

Knitting 201—Cable Pillow

The purpose of Knitting 201 is twofold: to teach the class how to make a cable stitch, and to teach them how to read a knitting chart.

Fisherman's Knits traditionally tell a story. This pillow tells a story, too. It is "The Love Pillow." The cable pattern forms the traditional "X-O" motif, or kisses and hugs. And the central pattern created out of simple knit and purl stitches creates three hearts. The three Bible studies all revolve around this love theme, starting first with the love of God, as all love comes from God, and ending in week three with our human love.

This is a three week class. The chunky weight yarn and large needles makes the project go quickly, and so the class will not lose interest.

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Week One

In the interest of having everyone ready to start on row one of the pattern chart, I contact the class ahead of time to come to the first session with the first ten rows of garter stitch completed.

Hand out the patterns and the chart. Explain to them how to read both. Then, as a group, walk thru the first few rows of the pattern chart. When you get to the cables on row three, you can teach them how to make the cable stitches.

Let them keep knitting for the rest of the class period, and then do the Bible study. The theme is the love of God.

I. Back to the Source

As people, we are born like a blank slate. We have had to learn all that we know. So we've even had to learn about love. **Questions:** Are there people who have taught you about love? Who are some of them?

The role of parent is critical in this lesson of love. We've all seen the pictures of children who have grown up in grossly understaffed orphanages, children who are starved for love. If we don't receive love as a small child, this affects us for the rest of our life.

We love because somebody first loved us. And how did the ones who loved us learn about love? We can trace this love lesson back and back and back. We can follow the trail of love back to its source, and its source is God.

Have someone read the passage from I John 4:7–19. As they read it, have them look for references to God as the source of love. Question: What are some passages you see in this reading which point to God as the source of love?

II. Jesus Says It All

John tells us that Jesus is the fullest manifestation we have of God's love for us. John is saying, "Do you want to see just how much God loves you? Well, look at Jesus!" Jesus is the revelation of God's love.

And John uses a very powerful word to describe just how big this love is: Sacrifice (Vs. 10). Something gives its life in a sacrifice. That's a pretty big gift! That's really giving all you have to give. Jesus shows us that there is nothing God wouldn't do, nothing God wouldn't give, to be in harmony with us. God holds nothing back.

Now, it's easy to be nice to somebody who is nice to you. But what about somebody who is nasty to you? **Question:** Have you ever had experience with that? Have any of you worked in a service industry, where you had to deal with a nasty person? What was that like? How did you want to act towards that nasty person?

Look at verse 10. Here we see the order of events! God didn't send Jesus to us because we were such nice and loving people! And God didn't send Jesus to us because we had first been loving and adoring to God. No! God took the first step. In fact, God love us when we were at enmity with God!

III. Complete -vs- Flawless

This love of God has an effect on us. Love drives out fear. The two are mutually exclusive.

John describes this by using the term "perfect" several times (Verse 17, twice in verse 18). When we hear that word, we think of something which is flawless. If you get a perfect score on a test, it means you got all the answers correct. If you bowl a perfect game and score 300, it means you knocked down every single pin in all the frames.

But "perfect" has a very different meaning in the Greek. It means "brought to completion," "whole." When someone's love for us has completely filled us, then it has displaced any trace of fear. We can tell that person anything, and we know they will still love us. We know that their love for us is unconditional. We are confident that they don't love us because we look a certain way, or because we have certain abilities, or only because we're nice to them. We know they will love us, no matter what.

And the "perfection" of that love manifests its fullness in this: That we are *so confident* in God's love for us that we can approach God's throne of judgment in complete joy. And we approach in

such boldness because we know what God's judgment is: "I am God's beloved."

"For God so loved the world that he sent his only beloved son, that whosoever believes in him may not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save it."

That is God's judgment of you. Jesus is God's judgment. And that's why we can approach the throne of judgment in complete confidence.

