

**John 11**

**Love God** – Each week there are prayer requests for those battling a disease and mourning the loss of a loved one. Take time to pray for those who are grieving in your groups, among your acquaintances, and in the larger church and community.

**Grow in Grace**

1. Describe a time when you thought you knew better than the person giving you the instructions – on a mission trip, directions on how to make something, instructions on how to raise your children. How did you react to these “instructions”?
2. There are three different reactions to Jesus in this chapter:
  - 1) From Martha and Mary, “Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died.”
  - 2) From the Jews, “See how he loved him!” and
  - 3) From some of the Jews, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

Which reaction do you align yourself most with and why?

3. In this passage Jesus’ presence is essential to comfort the grieving. Why do you think presence is so important for the grieving? There is no correct or wrong way to grieve. There are also many causes for grief in addition to the loss of a loved one. If able, please share what brought you most comfort when you were grieving.
4. Martha gave “correct” responses to everything Jesus told her:
  - 1) She believed in the resurrection at the last day;
  - 2) Believed Jesus to be the Messiah, the Son of God;
  - 3) Lazarus was in the tomb for four days and there is a bad odor.

What in your life is hard for you to turn over to Jesus?

What do you think is impossible for Jesus to do for you in this life?

5. [John 11:33] Jesus was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. Jesus wept. What is the significance of this? Does this make God seem weaker or stronger? Why?
6. For Jesus, raising Lazarus is not his “quick fix” for the grieving sisters. His presence, aching heart, and troubled spirit were all part of grieving with the sisters. Ultimately, this is Jesus offers us when we grieve: He is always present with us and He is always praying for us to His Father who always hears him. What do you think Jesus’ prayer is for you?

**Sharing**

1. When you approach an “impossible” situation such as a terminal disease, a mental illness, an irreconcilable relationship, ask Jesus how he is praying for this impossible situation, or plainly ask Jesus to pray for this situation since you don’t know how.
2. We all experience pain and difficult times in our life. What is the most painful or difficult thing that you have experienced? Did you question God’s love for you during that time? Why or why not? a. Do good things ever come as a result of living through difficult or painful situations? Read Romans 8:28. Is there sometimes a higher purpose or bigger picture to the pain and suffering we experience?
3. How has God used your difficult situations to bring about good in your life or in the lives of others?
4. Have you ever thanked God for a difficult or painful time in your life because of the good that came as a result of the pain?
5. Who is grieving among you? Are you weeping with them? What are some things that would be helpful for those who are grieving? What things are not be helpful for them?
6. The Church Has Left the Building. Share your story of what you did to bless our community. Did you bring comfort to the grieving through your service?

**Love God** – In your closing prayer time ask God to fill you with His compassion for someone who is grieving or who is facing an impossible situation.

**Challenge:** Jesus knew that he was going to raise Lazarus from the dead before he was told that Lazarus was ill. In spite of knowing what was going to happen, he still allowed those he loved to experience the pain and difficulty of death in order to achieve the higher purpose of building faith and glorifying God. In times of pain and difficulty, know that God is with you in the midst of the trial and that he can use your pain and struggle to build your faith and bring glory to himself.

**Action:** Give God your pain and difficult situations and ask him to use those things to build your faith and bring glory to himself.