

Close Encounters

1 Corinthians 13: 1-13 (NIV) *If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.*

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS - Wk4

Getting Started:

1. Have you ever thought you had an accurate picture of something in your head, but when you actually saw it, it was way different - for better or worse (ie. the Grand Canyon, something you ordered online)?
2. This morning, did you have a "close encounter" with God that changed how you saw Him or yourself?

Going Deeper:

The Gospel of John states that God is Love. When we have a better picture of Him, a more accurate understanding of Him, and more passionate interaction with Him, then we will understand love better. In addition, when we are not sure what His will is for our life, we can live by the principle of love, which will lead us more closely to His will and design for our life. Throughout scripture we see that increased revelation of who God is, changes who we are.

1. Read I Corinthians 8:1-3. This verse discusses whether knowledge is the primary means of making decisions and discerning God's will. What does it say about those who think they have enough knowledge? In light of limited knowledge, what should be our guiding principle? What does this look like practically?
2. Read I John 4:7-10. Describe the relationship between knowing God and loving. What does it look like when people know a lot about God, but are not loving?
3. If I am growing in my relationship with God, what will it look like? Be specific.
4. If our group is growing in our relationship with God corporately, what will the group look like?

Acting Out:

1. Make a list of attributes you want your group to have, as you continue to grow in your relationships with God and each other.
2. Discuss what you want for the future of your group.
3. Take time to contact 2 people from your group (guys contact guys, ladies contact ladies) this week (i.e.) email, call, coffee - to practice Godly love. As you grow in your love, you will experience Him more clearly.

Further Reading This Week:

I John 3, I John 4, I John 5, John 3