

LOVE IN CHAOS | Session 2: God Loves You and Everyone Else Too

SESSION GOALS

Every session has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.

Main Idea: When we remember our weaknesses, we will be patient and generous toward others.

Head Change: To know that our weaknesses don't disqualify us from following Jesus but embolden us to humbly act in faith.

Heart Change: To feel compassion for those who are struggling.

Life Change: To be a safe place for people by exercising humility, patience, and tenderness toward them.

OPEN

Is there a sport or a recreational activity that you simply aren't good at? If so, which one(s)?

Each of us has that one thing (at least) that we're simply not good at. Whether it be a sport, a physical activity, or even a recreational activity like dancing, there is something we're bad at. We know we're bad, and so we often steer clear of it.

Sometimes following Jesus can take on a similar character for us. Our weaknesses—whether hardships we've encountered or personal failures—can cause us to steer clear from exercising our faith. In this session, Bob will help us see that our weaknesses shouldn't distract us from serving others but should embolden us.

VIEW

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Bob Goff's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how he answers the following questions.

What did Bob say should happen when we remember who we are?

Why is patience such an important strategy?

How does Bob encourage us to engage with others?

Watch Session 2: *God Loves You And Everyone Else Too* (11 minutes).

REVIEW

One of Bob's hopes for this series is that we'll be able to see our "piccadillies," or some of the ways we struggle, misunderstand the gospel, or even misrepresent Jesus. **What have you learned about yourself so far in this series?**

Bob shared a story of a failed sailing navigation to illustrate that it's easy for us to get "a couple of degrees off" and veer slightly from what we know is best. When we do, it doesn't take long before we experience a failure or hardship. **Have you ever gotten a couple of degrees off? Where did that path lead?**

Everyone gets “a couple of degrees off” at some point in their life. We’ve done it. Our friends and family have done it. Everyone we encounter daily has done it. It is important to remember that we all can mess up. **How can the reality that everyone veers off course affect the way we engage with others? What emotions and character traits can that knowledge cultivate in us?**

Bob said he hopes our deep dive into the Scriptures in this series will help us to remember who God has made us to be and what he says about us. Without recognizing who God says we are, we run the risk of misunderstanding ourselves entirely. **How would you answer the question, “Who are you?” What factors inform who you are? Who does God say you are?**

Bob talked about our tendency to fake who we are, both in front of others and ourselves. **Do you ever fake who you are or put on a front to please others? Why? What could you do to be more comfortable with yourself and the way God made you?**

Bob encouraged us to ask others, “What does it feel like to be you right now?” **In what ways does this question force us to discuss how we’re really doing?**

Let’s practice answering that question with each other. **What does it feel like to be you right now? What did you learn about each other?**

Whether it’s a major life setback or a struggling faith, Bob said that Jesus invites us to come to him about anything and everything. He also encouraged us to model Jesus’s openness for others. **What setbacks have you experienced in life? In what ways have you struggled (or are you now struggling) in your faith? How can you use these experiences to draw yourself toward others who are experiencing similar hardships?**

One of the major takeaways from this session was Bob’s encouragement for us to be generous toward others, especially those who’ve experienced a struggle or a setback. We can be a safe place for them—a place where they can speak without being judged or lectured. **Who has been a safe place for you during a difficult time? In what ways did their generosity help get you back on your feet after you’d fallen?**

What could you do to create a safe place for others?

Bob said if we want to be a safe place for others, we must practice patience—both with ourselves and with others. **In what ways do you struggle to be patient? What could you do to develop more patience?**

As he closed, Bob talked a lot about weakness. We often try to hide our weaknesses or steer clear of them, especially in our interactions with others. But Bob encouraged us to do the opposite, to be real and honest about our weaknesses. **To what degree do you attempt to hide your weaknesses from others? What could change about your life and relationships if you were open about your struggles?**

Bob said honesty and openness toward others about our weaknesses requires humility and authenticity. **How can you make being “the most authentic, humblest version” of yourself the goal of every interaction you have?**

BIBLE EXPLORATION

In this session, Bob talked a lot about our need to be patient with others and aware of our weaknesses. But patience in our fast-paced society feels hard to come by—we all have places to be, responsibilities, and distractions soaking up our attention. And our weaknesses, we assume, disqualify us from engaging people who need help. But, if we are to be like Jesus, we need to cultivate loving patience in our daily routine and the belief that God’s power can overcome even our most frustrating weaknesses. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4 and Galatians 5:22–23.

