

# Going Deeper

Your weekly guide to understanding God with others

## Core Strength - Part 6

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### Introduction

For thousands of years God pursued the salvation plan He set in motion at the beginning of time. God promised Eve that her offspring would crush the serpent's (Satan's) head, and later He promised Abraham the world would be blessed through his seed. These promises were ultimately fulfilled through Jesus Christ who became sin for all, standing in the gap for us and receiving the punishment for our sins so that we may live free from the effects of sin. The proclamation of this Good News (the Gospel) was given to His followers, the body of Christ - the Church. We, the Church, have effectively become God's plan, representing the salvation of Christ to the world. This discussion will focus on the core strength of representing Christ well as His Church.

### Discuss

1. Discuss or share up to three practical and effective ways you could represent Christ this week if you were bolder than you are right now.
2. Read 1 Peter 2:9-10. This is a strong and passionate declaration to the body of Christ (the Church) scattered throughout various countries and provinces. How does this passage speak to your own heart? What do you think it means for today's Church? Regarding the three titles listed in this passage, what do you think is the emphasis intended for us?
3. When Jesus said to Peter, "on this rock I will build my church" (Matt 16:18), He used the word 'Ekklesia' that comes from the idea of a gathering of believers called out from their homes into some public place. Pastor Sam emphasised that 'the church' was not a building, it was people. Why is this important for believers? (Consider Matt 5:14-15)

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4. Pastor Sam went on to share three primary or 'core strength' ways the body of Christ should represent Christ to our generation:

- The way we love
- The way we act
- The way we carry His Spirit

Read John 13:34-35. List some of the ways in which Jesus demonstrated His love for people.

For us to love like Jesus is easier said than done. However, since Christ loved all sinners, when we choose not to love someone we do not represent God well. How can we be genuine and authentic in our love for those who are hard to love? Do we need to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to love as Christ loved, or is it an act of our will, or a combination of both?

5. Read Ephesians 2:10. What does this verse tell us about good works? What are some proactive ways we can look for opportunities to demonstrate love, rather than waiting for the opportunity to present itself? Discuss how being 'too busy' can sometimes rob us from an opportunity to represent Christ well.
6. Read Acts 1:8. Pastor Sam said we should carry the Spirit well. What do you think he meant by that? He also said it is impossible to love and act as the body of Christ without the Holy Spirit. Why is this so? Discuss the importance of living by the Spirit to sustain a lifestyle that loves and acts like Christ.

### **Respond**

As the Church we are called and empowered to represent Christ well to our family, community, and all the world. Christ has entrusted us with His reputation. It is not possible to maintain this in our own strength, but the ability to do so will grow as we spend quality time in His presence, seeking to know Him and be led by His Spirit. Start by choosing a person that you can represent Christ to this week.