

## Digging Deeper

### A Reflection/Discussion Guide for *Love Seed*

Welcome to *Love Seed*, what we hope will be an encouraging and useful point of reference in your walk with God. This guide is designed to help you get the most out of *Love Seed*, and can be used for individual reflection, group discussion, or both! Writing your answers to the following questions in a journal or notebook is the best way to process your experience, both to help focus your thoughts and to be able to look back on them in the future.

This dramatic narrative sermon is based upon Mark's account of Jesus' parable of the sower in which Jesus uses different types of soil to teach about the condition of our hearts. Jesus likens our hearing of His word to a process in which seed is sown; how we receive that word is determined by which type of soil our hearts are made of. In our effort to enter into this parable, we have described the seed in terms that summarize the essence of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and His purposeful love by offering to us His perfect righteousness, His atoning sacrifice, and the power of His resurrection. In our discussion, we will look at each of these gifts as we define the seed being sown in the soil of our hearts. Because of the relational terms that describe these things, *Love Seed* also employs Jesus' bridegroom/marriage metaphor in addition to His seed sowing imagery.

#### IA – Discussion One – Righteousness

As an introduction to this first section, describe your experience in seeing *Love Seed* with regard to the first half. This is when the seed was defined as a message of God's intentional love in our lives, hoping to draw us into an everlasting covenant with Himself. Any new insights, useful reminders...?

Read Hebrews 4:14-16 aloud (even if you're alone, if you can), then answer the following questions:

1. How does the Hebrew writer describe Jesus' righteousness?
2. The Greek word for "tempted" in v. 15 also means "tested". Does it sound like Jesus' righteousness came easily for Him? How can you relate to His testing?
3. What do you think the Hebrew writer means when he says Jesus can sympathize with us?
4. Jesus' sinless righteousness was achieved one decision at a time. Does that change the way you look at Him, or the way you look at your own journey? How?

#### IB – Discussion Two – Sacrifice

Read Hebrews 10:10-18 aloud, then answer the following questions:

1. What does this passage say about Christ's sacrifice?
2. The Hebrew writer contrasts the sacrifice of Jesus with the sacrifices required by the law of Moses. They had to be made "again and again" because they were never enough. Sometimes, we act like the sacrifice of Christ wasn't enough to forgive our sins - it needs "help" to be effective in our lives as well. Can you think of things you feel like you need to do or feel before Christ's sacrifice will "kick in" after you've sinned? Has this become your own additional "offering for sin" (v. 18)? How?
3. Read Romans 5:6-11 aloud, thinking about the effectiveness of Christ's sacrifice while you read. Which of Paul's phrases stick out to you? Why?

#### IC – Discussion Three – Resurrection

Read Romans 6:1-11 aloud, then answer the following questions:

1. What does Paul say links us to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ? How? Why?

2. What effect of being linked to Christ's resurrection does Paul describe in v. 4? Does this sound like more than being resurrected sometime in the future? What does what Paul's describing look like? How? How is Jesus' powerful resurrection life being made manifest in your life now? How can you experience it more?
3. In Romans 6, Paul described a past event (Jesus' resurrection) and how it changes our lives now. He describes a future event in 1 Corinthians 15:50-58 with similar impact. After you've read: how does knowing a little about your own future resurrection help you? If the certainty of this happening to you someday were firm in your everyday awareness, how would you act and feel? What can you do to have a more eternal perspective daily?

#### ID – Discussion Four – Here Comes the Bride

Read Ephesians 5:25-32 aloud, then answer the following questions:

1. What things about Jesus' love for His people does Paul highlight as he urges husbands to love their wives as Jesus loves His people – His church?
2. Remembering that He's talking about us (!!!), how is Jesus' bride described in v. 27? What does He do for His bride in 26, 27 and 29? What does this mean to you?
3. In v. 31 and 32, Paul uses a husband's leaving His family to join with His wife to illustrate some things about Christ and our relationship with Him? What is Paul saying? What meaning does that have in your life?
4. Read 2 Corinthians 11:1-3. How does thinking of your relationship with Christ as a marriage change your thinking about your own sin? If the certainty of your being married to Christ were firm in your everyday awareness, how would you act and feel? What can you do to feel/act more "married to Christ" from day to day?

#### IIA – Discussion Five – Soiled!

As an introduction to this section, describe your experience in seeing *Love Seed* with regard to the second half in which Jesus' four soil types were discussed. Any new insights, useful reminders...?

Read aloud Mark 4:1-9 and 14-20, then go through the following questions for each of the four soils:

1. How does Jesus describe this soil in both his exposition (1-9) and explanation (14-20) of the parable?
2. What does this soil type look like in today's world?
3. How does this soil type describe YOU and/or someone you know? What does that move you to do?

#### IIB – Discussion Six – Sowers

Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-6:1 aloud, then answer the following questions:

1. Paul describes something that is the foundational lens through which he sees everyone around him. What is that lens? How does it change the way we (along with Paul) look at others?
2. How does Paul describe the ministry God has given us? How have you experienced being on the receiving end of that ministry? The giving end?
3. The Greek text of 6:1 implies "as we work together *with Him*," referring back to Christ. How does that impact the way you look at your own ministry as a sower/ambassador for Christ?
4. As our role as sowers was explored near the end of *Love Seed*, there were a couple of things we said were not our responsibility: we are not the ones to change people's hearts – that's God's job! We are not even able to truly discern what type of soil lies within another's heart, as looks can be deceiving. If we are called simply to sow – to be ambassadors for Christ – what does that mean today? If the certainty of your being an ambassador for Christ was firm in your everyday awareness, how would you act and feel? What steps can you take to live out that role more from day to day?