The first word the apostle Paul uses in 1 Corinthians 13 to describe love is “patient.” Patience is an act of love. **In what ways does exercising patience show love for others? When has someone’s patience with you shown their love for you?**

But it’s not as if patience is something we can just turn on. Patience is hard work. In some ways, it’s unnatural. **To what degree do you find it difficult to exercise patience with people? What makes practicing patience feel like a hassle or a chore?**

Patience doesn’t come pre-loaded in us. It comes from the Spirit of God, as we read in Galatians 5:22. **What can it look like to cultivate patience? What opportunities do you have in your life right now to exercise patience?**

Patience isn’t the only thing Bob addressed in this session. He also talked about our tendency to hide our weaknesses from others. He, like the apostle Paul, argued that our weaknesses shouldn’t be hidden away. Read 2 Corinthians 12:9–10.

In these verses, instead of hiding his weaknesses, Paul says he “will gladly boast ... about [his] weaknesses.” **According to the passage, why would Paul boast about his weakness? If the power of Jesus can shine through and overcome our weakness, why do you think we’re still so prone to hiding it?**

Our weaknesses aren’t just an opportunity for us to experience the power of Jesus in our lives personally, they’re also an opportunity for us to bear witness to others about the gospel. **How could you use your own weakness as a touch point for ministry to other people?**

Where are you weak? To what lengths do you go to hide those weaknesses? What do you think God could do in your life if you followed the example of Paul and viewed your weakness as an opportunity for God to display his power in your life?

For many of us, when we think about the relationship between patience and weakness, we can recognize that patience *is* our weakness. Maybe we’re impatient with ourselves or maybe we’re impatient with others, but either way, we can’t seem to exercise patience. Ever. If that’s you, make it your ambition to apply Paul’s words in 2 Corinthians 12:9–10 to your heart: “my power is perfected in weakness.” **What’s one thing you could begin doing today, by the power of Jesus, to exercise patience with yourself and others?**

LAST WORD

Life is hard and people are fallible. It can sound cliché, but everyone is fighting some kind of battle. Bob urged us in this session to be patient and kind, and to acknowledge our own tendency to “get a few degrees off course” when we interact with others. But his plea for patience, kindness, and authenticity is not a simple switch we can flip. We need the Spirit of God to bring these things to bear in our lives. And when he does, we will represent Christ well to those around us. We’ll see him help us extend patience and generosity to others, even when we don’t feel equipped to do so.

DEEPER WALK

Remember: Bob encouraged us to acknowledge the ways in which we have struggled or failed. Think back over your life and make note of some of your own failings, not to condemn yourself but to develop compassion for others who are experiencing their own hardships. Acknowledge God's grace in your life and go show that grace to others who need it.

Listen: One of the most tangible ways to exercise patience toward others is simply to listen to them. Be a safe place for one person in your life this week by listening to his or her stories, struggles, doubts, and questions. Show him or her you care by listening.

Wait: Almost everything in modern life, it seems, is aimed at removing our need to wait. Whether it's fast food, same day delivery, or instant messaging apps, we don't often have to wait for much. But these services, as beneficial as they aim to be, can wear away at our patience. This week, choose one way to embrace slow instead of fast. For instance, you could refrain from making any Amazon purchases, fix all your meals at home instead of visiting a drive-thru, or even write and mail a letter to a friend. Consider how you could add practices like these to your routine more regularly in an effort to cultivate patience.