

A **BELIEVE** BIBLE STUDY GUIDE | 8 SESSIONS

BE LIKE JESUS



Who Am I Becoming?

RANDY FRAZEE

BE LIKE JESUS



*Am I Becoming the Person
God Wants Me to Be?*

STUDY GUIDE | EIGHT SESSIONS

RANDY FRAZEE

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Be Like Jesus Study Guide

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CONTENTS

How to Use This Guide	v
Session 1 How Does God Want Me to Love Others?	1
Session 2 What Will Give Me True Joy?	19
Session 3 How Do I Find Real Peace?	37
Session 4 How Does God Free Me from Sinful Habits? ...	53
Session 5 How Can I Maintain Hope During Hardships? ...	71
Session 6 How Can I Be Patient with Others?	89
Session 7 Why Should I Be Loyal to Others?	107
Session 8 How Can I Be Considerate of Others?	125
Leader's Guide	143

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Scope and Sequence

The goal of every follower of Jesus Christ is to become more like him, but how do you know where to start? What does it really mean to be a disciple of Jesus? The objective of *Be Like Jesus*—the third in a series of three small-group studies—is to continue the process of transforming your thoughts and actions so you can become like Jesus—the person whom God intended you to be. This study guide (and the related video) will help you assess your spiritual life, pinpoint areas that need special attention, and give you tools to help you grow. The first study in this series, *Think Like Jesus*, focused on the beliefs of the Christian faith. The next study, *Act Like Jesus*, focused on the practices of the Christian faith. This study will focus on the virtues of the Christian life. May God bless you as you seek him through this experience!

Session Outline

Each session is divided into two parts. In the group section, you and your group will begin by watching a short video teaching from Randy Frazee and follow along with the

note-taking outline that has been provided. You will then recite the key verse, the key idea, and engage in some guided group discussion through the questions provided. At the end of the group time, you will be given real-life scenarios of people who struggle with their faith. Using the key applications from your study guide, your group will be challenged to think of ways to encourage the people within these case studies. Finally, you will close the group with a time of prayer.

Personal Study

At the end of the group section, you will find a series of readings and study questions for you to go through on your own during the week. Each of these sections will challenge you to consider a key question about the topic, think through a key idea, and then consider a key application regarding the difference it should make in your life. You will also be given four statements to help you evaluate the alignment of your life with the key idea and asked to take action by memorizing each session's key idea and key verse. **The personal study is a critical component in helping you see how the beliefs you are studying are reflected in the pages of the Bible, so be sure to complete this study during the week before your next group meeting.**

Group Size

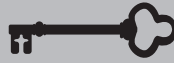
Be Like Jesus is designed to be experienced in a group setting such as a Bible study, Sunday school class, or any small-group gathering. To ensure everyone has enough time to participate in discussions, it is recommended that large groups watch the video together and then break up into smaller groups of four to six people for discussion.

Materials Needed

Each participant should have his or her own study guide. Although the course can be fully experienced with just the video and study guide, participants are also encouraged to have a copy of *Believe: Living the Story of the Bible to Become Like Jesus*, which includes selections from the *New International Version* that relate to each week's session. Reading *Believe* as you go through the study will provide even deeper insights and make the journey even richer and more meaningful.

Facilitation

Each group should appoint a leader who is responsible for starting the video and for keeping track of time during discussions and activities. Leaders may also read questions aloud and monitor discussions, prompting participants to respond and ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to participate. (For more thorough instructions, see the Leader's Guide included at the back of this guide.)



Session 1

HOW DOES GOD WANT ME TO LOVE OTHERS?

WELCOME

Generations of poets and musicians have attempted to define and capture the essence of love throughout time. Yet the poems and songs just keep on coming. The reason? Love is such a powerful force that we never grow weary of hearing about it. Even still, we all struggle to adequately comprehend and express love to others on a daily basis. We know that God is the creator of all things—and therefore is the creator of love as well. So, we must look to him to understand what love truly means. He can reveal how we can hold his love in our hearts while giving it away at the same time—just as Jesus showed us throughout his life and in his death.

VIDEO TEACHING NOTES

Welcome to session one of *Be Like Jesus*. If this is your first time together as a group, take a moment to introduce yourselves to each other. As you watch the video, use the following outline to record some of the main points. (The answer key is found at the end of the session.)

- **Key Question:** What does it mean to sacrificially and unconditionally _____ others?
- **Key Verse:** “This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made _____ in us” (1 John 4:10–12).
- **Key Idea:** I am _____ to loving God and loving others.
- **(Key Application #1):** I am their _____.
- **(Key Application #2):** I sacrifice my _____ to see them succeed.
- **(Key Application #3):** I help them see God’s good _____ for them.

