# YOU'RE *Welcome* HERE

## Embracing the Heart of Hospitality

A six-week study based on the teaching of

NANCY DEMOSS WOLGEMUTH

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All emphasis in Scripture has been added.

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# HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

This is not just a book on the topic of hospitality. You won't find vintage recipes or napkin folding tricks tucked in its pages. The goal is to give you a guide to dig into God's Word and find *His heart for hospitality*. To get the most out of it, here are some basic tips for digging into Scripture.

**The Bible is a book about God.** As you study, don't jump to application too quickly. Take time to consider: What does this teach me about the heart of God?

**Lead with prayer.** Before you dive into each day's study, ask the Holy Spirit to give you wisdom and insight. Ask Him to help you understand biblical hospitality and give you opportunities to put what you're learning into practice.

**Dig deeply.** Since hospitality is, at its core, an invitation to connect, take your time. Read passages slowly and repeatedly. The more time and energy you invest in this study, the more you will get in return.

**Learn together.** Hospitality requires connection. Consider starting a small group in your home or gathering with other women once a week for coffee and to talk about what you've learned. Discussion questions for each lesson are included on page 128.

**Study the key passage.** Though you will study passages all throughout your Bible for this study, consider Romans 12:9–21 your anchor passage. Make an intentional effort to memorize these verses as you work through the content. Fill-in blanks throughout the study are based on the Christian Standard Bible®.

**Press play.** Supplementary video lessons for this study are available at ReviveOurHearts.com/hospitality. Join in as women in different seasons of life discuss the study and model biblical hospitality.

# THE HEART OF HOSPITALITY

**ROMANS 12:9–21**

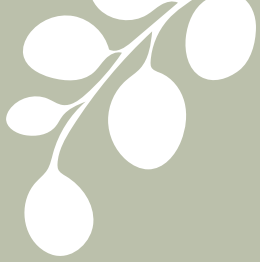
9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Detest evil; cling to what is good. 10 Love one
another deeply as brothers and sisters. Take the lead in honoring one another.
11 Do not lack diligence in zeal; be fervent in the Spirit; serve the Lord.
12 Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; be persistent in prayer. 13 Share with
the saints in their needs; pursue hospitality. 14 Bless those who persecute you;
bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who
weep. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud; instead, associate
with the humble. Do not be wise in your own estimation. 17 Do not repay anyone
evil for evil. Give careful thought to do what is honorable in everyone's eyes.
18 If possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19 Friends,
do not avenge yourselves; instead, leave room for God's wrath, because it is
written, Vengeance belongs to me; I will repay, says the Lord. 20 But

> If your enemy is hungry, feed him.
> If he is thirsty, give him something to drink.
> For in so doing
> you will be heaping fiery coals on his head.

21 Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good.

# Week 1

## Your Home Is a Mission Field



***Big Idea: You have been called to practice hospitality.***

## INTRODUCTION

Hers is the house you love to visit . . .

Her lawn is covered in manicured gardens, bespeckled with beautiful flowers. Her front door beckons you closer, adorned in a gorgeous wreath. The mat on the stoop announces "You are welcome here." She always answers the door with a smile.

"I'm glad you're here," she says. You can tell she means it.

The table looks like it's been set for a royal banquet. Warm cinnamon rolls and fresh coffee lure you in. *All of this for me?* you marvel. The tension in your neck relaxes. Now *this* is hospitality.

But what if you don't have a spacious home decorated to perfection? What if the last time you tried to cook, your kitchen filled with smoke instead of warm and inviting smells? Can you shrug your shoulders and tell yourself, "Hospitality just isn't my gift"?

The answer lies in your definition of hospitality. If glossy magazines or heart-worthy social media posts define the meaning of hospitality, most of us can never deliver. There are toys on the floor after all. Our furniture isn't new. Our laundry isn't folded. Our style doesn't match the current trends.

But what if we look to the Bible? What if we take God at His Word that true hospitality begins in the heart, then transforms how we use our homes? What if it's not reserved for the woman with the perfect house surrounded by the perfect

lawn who makes perfect cinnamon rolls? What if hospitality is an assignment given to *all* of God's children? What if it's for *you*?

