



Home Group Discussion Guide *February 27 – March 5, 2022 – Build Up One Another*

**Devotion:** In 1882, England suffered an embarrassing loss to her colony across the globe – Australia. A British newspaper called *The Sporting Times* published an obituary saying that English cricket had died and that the ashes would be taken to Australia. Since then, the two nations have faced off every year in what is known as the “Ashes Series”. In December of 2021, the Australian national cricket team once again defeated their English adversaries and won the Ashes Series. The victory became worldwide news; however, what the media and the world took notice of was how the Australians celebrated. As the champagne was brought out, Usman Khawaja stepped away to avoid any contact with alcohol as it would violate his Muslim faith. In a profound act of leadership and humanity, team captain Pat Cummins halted the celebration and urged the team to put away the champagne bottles before being opened so that Usman could rejoin their celebration. This act is being praised worldwide as a powerful example of love. As we consider this story, we can reflect on Paul’s exhortation to the Romans where he explains that we aren’t acting in love when we partake in things that distress others. His message is that it becomes a matter of consideration and an act of love when we choose to abstain from something for the sake of others, even if it isn’t sinful in itself.

It is common for people to behave in their own way, whether it is how they dress, speak, or what they partake in, without consideration to how it might affect those around them. We go as far as to take offense when anyone has issue with the way we choose to act. In a culture where we often focus on our own rights, it may seem odd to live in a way that is sacrificial for the sake of others, but Paul encourages us to edify and build up others rather than be stumbling blocks.

This becomes for us the law of love where we are reminded that we are to love God and love our neighbor above anything else.

### **Scripture – Read Romans 14:15-19**

- According to this passage, what are the priorities of the kingdom of God? How do you think these priorities affect us personally?
- Why would it become detrimental to our witness if, for example, we ate pork in front of those who couldn’t eat it, or drank in front of someone who struggles with alcoholism, or overshared with someone who struggles with gossip? What



would it communicate to those people if we intentionally abstained for their sake?

- Can you think of any examples where you were affected by someone's actions even if they weren't necessarily sinful?
- What are some ways you can love others more intentionally?

**How is it with your soul?** (You'll notice that these questions are the same each week. This helps us develop a habit of looking for God and considering how we are responding to God's presence during the week.)

Where have you seen God this week?

Where have you struggled this week?

How can you be open to God/the Holy Spirit this week?

**Prayer**