GETTING STARTED

Begin your discussion by reciting the key verse and key idea together as a group. On your first attempt, use your notes if you need help. On your second attempt, try to state them completely from memory.



KEY VERSE: “This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us” (1 John 4:10-12).

KEY IDEA: I am committed to loving God and loving others.

GROUP DISCUSSION

As a group, discuss your thoughts and feelings about the following declarations. Which statements are easy to declare with certainty? Which are more challenging? Why?

- God’s grace enables me to forgive people who have hurt me.
- I rejoice when good things happen to other people.

- I demonstrate love equally toward people of all races.
- I frequently give up what I want for the sake of others.

Based on your group's dynamics and spiritual maturity, choose two or three questions that will lead to the best discussion about this week's key idea.

1. Who are the toughest people for you to love? Family members? Coworkers? Strangers? Explain why.

2. It's easy to love someone who meets your needs. But is it possible to genuinely love someone who does nothing for you or even hurts you? If so, how?

3. Outside of Jesus' example, when have you witnessed expressions of Christlike love?

Read Matthew 18:21–22, John 13:31–35, and 1 John 4:19–21, and then choose one or two questions that will lead to the greatest discussion in your group.

1. The Bible describes *love* as a quality that shows we belong to God. Given this, why do you think Christians are often described by outsiders as hypocritical and judgmental?

2. Based on what you read, what is the best strategy for developing authentic and genuine love for God and others?

3. *Forgiveness* is a key component of effectively loving one another. How can withholding forgiveness be an adversary of genuine love?

CASE STUDY

Use the following case study as a model for a real-life situation where you might put this week's key idea into practice.

Bo's boss is not easy to work for. He shovels out criticism by the truckload, talks disrespectfully to his employees, and often takes credit for ideas that are not his own. Rumors have been circulating around the office that the boss's wife served him divorce papers over the weekend. He has basically locked himself in his office all week. When he does come out, he hardly says a word and looks awful.

Most of the employees are reveling in their boss's pain, secretly making jokes and snarky comments. Bo has never liked the man, but something in his spirit won't allow him to join in with the other employees. He wonders if he should ask his boss if he's okay or just give him space. Does his boss deserve sympathy? Or is he simply reaping what he sowed?


Using the following key applications from this session, what could you say or do to help Bo exercise the virtue of love in this situation?



KEY APPLICATION #1: I am their advocate.

KEY APPLICATION #2: I sacrifice my rights to see them succeed.

KEY APPLICATION #3: I help them see God's good vision for them.



CLOSING PRAYER

Close your time together with prayer. Share your prayer requests with one another. Ask God to help you put this week's key idea into practice.

FOR NEXT WEEK

Before your next group meeting, be sure to read through the following personal study and complete the exercises.

VIDEO NOTES ANSWER KEY

love / complete / committed / advocate / rights / vision

PERSONAL STUDY



Every session in this guide contains a personal study to help you make meaningful connections between your life and what you are learning each week. Take some time after your group meeting each week to read through this section and complete the personal study. In total, the personal study should take about one hour to complete. Some people like to spread it out, devoting about ten to fifteen minutes a day. Others choose one larger block of time during the week to work through the entire personal study in one sitting. There is no right or wrong way to do this! Just choose a plan that best fits your needs and schedule from week to week, and then allow the Scripture to take root in your heart.

KEY QUESTION

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SACRIFICIALLY AND
UNCONDITIONALLY LOVE OTHERS?

There is likely not a more abused word in the English language than *love*. We say we *love* chocolate, a song on the radio, and our favorite sports team just as we say we *love* our children. Are they the same? Of course not. But how does one differentiate the meaning? And what do we mean when we say we *love* God? Again, while those two concepts come from

entirely different places in our hearts, we use the same word to describe our feelings for each.

The New Testament writers understood this dilemma. They wanted to talk about this new brand of Christian love that was made possible through a relationship with Jesus. Christ was good throughout his entire being. Goodness and love ruled his every motive, his every thought, his every word, and his every action. In and through his healings and miracles, he continually exhibited his goodness and love. Simply put, love dominates God's story.

But for the New Testament writers, there was no word in the Greek language that adequately described the nature and quality of this new divine experience of love. So, they took an existing word in the Greek language—*agape*—and infused it with new meaning to reflect this powerful concept of “God-centered love.” The attempts of these human writers to describe God's love for us has resulted in a word that now has a meaning never before given.

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us (1 John 4:10–12).

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, 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. . . . And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love (1 Corinthians 13:4–8, 13).

Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God (Ephesians 5:1–2).

