do they illustrate?

Do you have unanswered questions on part of the passage? (Share them with your group.)

Digging Deeper: In the right column, write down any additional observations you can add from other sources such as:

Other scriptures that apply (cross references)

Dictionaries for specific words (English or Greek dictionary)
Bible dictionaries for historical information
Commentaries (See the Tool Box at the end of the study for suggested sources.)
Parallel passages in other books. Accounts found in parallel passages, while very similar, often reveal small but critical details omitted by another author.

Inductive Method Step 2: Interpretation

Webster tells us that *interpret* means “to explain the meaning or make understandable.” What is the spiritual truth or lesson that God is trying to teach in this passage? Don’t isolate the passage but read into it and read out of it. Look for commands, imperatives, promises, or warnings. What is God saying to those people at that time? (You will share what God is saying to you in the next section.) State the spiritual truth or lesson in a single sentence.

Inductive Method Step 3: Application

This is where you purpose to do what God has taught you in your time with Him. It is through applying the Word that God changes lives. Application does not happen by osmosis but by intent. God enlightens us with His Word, we apply what we’ve learned with our wills, and the Holy Spirit empowers us to carry out these choices. The goal of all application is to glorify God by becoming more like Jesus. 2 Timothy 3:16 says, “All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for . . .”

Teaching: What did I learn?

Reproof: Where do I fall short? Why do I fall short?

Correction: What will I do about it?

Training in righteousness: How can I make this principle a consistent part of my life?

Study Text / Worksheet

Write down your observations, comments, or questions directly on the text as you go over it.

Pray, Serve, Love

1 Peter 4:7-11

7 But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. 8 And above all things have fervent love for one another, for “love will cover a multitude of sins.” 9 *Be* hospitable to one another without grumbling. 10 As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 11 If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God

may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

My Observations

Digging Deeper

Interpretation:

Application:

Parallel Passage

Paul describes what Peter's "fervent love" should look like in the life of a believer in the following passage.

Christian Love

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. 2 And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. 4 Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave

rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never fails. But whether *there are* prophecies, they will fail; whether *there are* tongues, they will cease; whether *there is* knowledge, it will vanish away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. 11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. 13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these *is* love.

My Observations

Digging Deeper

Interpretation:

Application:

Take Away / Summary

If one of your friends at work or a neighbor were to ask you what you did on Tuesday, you would tell them you went to a Bible study. The next question would likely be, "What did you learn?" We often summarize an entire athletic contest or a movie in a few brief sentences and easily convey the essence of the event. Now apply these same skills to give a summary of the passage in a sentence or two. Then, in an additional sentence or two, describe what impact this passage will have on how you live.

Memory Verse

And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins." —1 Peter 4:8

Key Words/Phrases

Write out the definition of these key words. You can use a regular dictionary or go to one of the Greek sources listed in the Tool Box at the end of the study. You may also use a concordance to see where else and how the word is used in the Bible.

Fervent Love (1 Peter 4:8)

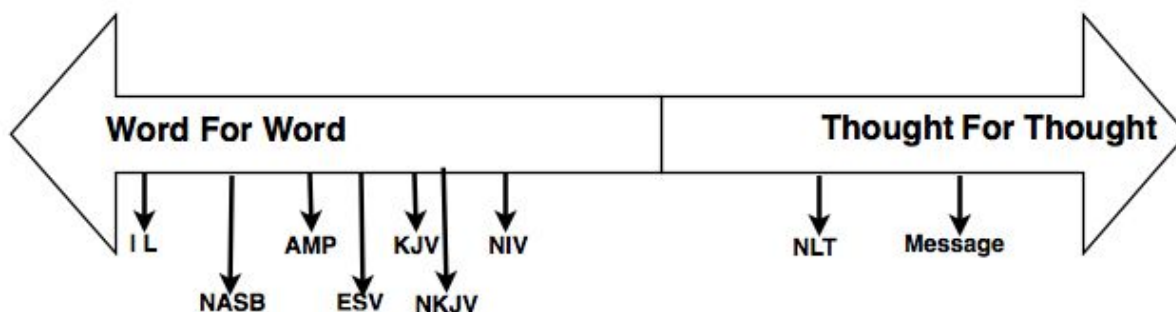
Manifold Grace (1 Peter 4:10)

Tool Box

Step 1: The Bible. Read the passage in a couple of different versions. If you are having trouble understanding a passage, choose a more dynamic version such as *New Living Translation* or *The Message*). To focus in on the exact meaning of a verse, choose a more literal translation such as *New American Standard Bible* or *New King James Version*.

Step 2: Study Tools. Use these to help you dig deeper. Background Information: 1) Unger's Bible Dictionary 2) Bible Dictionaries online at biblestudytools.com and blueletterbible.com. Word Studies: 1) Zodhiates' *The Complete Word Study New Testament* 2) Vine's *Complete Expository Dictionary* 3) Strong's *Dictionary of Bible Words* 4) The two websites listed above

Step 3: Commentaries. Commentaries should not be used in place of studying God's Word directly, but they can give you additional insights. Some good commentaries include: John MacArthur, J. Vernon McGee, *The Expositors Commentary*, NIV Application Commentary, William Barclay (great for background and culture but be careful of his spiritual applications).



Word for Word Translations

NASB – New American Standard Version

<http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/New-American-Bible-NASB/>

AMP-Amplified Bible <http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/Amplified-Bible-MP/>

ESV- English Standard Version <http://www.esvstudybible.org/>

KJV – King James Version

<http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/King-James-Version-KJV-Bible/>

NKJV – New King James Version

<http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/New-King-James-Version-NKJV-Bible/>

NIV – New International Version <http://www.biblica.com/niv/>

Thought for Thought Translations

NLT – New Living Translation <http://newlivingtranslation.com/>

The Message – <http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/Message-MSG-Bible/>

¹<http://hockleys.org/2009/05/quote-only-one-life-twill-soon-be-past-poem/>

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Prayer Requests
