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***The Heartbeat of Hope:***  
“Equipped as Disciples of the Son”  
John 13:34-35, 15:1-16:1

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***Thoughts to Shape and Spark Discussion:***

“No one will leave an addiction or compulsion unless a competing passion is offered that gives a taste of what the soul is meant to endure. Only Heaven is a big enough passion to draw us away from petty distractions and cheap addictions of this sorry world.”

— Dan Allender, *Bold Love*

"The more you say no to self in the way that Jesus teaches us to, you become more yourself. You don't cease to have a personality. The more you deny self, the more the 'real you' you become—the you that God intended you to be—the you that you sense in your better moments you should be. The you that God thought up in the first place."

— Sam Allberry, "Is God Anti-Gay?"

“[People with intellectual disabilities] are essentially people of the heart. When they meet others they do not have a hidden agenda for power or for success. Their cry, their fundamental cry, is for a relationship, a meeting heart to heart. It is this meeting that awakens them, opens them up to life, and calls them forth to love in great simplicity, freedom and openness. When those ingrained in a culture of winning and of individual success really meet them, and enter into friendship with them, something amazing and wonderful happens. They too are opened up to love and even to God. They are changed at a very deep level. They are transformed and become more fundamentally human.”

— Jean Vanier

***Themes and Questions to Guide Reflection and Response:***

- Do any of the quotes above provoke thoughts for discussion?
- After reading through the passage together, ask your group what makes an impression upon them from the passage and why it strikes them.
- What makes following Jesus hard? Where have you seen this in your own life? On the other other hand, where have you experienced the sweetness and joy of following Jesus?
- Ethan mentioned that busyness is a hindrance to loving others (John Ortberg calls it “hurry sickness”). Where are you busy? What might need to be cut out of your life (i.e., “pruned back”) in order for you to love your co-workers, roommates, spouse, friends, family, or neighbors well?
- Why do we need to continually go back to the embrace of the Father as we learn to be Jesus's disciples? What are some “habits of grace” that have helped you return to that embrace?
- Do you have any lingering questions or doubts from the passage or this discussion?