

WORSHIP

SUGGESTED WORSHIP SONGS:

Holy, Holy, Holy, This is Amazing Grace, No Other Like Jesus

WELCOME

Love Story. Share briefly about your best love story experience.

WORD

DEUTERONOMY 8:1–6

¹All the commandments that I am commanding you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the Lord swore to give to your forefathers. ²You shall remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. ³He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord. ⁴Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. ⁵Thus you are to know in your heart that the Lord your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son.

GOD'S UNCHANGING LOVE

If God were to choose a nation to love based on merits, performance or number, He would not have chosen the Israelites. But God set His eyes on them and chose to love them because it was His choice. Period. It was God's unilateral decision to love them (**Deuteronomy 7:7–8**). God is saying the same to us - when He chose us to come into a relationship with Him, it was His sovereign choice not because we deserve it. This is the kind of love God has for us, which is exactly what true love is, an unconditional commitment towards imperfect people to seek their highest good which may require sacrifice resulting in His glory. We need to receive and experience this love from God first in order to be able to give it and share it to others.

You see, the most challenging aspect of true love is to seek the highest good. We can learn three ways by which God demonstrated this from His amazing love story with the Israelites in the wilderness (**Deuteronomy 8:1–6**): God's love transforms our character, teaches us to depend on Him, and trains us up as His children.

TRANSFORMS OUR CHARACTER (v. 2)

The first thing God's love does is to transform our character from the inside out. In God's love story with the Israelites, the Bible tells us that He actually led them to the wilderness for 40 years in order for them to be

humbled and to test what is in their heart. 'Being humbled' does not mean punishment. Rather, it is the molding of character into becoming the person God can use to make an impact to the world and as a channel of true blessings to others. 'Testing' is about bringing to the surface what is in the heart so that we can see it and be able to acknowledge what He is telling us to improve on.

God promised that He will revive the lowly in spirit and those whose heart are contrite (**Isaiah 57:15**). Most often, it is when we are broken and low that we dramatically experience God's love. In the opposite end, the proud wants to do it his own way (**Isaiah 14:12–14**). Because our heart is deceitful, we may sincerely think we are okay. But for our highest good, God allows testing in our lives so that the truth will surface and it shall make us realize that we need to humbly walk with Him (**Micah 6:8**).

TEACHES US TO DEPEND ON HIM (v. 3)

God's love let the Israelites go hungry in the wilderness. But more importantly, He wanted His people to remember that during this time, He fed them with manna every day. He let them gather only for a day's need so that He may test whether they would depend on Him for daily sustenance and rely on His daily instruction (**Exodus 16:4**).

In teaching us to depend on Him, God often tells us our destination but He seldom tells us about the twists and turns that we will encounter along the

WORD (cont'd)

way. Otherwise, it may scare us and we may argue with Him. We may not even go at all. He also does not tell us how long the trials will last, lest we may give up too soon or become complacent. All He wants is for us follow Him daily and to trust Him. He knows the route, so we should be secure in Him.

TRAINS US UP AS HIS CHILDREN (v. 5–6)

Discipline is not about the punishment but the molding of a person, correcting what is wrong for their highest good. Sometimes in our intention to express our love, we unconsciously end up overprotecting or spoiling the person we love. We end up deceived because if we take a closer look, such actions are often due to our selfish motives to be

relieved of discomfort and inconvenience. But God's love is different. He works all things together in order for us to be conformed to the image of Christ — our highest good (**Romans 8:28–29**).

Training us up to become most useful for God requires discipline which obviously is not easy. It is like the process of producing an aluminum product which passes through an intensive process of refinement from all impurities to be ready for casting into a useful product. Likewise, we also encounter refining moments under extremely high temperature in the form of trials, pains and sufferings. But soon after all impurities are extracted, we will reflect the image of Christ in our thoughts, words and deeds.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. **Command and Promise.** What are the commands and promises of God from **Deuteronomy 8:1–6**?
2. **Transforming Lives.** How is the love of God transforming your character?
3. **Christlikeness.** What are the evidences of God's love in your life? If you ask people around you, what would they say about you as a follower of Christ?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

True love is an unconditional commitment towards imperfect people to seek their highest good which may require sacrifice resulting in His glory.

This week, demonstrate true love to at least three people within your natural environment — family, community, workplace or school. Write down their names and meditate on God's Word to guide you how to do it with pure intention to give this kind of love to them as you receive it from God.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of Public Servants and a God-centered Philippines
- Repentance and Salvation

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples
- Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
- Ministries and Churches worldwide

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living
- Salvation of family and friends