
Video Lesson Length:

9:23 for the Part 1 video

11:40 for the Part 2 video

38-46 minutes for the total class length.

Book Lesson Length:

30-45 minutes for the total class length.

Number of Discussions: 2

Session Layout:

Give Introduction

Play Session 1, part 1 video

Lead Discussion #1a

Play Session 1, part 2 video

Lead Discussion #1b

Please read the introductory sections prior to Lesson 1.



Lesson 1

Preparation

1. Read through the Leader's Guide introduction (see above).
2. Watch the Live Like You're Loved video (two parts, with a 15-second gap between the two for pausing the video).
3. Key points of the video:
 - **Big Thought:**
 - When you gain the heart knowledge that God loves you, you realize your value and worth, and it transforms the way you approach your life.
 - **Core Passage:**
 - John 3: 16: **"For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whosoever believes in Him may not perish, but have eternal life."**
 - **SAIL: Step In, Accept, Improve and Live It.**
 - **Step in:** Believe God's love for whosoever, and that "whosoever" includes you.
 - Cecil quotes from the lyrics of "You Say."
 - **Accept:** Claim your value and worth.
 - You can claim our God-given value and worth by counting your blessings, and by asking the Holy Spirit to show you your value and worth.
 - **Improve:** Discard your baggage.
 - Baggage that weighs us down and holds us back includes worry, guilt, anger and more. Cecil brings up an example from the movie "Up!"
 - **Live it:** Love your neighbor, since God loves you.
 - We are able to do this because God's love for us

can flow through to others.

- Other points:
 - Two symbols of God's sacrificial love are the manger and the cross.
 - God loves us with a waterfall of love, compassion, mercy and forgiveness.
 - In addition to recognizing God's love, you can claim your value and worth by counting your blessings and by asking the Holy Spirit to show you your value and worth.
 - "Head Knowledge" is what we think and believe in our heads, but may not have embedded in our souls nor put into full practice. "Heart Knowledge" is when we convert "Head Knowledge" into a personal belief that permeates our souls and causes real change in our lives.

Class Time

Step 1. Introduction to the Series (1 minute)

Please read the following to the group:

"Live Like You're Loved" consists of five lessons exploring four Biblical truths: God loves you, God forgives you, God sends you with purpose, and God invites you to eternal relationship. For each truth, Cecil Taylor explains the Biblical basis, then articulates what a life fully lived in each truth would look like.

Each truth is paired with four SAIL steps. These are practical steps to take to embed the truth into your soul and live it.

The four truths are covered in the first four lessons. The fifth lesson is a conclusion to the series, explaining more about how to put the concepts into practice.

The overall premise of the study is that until we can believe these truths to the point that we know them with our hearts instead of only with our heads, we cannot fully live the life that God envisions and desires for us. And that life has real benefits to ourselves, to others, and to God's kingdom.

Step 2. Video Leaders Only: Watch Part 1 of the "Live Like You're Loved" video (9-10 minutes)

Step 3a. Discussion 1A (Target Time: 8-10 minutes)

MAIN DISCUSSION GOAL: Help the group understand the symbolism of God's love and discuss our feelings on God's love for us. Be sure to do the Practice Opportunity.

BOOK STUDY LEADERS: Please include the questions in step 3b in this discussion.

Questions:

1. Look at the banner picture for “Live Like You’re Loved” on the paused video screen. What symbolism do you see in this picture, based on Cecil’s description in the video so far?
 - **CECIL’S ANSWER:**
 - **Manger constellation:** God’s love in coming to earth in the person of Jesus.
 - **Cross constellation:** God’s love in the sacrifice of the person of Jesus, for our salvation.
 - **Waterfall:** God’s powerful, overwhelming, reckless love, compassion, mercy and forgiveness for whosoever.
 - **Sailboat:** You!
 - **Tattered sails:** Our imperfections, but God loves us anyway as he sees our true value and worth.
2. Is it hard for us to believe that God loves every one of us? Why or why not?
 - **NOTE:** You may find a mixed reaction, from “Of course God loves us” to “It is hard to imagine that God loves us despite our sins and imperfections.” As much as possible, let speak those who are hesitant to admit that they may not feel worthy of God’s love.
 - **NOTE:** Prepare for a possible discussion of God’s judgment vs. God’s grace. Acknowledge God’s judgment while also reminding of God’s grace and love. We don’t want to diminish God’s judgment and sovereignty, but in this series, we’re trying to bolster the concept of God’s love.
3. What did you think of Cecil’s story of God’s waterfall of love?
4. **PRACTICE OPPORTUNITY:** What would you say to someone (including yourself) who does not believe that God loves them?
 - **NOTE:** This is intended as a safe way to practice self-talk, as well as to practice sharing God’s proclamation of love with others.

