

You can relate to God through religion .

One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and reclined at table. *Luke 7:36*

And behold, a woman of the city, who was a **sinner**, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment... *Luke 7:37*

And standing behind him at his feet, **weeping**, she began to wet his feet with her **tears** and wiped them with the hair of her head and **kissed** his feet and **anointed** them with the ointment. *Luke 7:38*

"If this man were a **prophet**, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is **touching** him, for she is a **sinner**." *Luke 7:39*

"A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will **love** him more?" *Luke 7:41-42*

'**Love** the Lord your God with all your **heart** and with all your **soul** and with all your **mind**.' *Matthew 22:37*

God desires your affection .

These people honor me with their lips, but their **hearts** are far from me. *Matthew 15:8*

"The one, I **suppose**, for whom he cancelled the larger debt." And he said to him, "You have judged rightly." *Luke 7:43*

"Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she **loved much**. But he who is forgiven little, **loves little**." *Luke 7:47*

The secret to loving God is receiving his love .

The only way to relate to God is through a relationship .

But God **demonstrates** his own **love** for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. *Romans 5:8*

We love because he **first** loved us. *1 John 4:19*

How much do you love God?

And this is eternal life, that they **know** you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. *John 17:3*

Group Prep

In preparation for small group, read Luke 7:36-50, then answer the following discussion questions.

Introduction

In Luke 7, a Pharisee by the name of Simon has invited Jesus over for dinner. By the way Jesus is greeted, you can tell Simon doesn't think much of him. Simon is even hoping to unmask Jesus as a fraud and debunk his teaching, but Jesus has other plans. With the help of a lowly, sinful woman, Jesus teaches us that we can't relate to God by obeying religious practices. He desires a loving relationship.

Discussion Questions

1. What is religion? How has religion played a part in your life? Has your experience with religion been positive or negative? How so?

2. Read Luke 7:36-39. Describe this woman and the scene she's created. (i.e. What would motivate her to attend this dinner party? How does she feel about herself? What emotion was she feeling? Why would she wash Jesus' feet?)

The Pharisee could not believe Jesus would allow this sinful woman to touch him, so Jesus tells him a parable. Read Luke 7:41-43. How does this parable relate to the current scenario? What is the significance of the creditor cancelling the debts?

With all the sin in her life, this woman has found a way to accept the love of Jesus. Why is it so difficult for the Pharisee to accept Jesus' love? If someone was having trouble accepting the love of Jesus, what evidence in their lives would you see that shows they are having trouble?

3. Read Luke 7:44-47. How does the sinful woman exhibit her love for Jesus? How would the Pharisee's expression of love for God be different from that of the sinful woman?

God doesn't want us to relate to him through religious practices, but desires a loving relationship with us. What are some attributes of any loving relationship? If someone couldn't verbally ask you, how would they determine whether or not you love Jesus? In what ways can we exhibit a loving relationship with Jesus in our life?

4. Read 1 John 4:19. How can this group help each other not only fully accept God's love but stay accountable to consistently loving him in return? How will you pursue a loving relationship with Jesus this coming week?

My action step is _____.

I will encourage and pray for _____ to follow through, and their action step is _____.

My memory verse is _____.

This coming week, I'm praying for _____.

Outreach: Groups in Action

One person's junk is another's treasure. Start your spring cleaning by donating items to the Colombia mission trip yearly garage sale. Small items can be dropped off at the Information Desk at Emmanuel. Large items like couches or other furniture can be given to Kerry Carmichael. Email Kerry at kcarmichael@eclife.org.

Help the elderly of Emmanuel do some yardwork around the house. People need flowers planted, mulch distributed, and grass mowed. Email Kerry Carmichael at kcarmichael@eclife.org and she will connect you with an elderly person or couple in need of help.