IV. A Love Telegram

This is "The Love Pillow." This pillow is meant to be like a little telegram. It's meant to display God's love for you. And when you look at it, I want you to remember that **God is love**.

Cable Pillow, Week One

1 John 4:7-19

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, for **God is love**.⁹ God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him.¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.¹¹ Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another.¹² No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

¹³ By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.¹⁴ And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world.¹⁵ God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God.¹⁶ So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.¹⁷ Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world.¹⁸ There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love.¹⁹ We love because he first loved us.

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Week Two

This week the class just keeps on knitting! They aren't learning anything new. It's simply a nice time for knitting fellowship. Aah, the pure joy of a knitting circle!

Before they depart, you'll want to tell them to bring all of their supplies next week: the pillow insert, the completed two panels, their left over yarn, a large-eyed yarn needle, and a 4 3/4" piece of card stock (for making tassels).

At the end of the knitting period, you can gather their attention for the Bible Study on Psalm 85.

I. Past and Present

This week we're going to look at Psalm 85. What's happening here? What's the context of the psalm? Israel finds itself in some situation of national calamity. And this situation is so dire that it shakes their very foundations. Is God faithful?

In their present situation they feel as if God has abandoned them. Like St. Paul would say, "For now we see in a mirror, dimly." They just can't find God! Their God-vision in the present tense is all blurry.

Question: When life has shaken you off your foundations, so that you don't even know what end is up, when even God feels far off, what have you done to get your bearings?

Israel was completely shaken. God seemed far away. So they looked back. They looked to a time when they *were* comforted by a divine blessed assurance. Surely this loving, merciful God of the past is with them, even through this! *Have someone read vss. 1–7. Have them look for the past and present tense.*

Israel looks to their history. And there they see that God has always been good and merciful! Like that parable "Footprints in the Sand," they can look at the past events of their life, and God was there, every step of the way. When they look at the past, they see one thing: **God is steadfast in love.**

When our present situation seems shaky and confused, this is something we can do. We can look to the past, to God's track record of faithfulness in our lives. And at the bottom of this track record lies your baptism. At your baptism God made a promise to you: "I will be there for you! You are mine! You are my beloved! And *nothing* will change that! By this covenant today I bind myself to you!"

II. Steadfast Love

Notice the line emboldened in verse seven. That phrase “steadfast love” is the one most commonly used in the Old Testament to describe God! **Question:** What does that imply to you, steadfast love?

What’s the difference between *steadfast* love and just plain old love?

This, then, becomes their appeal for their present calamity: God, show us that steadfast love *now!* We need it *now!*

III. Future Hope

So we’ve seen past assurance, and present appeal. The rest of the psalm looks to the future.

Question: What difference does a word from the future make in an uncertain situation?

We call a word from the future a **promise**. And promise brings hope.

We can endure any present calamity if we know there’s hope for the future! The rest of the psalm speaks a word of future assurance to Israel’s present uncertainty. *Have someone read vss. 8–13.*

Look at verse 10. Here we find the reason for the hugs and the kisses on this pillow:

Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet (embrace);

righteousness and peace will kiss each other.

Again, this pillow becomes a little telegram from God. The three hearts look to the past, present and future. And in each of them we find the same thing: steadfast love, steadfast love, steadfast love. And God’s promise for the future is this: God will fully embrace us with steadfast love and faithfulness, and greet us with the kiss of righteousness and peace.

Cable Pillow, Week Two

Psalm 85:1_13

To the leader. Of the Korahites. A Psalm.

Lord, you were favorable to your land;
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.

² You forgave the iniquity of your people;
you pardoned all their sin.

Selah

³ You withdrew all your wrath;
you turned from your hot anger.

⁴ Restore us again, O God of our salvation,
and put away your indignation toward us.

⁵ Will you be angry with us forever?
Will you prolong your anger to all generations?

⁶ Will you not revive us again,
so that your people may rejoice in you?

⁷ **Show us your steadfast love, O Lord,**
and grant us your salvation.

