

***Study Guide for
The Love Revelation***

Book 1: The Royal Law

Chapter 4

The Vignette: *God Is the Answer*

Summary: A pastor decides his church needs some changes, and does he make them!

1. Comment on Pastor Jenkins' desire to bring the church "up to speed." Is there anything wrong with that? What are some good intentions as well as risks when attempting to change a church?

2. What do you think were Pastor Jenkins' motives for wanting to move the church forward? (Hint: What was the name of the seminar he attended?)

3. Regarding the people in the church, what were some really good things that happened during the restructuring process?

4. Why do you think the effort to reach the unchurched was so successful on Easter Sunday, but lasting growth failed to materialize?

5. Why do you think some people *really* left the church, and do you think Pastor Jenkins should have been making any changes at all as a result of their leaving?

6. If the size of Pastor Jenkins' church was about 150 to begin with, what do you think was the total cost of renovating the church, including the cost for mailings and other advertising efforts? Do you feel that money could have been spent on something better?

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7. What do you think about Pastor Jenkins' "call" to leave and begin ministry at another church?

8. What do you think was the attitude of some of the new members, those who began with the statement, "My personal.....is none of the church's business"? What was lacking in their attitude toward the church and the kingdom of God? What had they failed to receive from the church?

Chapter 4: "Ice Weasels and Their Kin" (Love and Its Biblical Revelation)

1. Of the various definitions of love listed at the beginning of the chapter, which would do you like the best? Do you know of other definitions you would like to add?

2. Why did the author title the chapter, "Ice Weasels and Their Kin" when the subject is about definitions of love? In other words, what do the "ice weasels" represent?

3. Do you agree with Joseph Fletcher's proposition that "prescriptive principles such as rules or laws, regardless of their source, supernatural or natural, are insufficient to meet every situation in life and to address every contingency"? What is right and what is wrong about that proposition? (Note: If you have never heard of "ethical relativism" or "situation ethics," there are plenty of resources online.)

4. Do you agree or disagree with the statement, "Without absolute truth, love cannot be absolutely defined"?

5. As you read through the section titled, "Love in the Old Testament—To Love Is to Obey," why do you suppose loving God is a *command*?

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6. According to the chapter, why did God make the laws and commandments for the Israelites? Was he capricious in doing so? What does it mean “to protect the Messianic seed line embedded in the nation (of Israel) through the tribe of Judah”?

7. Do you agree or disagree with the statement, “...the love revealed throughout the Old Testament is parochial”? Why?

8. Do you agree or disagree with the statement, “...those who willingly choose to remain under the Law will always fall short in their ability to love God.” If you agree, why?

9. From the section, “Love in the New Testament,” define the three types of love found in the Greek language. It is important that a Christian understand and be able to explain *agape* love. Can you?

10. What is the key feature about *agape* love?

11. How do you feel about Jesus’ command to “love your enemies”? Does that command seem reasonable? Impossible? (Note: Greater discussion of this command can be found in the yet unpublished Book 3.)

12. Comment on the statements, “Biblical love is based on action more than feeling because, if we waited until we felt love, we might never love at all,” and, “We learn to *feel agape* love once we have been obedient to *showing agape* love.”

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13. Can you summarize the contents of chapter 4?

14. Write what you believe is the main point of the chapter.

Main Point: _____

Personal Assessment Questions:

- How does the theme of love connect with the actions of Pastor Jenkins in “God Is the Answer”?

- Have you ever been part of a church that went through a “restructuring”? If so, did it work or not? If it did, what made it work? If not, what made it fail?

- When you think about biblical love, do you think in terms of a feeling or in terms of an action?

- How do you show love to God? Do you show love by obeying the Ten Commandments or by showing love to others? (Or both.) Be specific and provide some recent examples.

- Do you consider yourself a child or an adult when it comes to expressing love?

- Where are the “ice weasels” in your definition of love?

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