



## **Session 7: Loving Ourselves Like Jesus Does**

**Core Theme:** Love self – Jesus began his ministry hearing God proclaim him as “beloved.” Imagine if we saw and understood ourselves as beloved and honored our own and others’ belovedness?

**Core Scriptures:** Luke 3: 21-22, Matthew 11:28-30

### **Suggested Session 7 Schedule**

#### **1. Welcome and Opening Prayer (3 minutes)**

#### **2. Meal (30 minutes, including Check-in described under #3)**

Enjoy a meal together, following earlier guidance around the meal. About 15 minutes in, welcome people to shift gears and gather round for the check-in. Continue to notice who builds relationships quickly and who might need a nudge to connect. Continue to notice if anyone seems disengaged, acutely quiet, or alone during the meal, and check in with them.

#### **3. Check-in (15-20 minutes – if sharing meal, occurs during mealtime)**

Following a brief review and reaffirmation of the covenant, offer **one** of the following questions for check-in:

- Since our last session, where have you seen Jesus in the context of community?
- How did the scripture from the last session show up in your life?
- How did you feel about what you’ve learned about the Way of Love practice of Bless?
- How do you feel as you arrive here?
- What do you need to acknowledge before you can fully be present today?
- *Create your own check-in question.*

Heed earlier guidance around check-in, including using the talking piece, listening respectfully, and honoring each person’s time to speak. If you notice check-ins running long, offer a time limit and begin by modeling a check-in within that time frame. You may also gently remind people to return to the covenant to honor the time and others’ opportunities to speak.

#### **4. Content Engagement (45 minutes)**

Once everyone has checked in, it’s time to move into the next part of your small group meeting: content engagement. For the seventh session, we seek to know more about

life with Jesus through loving ourselves like Jesus loves us.

**Show: Session 7: Part A Video**

*Note: To save time, participants can watch this video on their own before the gathering.*

Discuss the following questions as a group, inspired by the Session 7: Part A Video. Remember: You need not cover all the questions in this relatively short time. If it would be helpful, break into pairs or trios for about 5 minutes to facilitate giving everyone a chance to speak. Then, come back to the larger group and share for the remaining 10 minutes. Use these questions or others, as appropriate:

**Wondering Questions**

- Think of how you view yourself in relation to God. Do you see yourself as beloved?
- What is one way you can embrace your identity as a beloved by God this week?
- Is there an action or phrase that would help?
- What in this video resonated with or challenged you?

**Show: Session 7: Part B Video**

Watch the video as a group, then discuss the following questions together:

**Wondering Questions**

In the second video, we hear three leaders share how they reconnect with their identity as God's beloved.

- As you listened to their conversation, what came up for you?
- How can you treat yourself and others as beloved?

**5. Check-out and Closing Prayer (7 min)**

Follow earlier suggestions for check-out (confirm time and location for next session, share Make It Yours opportunities), especially inviting group members to share **one word** about the time they've spent together today.

If time permits, offer this question for check-out: *How has the group blessed you today?*

Close with prayer, welcoming prayer requests from each person, which the group leader or a volunteer gathers and offers up. Pray spontaneously, choose your favorite prayer, or try this prayer *For Quiet Confidence*:

*O God of peace, who taught us that in returning and rest we shall be saved, in quietness and confidence shall be our strength: By the might of your Spirit lift us, we pray, to your presence, where we may be still and know that you are God; through Jesus*

*Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## **6. Make It Yours: At-Home Engagement Opportunities**

- For a deeper dive, encourage your group to review and reflect on Session 7 in the Participant Guidebook before your next gathering.
- Invite participants to learn more about the spiritual practice of [Rest](#). Pose these questions: How is practicing Rest a way to love yourself? How does turning to God help you to turn toward yourself in love?