



Gifts from Above

12.18.22

BEYOND SUNDAY WEEK FOUR LOVE

DAY 22

Watch the Love video:

<https://youtu.be/slyevQ1LW7A>

In our fourth and final week of Advent, we'll explore the biblical meaning of love and how we can understand and experience Jesus' love for ourselves. How does the video encourage you today?

DAY 23

When people ask Jesus about the most important command he answers by quoting from the Hebrew Bible: "Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, soul, mind, and strength." But that's not all. Jesus quickly follows up by saying that another command is equally important: "Love your neighbor as yourself." For Jesus, no other command is greater than these.

[Read: Mark 12:29-31, Deuteronomy 6:5, Leviticus 19:18.](#)

Reflection and Discussion Questions:

- How does loving God relate to loving other people?

DAY 24

The Hebrew Bible records the history of the ancient Israelites repeatedly neglecting the commandment to love God and others. How can we hope to do any better? Jesus helps us when he adds a new commandment to accompany the greatest commandment. His new command shows how his sacrificial love can empower his followers to love others.

[Read: 1 John 4:9-11, John 13:34, and review Mark 12:29-31.](#)

Reflection and Discussion Questions:

- Compare John 13:34 with Mark 12:29-31. What is the difference between these two commands? How does Jesus' example show us what it looks like to follow the greatest command?
- Review 1 John 4:9-11 carefully. According to this passage, why did Jesus give his life, and what should motivate our love for others?

DAY 25

The God of the Bible doesn't just express love; he is love. As a triune God—Father, Son, and Spirit—he has always been and will always be an others-centered, self-giving, communal being. Jesus, the Son, fully embodies the love of God and demonstrates it most clearly when he gives his life on behalf of humanity. When people learn to trust Jesus' love for them, they join in God's community of love, and their very nature is transformed to love others with him.

[Read: 1 John 4:8, 1 John 4:16, 1 John 3:16, John 15:9-13.](#)

Reflection and Discussion Questions:

- Take note of the phrase “come to know and believe.” How is knowing and believing God’s love for us a process?
- Jesus and his disciples compared his love to a place where you can live or “abide.” To truly live somewhere, we first have to move in, unpack, and learn the space and how to operate in it. What else do people do when they live somewhere? How can this compare to what it’s like to trust in Jesus’ love?

DAY 26

Agape love is not primarily a feeling that happens to people. Love is a choice to act in a way that brings well-being to others. Love is more important than having spiritual knowledge or special abilities, and nothing matters without it. So how does love impact our thoughts and actions? [Read: 1 Corinthians 13:1-7.](#)

Reflection and Discussion Question:

- Using Paul’s definition of love, consider how Jesus loves us. How is Jesus patient, kind, humble, and selfless toward us?

DAY 27

Jesus says that the ultimate standard of authentic love is how well you treat the person you can’t stand, or in his words, “You should love your enemy and do good to them, expecting nothing in return.” Jesus says this kind of love imitates the very character of God himself. [Read: Luke 6:27-36.](#)

Reflection and Discussion Questions:

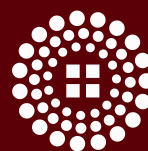
- What does Jesus promise for those who love their enemies (see verse 35)?
- Note how God himself is kind to ungrateful and evil people. What does this say about God’s character?
- Note how verse 36 describes God. What is the relationship between love and mercy?

DAY 28

In his letters, Paul says that God’s love extends beyond the Jews to include the Gentiles. Jesus’ love is so massive and relentless that people need unique help from God to begin to understand and live according to it, so Paul prays for his readers to be strengthened with God’s Spirit. [Read: Ephesians 3:14-21, Romans 8:38-39.](#)

Reflection and Discussion Questions:

- What metaphors does Paul use in today’s passages?
- How do these metaphors help us understand the nature of God’s love?



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WEEK FOUR: **LOVE**