1. How would you define God-centered love as described in these passages?

2. How is forgiveness and sacrifice part of God's love?

KEY IDEA

I AM COMMITTED TO LOVING GOD AND LOVING OTHERS

God asks us to love him with our heart, soul, and strength and then to love our neighbor as ourselves. This love has three distinct characteristics. First, *agape* love is unconditional. It is not dependent on love being given back. While it

is always great for our feelings to be reciprocated, there are no conditions for God's love to be experienced. *Agape* love places no conditions, expectations, or stipulations on the other person for love to be expressed or displayed.

Second, *agape* love is sacrificial. It requires us to place the other person first and take a risk by showing your intent—regardless of the other person's response. This degree of love communicates, "I will lose some of who I am to love you. You are more important to me than I am to me!" *Agape* love gives itself up and takes risks for the welfare of others. As we exercise this type of love, we are reflecting the goodness of God in our motives and actions.

Third, *agape* love is forgiving. It expresses, "You don't have to be perfect for me to love you and stay in a relationship with you. In fact, I expect you to be imperfect, so I will forgive. You don't have to earn my love." This is what God does for us daily. He is a God who forgives us, and he invites us to do the same for others. Our commitment to God is thus reflected in our love for *him* and our extension of his love to others.

Jesus said, "A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart" (Luke 6:45). As we seek to demonstrate *agape* love, we take steps to being more like Christ. And we find that when God's love is within us, loving others becomes quite possible.

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength (Deuteronomy 6:4–5).

Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God

demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:7–9).

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:8–9).

1. What are the costs and benefits of loving God?

2. How does forgiveness help you to love others in your life unconditionally?

KEY APPLICATION

WHAT DIFFERENCE THIS MAKES

Jesus is our example. He received the love of the Father and passed it on to us. Our capacity to love thus begins with receiving God's love for us. When we yield to this presence in our lives, it enables us to love those whom we could never have

loved before. It urges us to build others up instead of tear them down, to not pay back wrong for wrong, and to go the extra mile to do the hard things for others. It compels us to treat others with respect, regardless of how we are treated, and to love even those who seem unlovable.

Our world today has little time to spare for the homeless, the poor, the hungry, the orphaned, the diseased, the elderly, and the imprisoned. But Jesus clearly states that his followers are to be about his business in those very places—to show love to the unloved. This love of Jesus in our hearts enables us to show the world what true *agape* love looks like. Our love for him should be so strong and committed that all other loves can't possibly compare.

The amazing thing about God is that when we love him to this degree, our devotion and care for all people—including our families—grows in ever-increasing measure. We find we can't help but love everyone. This new breed of love allows us to be involved in healthy relationships and to be free to express God's love to the world. This love of others is confirmation that we are, in fact, children of God.

“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends” (John 15:12–13).

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:43–45).

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

1. How would you describe the love you show for others?
How does this reflect your relationship with God?

2. What relationships has God given you through which you can share his love?

EVALUATE

As you conclude this personal study, use a scale of 1–6 to rate how strongly you believe the following statements (1 = no belief at all, 6 = complete confidence):

- ___ God's grace enables me to forgive people who have hurt me.
- ___ I rejoice when good things happen to other people.
- ___ I demonstrate love equally toward people of all races.
- ___ I frequently give up what I want for the sake of others.

TAKE ACTION

Memorizing Scripture is a valuable discipline for all believers to exercise. Spend a few minutes each day committing this week's key verse to memory.



KEY VERSE: “This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us” (1 John 4:10–12).

Recite this week's key idea out loud. As you do, ask yourself, *Does my life reflect this statement?*

KEY IDEA: I am committed to loving God and loving others.



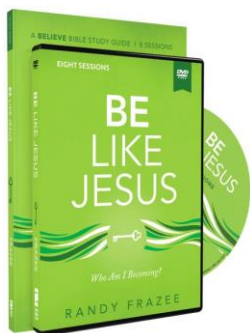
Answer the following questions to help you apply this week's key idea to your own life.

1. How could this virtue express itself in your life?

2. What visible attributes can be found in someone who embodies the virtues of love, kindness, and goodness?

3. What is impeding your ability to embrace this virtue?
How can you overcome this obstacle?

4. What step can you take this week to love more like Jesus?



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by RANDY FRAZEE

Becoming Like Jesus Is a Journey

God wants to transform your thoughts and your actions so you will bear good fruit, impact the world, and experience joy in your life. But for this to happen, you must remain in community with Christ so he can instill his life-giving spiritual virtues within you. As you do this on an ongoing basis - abiding in the presence of Jesus on a daily basis - the more spiritual fruit you will produce.

Be Like Jesus reveals how practicing these spiritual virtues, when embraced in your heart and mind, will lead you in fulfilling your mission to not only think and act like Jesus . . . but actually be like Jesus.

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