The Greek word for hospitality in the New Testament is *philoxenia*. Literally, it means to love the stranger.[1] As you begin this study, you'll see that hospitality is less of an obligation and more of an opportunity. Living with open hearts and homes puts the inviting nature of God on display. We *get* to welcome others because Christ has welcomed us. Your imperfect home can point others to a perfect God.

## Spotlight

### LYDIA

Lydia had a profound impact on the early church. Originally from Thyatira, Lydia was living in Philippi and was a dealer in purple cloth.

When Paul and his friends shared the gospel with Lydia, "the Lord opened her heart" (Acts 16:14) and she believed. She urged the men to stay at her house, giving them a base as they traveled throughout Philippi. Lydia's home became the meeting place for the first European church. She opened her door to bless others, and it became an important outpost for the gospel.

# DAY 1: SET APART HOSPITALITY

*Read Romans 12:9–21.*

The book of Romans was written by the apostle Paul as he was wrapping up his third missionary journey. Having planted and established many churches in the east, the time had come for the westward expansion of the mission. His intent was to move his home base from Antioch to Rome, so he wrote a letter, paving the way for missional partnership with his Roman brothers and sisters in Christ.[2]

Much of Paul's ink was spilled on building a theological framework, but his purpose wasn't to fill the Roman's heads with mere knowledge. His letter reverberates with the question, "Now that we know what is true, how then shall we live?"

Paul's brass tacks answer is found in the first few pen strokes of his epistle.

Read Romans 1:1. How does Paul describe himself?

What do you think it means to be "set apart for the gospel of God"? (If you get stuck look up 2 Timothy 2:21.)

As we turn from our sin and respond to God's invitation to forgive us, He transforms us into something new (2 Cor. 5:17). Every day provides a fresh opportunity to operate in ways that are distinctly different from those who do not know Christ. Nothing is out of reach of the Spirit's transforming power, including the way we operate within our homes.

After establishing himself as set apart because of the gospel, Paul went on to list the marks of a true Christian. Reread Romans 12:9–21. Using the chart below, make a list of the commands Paul gave placing them in the categories of Dos and Don'ts.

| DOs | DON'Ts |
| --- | --- |
| | |

These are not steps that must be taken to *earn* salvation but rather ways to intentionally showcase the work God has already graciously done in you.

Evaluate the list on the previous page. Put a star beside the action steps you are faithfully taking (example: holding fast to what is good). Place an arrow beside the steps where you see room for improvement.

Verse 13 describes two specific action steps. What are they?

Does this verse read more like a suggestion or a command? Explain your answer.

The word Paul originally used in the Greek language is a strong verb that means "to pursue, to strive for something." It suggests vigorous effort and intentionality.[3] As an outflow of being set apart in Christ, Scripture calls you to *pursue* hospitality. It's purposeful. Paul's exhortation is to think about it, pray about it, plan for it.

As you wrap up today's study, go back to the Dos and Don'ts chart. Pray through the list, asking God to help you live it out. Use the space below to record your prayer or any actions steps you feel led to take.

# DAY 2: REAL DEAL LOVE

*Read Romans 12:9–10.*

Imagine it's late on Sunday morning. The pastor just dismissed you, and your family spills out into the lobby along with the other worshipers. These are your brothers and sisters in Christ. You love them. How do you show it? Do you smile and wave as you rush your family to the car? Do you linger a little longer than usual, asking routine questions like "How was your week?" or "What's new with you?"

What if you put love into action by opening your home? What if you spent the week praying about who you could invite over for a meal and willingly pushed past the awkwardness of forging a new friendship by welcoming someone new to sit at your family's table? Love requires action. That simple fact is the heartbeat of true, Christian hospitality.

Look at Romans 12:9 again. What kind of love does Paul urge followers of Jesus to express?

Some translations say to love "without hypocrisy" (CSB), others say "let love be genuine" (ESV). The bottom line is the same. Hypocritical love gives lip service but requires nothing of you. Do you ever say you love your brothers and sisters in Christ but let inconvenience keep you from expressing your love in actions? Briefly explain your response.

Why do you think Paul was compelled to write to the Christians in his day to avoid this kind of love?

Write out 1 John 4:19 below.

Underline the number one reason we can and should show love to others. Though Jesus was not well received when He came to earth to save us, He put His love into action on the cross. This shifts our motivation for hospitality as we seek to love others.

Read John 15:12. How are we supposed to love others?

