

Week 9

Love God, Love People

Day 1

1 John 4:14-21: 14 Furthermore, we have seen with our own eyes and now testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. **15** All who declare that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them, and they live in God. **16** We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. **17** And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world. **18** Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love. **19** We love each other because he loved us first. **20** If someone says, "I love God," but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? **21** And he has given us this command: Those who love God must also love their fellow believers.

Two words are prevalent in this passage; live and love. When we live in the light of God's grace, we demonstrate love because God is love and God showed us the ultimate act of love by sending Jesus to the cross to die for our sins. He was perfect in everything he did, yet he took on all the brokenness, sinfulness, sickness, guilt, and shame that we would ever experience so that we can live with God forever in heaven. When we come to the reality of God's love for us, that allows us to trust him implicitly. It is hard to trust someone who does not



have your best in mind. God made the ultimate move towards you through Jesus. Make a move back to Him in response to His love for you. He's waiting with open arms. He wants us to spend eternity with Him and he has made a way for that. When we live in the love of God, the troubles of the world do not shake us or cause us to crumble. Instead, we can stand in the confidence of Jesus' love and joy that is made complete through our obedience to Him.

How have you experienced the unwavering love of Christ in your life?

Day 2

John 3:16-21: 16 *“For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. 17 God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him. 18 “There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God’s one and only Son. 19 And the judgment is based on this fact: God’s light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. 20 All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. 21 But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants.”*

John 3:16 is perhaps the most famous verse in all the Bible. But have you ever taken time to ponder and meditate on what it really means. Take some time right now to read through this entire passage slowly, reading every word out loud and pondering the magnitude of what God has done for us out of the wellspring of his heart.

What stood out to you about this passage?



Day 3

Romans 5:6-11: *6 When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. 7 Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. 8 But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. 9 And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation. 10 For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. 11 So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.*

How much effort does it take to love someone who is close to you? You probably don't have to think twice about it. What about someone you don't like or has wronged you? That's much harder isn't it? Some may say it's impossible. But take a look at verse 8 above. Read it out loud. Replace the word "us" with your name. Replace it with the name of someone you don't like or have a problem with. We are all sinners. We have all done wrong towards God. No one stands higher or lower than the other when it comes to sinful living. We are all on the same playing field. Christ died for *everyone*. There were no exceptions. We can have a relationship with God because of this sacrifice. We are friends with God because of Jesus. But that means doing some difficult things, like loving on those who we think are unloveable.

We have talked a lot about loving those who are unloveable in our lives, but that speaks to the importance of reconciliation. Is there someone over the past few weeks that keeps coming to mind that you need to make things right with? What are you going to do this very hour to move towards reconciliation?



Day 4

1 Peter 1:3-9: **3** All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, **4** and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay. **5** And through your faith, God is protecting you by his power until you receive this salvation, which is ready to be revealed on the last day for all to see. **6** So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. **7** These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world. **8** You love him even though you have never seen him. Though you do not see him now, you trust him; and you rejoice with a glorious, inexpressible joy. **9** The reward for trusting him will be the salvation of your souls.

No one likes tests of any kind, at least no one I have met. They tend to be stressful, high pressure situations. Whether it's a math test, drivers test, or life is testing you, rarely do they bring much happiness in the moment. Peter tells us here though, that when we face tests and trials, it is actually for our benefit, for we are growing in our faith because we see the goodness of God even in the midst of pain and suffering. God does not waste pain. He is able to use that which he hates to accomplish that which he loves. So if you are going through a test right now, look to our perfect Father, who will comfort you, protect you, and guide you through the storm. If you look across the course of human history, there is not one person who ever avoided hardship. It's inevitable but even greater than the inevitability is the graciousness of God, who strengthens us in our weakness.



How has God strengthened you during a storm in life? If you are going through a storm right now, what is he showing you?

Day 5

1 Timothy 6:11-16: *11 But you, Timothy, are a man of God; so run from all these evil things. Pursue righteousness and a godly life, along with faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight for the true faith. Hold tightly to the eternal life to which God has called you, which you have declared so well before many witnesses. 13 And I charge you before God, who gives life to all, and before Christ Jesus, who gave a good testimony before Pontius Pilate, 14 that you obey this command without wavering. Then no one can find fault with you from now until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. 15 For, At just the right time Christ will be revealed from heaven by the blessed and only almighty God, the King of all kings and Lord of all lords. 16 He alone can never die, and he lives in light so brilliant that no human can approach him. No human eye has ever seen him, nor ever will. All honor and power to him forever! Amen.*

Life is a battle that is fought on a daily basis. Everyday we're facing attacks from the enemy who wants to pull us farther away from God. Paul's charge to Timothy here was to encourage him to pursue righteous and godly living which combats the enemy. When our obedience to Christ is demonstrated in everyday living, we present a good witness to the transformation that has occurred within us. Until Jesus returns to earth, we will always be in battle against Satan and his followers. But Jesus has already declared victory over the forces of evil when he rose from the dead. We can live in the confidence of his victory in our day to day living, knowing that we have the power of the Spirit who raised Christ from the dead.

How can you give honor and glory to God today for what he has done in your life?