⁸ Let me hear what God the Lord will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people,
to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts.

⁹ Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him,
that his glory may dwell in our land.

¹⁰ Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace **will kiss each other**.

¹¹ Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,
and righteousness will look down from the sky.

¹² The Lord will give what is good,
and our land will yield its increase.

¹³ Righteousness will go before him,
and will make a path for his steps.

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Week Three

For this final week, the class will work on assembling their pillow and making their tassels and

attaching them to the pillow. It might be a good idea to bring along extra pieces of cardboard stock for making the tassels.

The final Bible study is on Paul's classic "love passage" from I Cor. 13.

I. The One Thing Necessary

Question: If a church in a community is well known, what kind of things will give it prominence? (Answers might be its size, the beauty of the building, or well known for its various ministries)

But Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, says that none of these things matter a whit if they aren't accompanied by something else. *Have someone read I Cor. 13:1–3.*

The church in Corinth was getting something of a swelled head. All the qualities Paul mentions here are the very things they valued. They were also qualities which Paul himself possessed in spades. And now he give them the shocking news: These qualities are worthless if they aren't accompanied by love!

Question: Isn't it enough to worship God well, or to have well attended Bible studies? What makes love so central to a community of faith?

In our first week's Bible study, we read that "God is love." If a church is lacking in love, then they've left out the one quality which is central to God's essence!

II. Love Lessons

What does love look like? How will we recognize it when we see it? In the next section, Paul describes what love is and what it is not. *Have someone read I Cor. 13:4–7.*

Notice that these qualities are all *actions*. Love is something we *do*. As I reflect on my own life, I realize that love is something I've learned how to do. My notion of what love is gets redefined over the years. As I walk through life, I get shaped into love's form.

Question: What, over the years, have you learned about love?

"Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." **Question:** Wow, that's a lot! Do you think your love can bear, believe, hope and endure *all things*? Is our love really that big? And if not, how do you make sense of this statement? (I think our human love is more limited than this. I think this statement can only be fulfilled through the fullness of God's love).

III. The Full Picture

Have someone read I Cor. 13:8–13.

We might know about love now. And we might know that God is love. And we might know that we love because God first loved us. But we can't grasp the fullness of this love right now. We've only glimpsed at a small patch of the full view.

We won't comprehend the full depth and breadth and height and length of God's love until we depart from this world and stand in God's presence face to face. This means that, for now, God's love is bigger than we're able to imagine.

Question: In a lifetime, things can happen which either expand or diminish our understanding of God's love. We would hope that, over the course of our life, our understanding of God's love for us would expand. As you reflect on your own experience, how does your comprehension of the magnitude of God's love affect the person you are?

Now, this is a truly beautiful thought! This is something for us to look forward to! No matter how much we've come to sense God's great love, we will see *so much more* when we rest in the presence of God! And just think of how the presence of that full love will fully transform you!

IV. The Greatest

At the beginning of this section Paul states, "Love never ends." And then at the end he states, "Faith, hope and love abide.....but the greatest of these is love."

Hebrews 11:1 states "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." Faith exists only in the unseen state. When we see face to face, then faith comes to an end.

Romans 8:24 states, "Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen?" You can hope only in anticipation. When reality is fulfilled, then hope goes away.

So this is what makes love the greatest of these three qualities. When we cease to see "through a mirror dimly," when we stand before God face to face, there will be no need for faith or hope. They'll cease to exist. The only quality left will be love, for love never ends. The love of God will be all in all.

Cable Pillow, Week Three

1 Cor. 13:1-13

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have **love**, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.² And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have **love**, I am nothing.³ If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have **love**, I gain nothing.

⁴ **Love** is patient; **love** is kind; **love** is not envious or boastful or arrogant⁵ or rude. It does not

insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶ it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. ⁷ It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸ **Love** never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. ⁹ For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; ¹⁰ but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. ¹² For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. ¹³ And now faith, hope, and **love** abide, these three; and **the greatest of these is love**.