In what ways does Jesus demonstrate His love?

An open heart and home is a practical way of loving others as an outflow of Jesus' love for you. This shift is important because it minimizes the aspects of hospitality that can cause the most stress: elaborate menu planning, spotless floors, quiet, well-behaved children, scintillating dinner conversation . . . None of those are required to show someone genuine love.

Can you think of a time when you experienced Christlike love because someone opened their home to you? Write about it below.

Ask the Lord to help you identify one person who needs to experience God's love today. What's one practical step you can take to show them hospitality?

# DAY 3: THE ONE ANOTHERS

***Read 1 John 3:23–24.***

Start to look for them in your Bible, and you will find them everywhere—the "one anothers." They are a series of commands for how the children of God should treat each other.[4]

We find one here . . .

"Outdo one another in showing honor" (Rom. 12:10 ESV).

Another one here . . .

"Comfort one another" (2 Cor. 13:11 ESV).

And still another one right here . . .

"Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another" (James 5:16).

Pile all of the "one anothers" into one big, beautiful box, and you could wrap it neatly with this bow: "Now this is his command: that we believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and *love one another* as he commanded us" (1 John 3:23).

*Love one another.*

Perhaps it feels like an overly simplistic solution to a world so broken by sin. Or maybe, more likely, you've tried it and found the "others" in the "one anothers" difficult to love. And yet over and over throughout His Word, God repeats this command.

"Love one another" (John 13:34).
"Love one another" (John 15:12).
"Love one another" (Rom. 12:10).

All of the other "one anothers" flow from this single expectation. Can you think of any additional "one another" commands in Scripture? Make a list.

Did any of these make your list?

- Pray for one another (James 5:16).
- Instruct one another (Rom. 15:14).
- Build up one another (Rom. 14:19).
- Be kind to one another (Eph. 4:32).
- Carry one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2).

How can showing hospitality help you fulfill the "one another" commands of Scripture?

Compare and contrast 1 John 3:23–24 and Matthew 22:34–40 using the chart below. Underline any commands that are the same in both passages. Circle the word love wherever it appears in each passage. Draw arrows wherever the passages are communicating the same big idea.

## 1 John 3:23-24

23 Now this is his command: that we
believe in the name of his Son, Jesus
Christ, and love one another as he
commanded us. 24 The one who keeps
his commands remains in him, and he
in him. And the way we know that he
remains in us is from the Spirit he has
given us.

## Matthew 22:34-40

34 When the Pharisees heard that he had
silenced the Sadducees, they came together.
35 And one of them, an expert in the law, asked a
question to test him: 36 "Teacher, which command
in the law is the greatest?"

37 He said to him, "Love the Lord your God with
all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your
mind. 38 This is the greatest and most important
command. 39 The second is like it: Love your
neighbor as yourself. 40 All the Law and the
Prophets depend on these two commands."

Was Jesus saying we must show love to others as a way to earn salvation? Explain your answer.

When Jesus was asked about the greatest commandment, what was His first answer (Matt. 22:37–38)?

Loving God is our first and most significant priority. As a result of His love for us, we are called to proactively love the people God puts into our lives.

Hospitality cannot save us from our sin: it is not a means to impress God. Instead we use the gifts God has given us—our time, our home, our resources—as a practical, ongoing way to showcase what God has done in our lives to the "one anothers" all around us.

Read Romans 13:8–10 (below) slowly and with the "one anothers" in mind.

- In verse 8, circle what the passage says we owe others.
- In verse 9, underline how we are commanded to carry this out.
- In verse 10, draw a line through what Christlike love is not/does not do.

> 8 Do not owe anyone anything, except to love one another, for the
> one who loves another has fulfilled the law. 9 The commandments,
> Do not commit adultery; do not murder; do not steal; do not
> covet; and any other commandment, are summed up by this
> commandment: Love your neighbor as yourself. 10 Love does no
> wrong to a neighbor. Love, therefore, is the fulfillment of the law.

When Paul wrote, "Love, therefore, is the fulfillment of the law" (v. 10), what did he mean? (Hint: look back at Matthew 22:34–40.)

You could never invite enough people over to earn God's love. He already loves you! You could never serve a meal perfect enough to meet God's standard of perfection, but you can bless the "one anothers" in your life because God loves you. How does this reality affect your perspective on hospitality?