Step 3b. Bonus Book Study Questions related to Discussion 1A (5-8 minutes)

1. There are 310 expressions of God’s love across 280 verses in the Bible. Cecil lists several in the book (pp. 21-23). What is your favorite verse that expresses God’s love (either from the listed verses or from others in the Bible)?
2. Cecil compares mythological gods, who came to earth to ravage and destroy, to Jesus, who came with humility as described in Philippians 2 (p. 25). What does it mean to you that God approached us with humility and a servant’s heart rather than violence and manipulation?

Step 4. Video Leaders Only: Watch Part 2 of the “Live Like You’re Loved” video (11-12 minutes)

Step 5a. Discussion 1B (Target Time: 10-14 minutes)

MAIN DISCUSSION GOAL: Participants should be able to recall and process the four SAIL steps. Question #3 is a crucial question, so be sure to ask this one. Finally, encourage the class to work through the assignment at the end of the handout; either distribute it on paper or send to them electronically.

BOOK STUDY LEADERS: Please include the questions in step 5b in this discussion.

Questions:

1. What does S-A-I-L stand for? What are the four steps of “Loved” S-A-I-L?
 - **ANSWER:** Step In, Accept, Improve, Live It.
 - **ANSWER** for four steps of “Loved” S-A-I-L:
 - **S:** Believe God’s love for whosoever, and that “whosoever” includes you.
 - **A:** Claim your value and worth.
 - **I:** Discard your baggage.
 - **L:** Love your neighbor, since God loves you.

PLEASE SAY TO CLASS: Cecil created the SAIL steps in response to trial run feedback that people wanted to know what “baby steps” to take to achieve living like you’re loved. Ideally you would achieve all 16 SAIL steps mentioned in these lessons, but some steps may be difficult and take you a long time. The idea is to know what you need to work on, and pursue those steps in particular, to enrich your life to live like you’re loved, forgiven, sent and eternal.
2. Cecil described the “Improve” step as a crucial tipping point. To really live like you’re loved means to live with freedom, security and confidence in who you are and whose you are. How do you get there, to really live like you’re loved?
 - **NOTE:** In this section, Cecil talked about discarding the baggage that weighs you down. If the class is struggling with answers, remind them of this and ask what kind of baggage they have experienced, or what they have witnessed in others, that stops them from living securely and confidently.
 - **CECIL’S ANSWER:** When we recognize and accept God’s loving action and embed that into our hearts, we can make the changes to live securely, freely and confidently. We can better manage emotions or behaviors that stop us from living like we’re loved. And it’s not only for ourselves; we can reach out to love neighbors better when we experience God’s love.
3. **PRACTICE OPPORTUNITY:** Cecil talked about turning head knowledge into heart knowledge. What would your life look like if you truly believed God’s love in your heart?
 - **NOTE:** If the class gets stuck, (slowly) give these examples to trigger their thinking.
 - Would the negative comments and glances of others matter as much to you?
 - Would you get down on yourself less?
 - Would you be willing to take more chances?
 - Would you have a freer and lighter spirit?
 - Would you feel more secure in who you are and whose you are?
 - How would your identity change?
 - How would you approach each day differently?
4. After this lesson, how might you see “love your neighbor as yourself” differently?
 - **CECIL’S ANSWER:** We realize loving our neighbors becomes easier because we experienced God’s love and can then let His love flow through us to others. We also recognize that God indeed loves our neighbors, and we ought to as well.

Step 5b. Bonus Book Study Questions related to Discussion 1B (6-12 minutes)

1. One of the hardest steps in the entire book is to accept and claim your value and worth. Is this a problem for you? What prevents you from accepting and claiming your value and worth?
2. Cecil proposes two ways to claim your value and worth: through counting your blessings, and through the assurance of the Holy Spirit. What other ideas do you have to help claim your value and worth?
3. What do you make of the phrase, "We love neighbor as the proof of our time with God" (p. 49)?