

Love One Another #1: God’s Love and Ours

In the Bible, the issue of Love is very important. In fact, the Bible uses the word love over 500 times! Did you know that there are almost 60 verses in the New Testament alone that talk about “loving one another”? Wow! That is a lot of time to spend on one subject, don’t you think?

When your mom or dad tells you something multiple times, you know they are serious. The Bible is the same way. When a subject comes up over and over, it is a clue for us to pay attention because it’s a really important topic.

Over the next several weeks, we are going to spend a lot of time looking at the different ways the Bible commands us to “love one another.”

Fact: God **never** asks us to do something that He hasn’t already **done Himself**.

READ:

1 John 4:7-21 and answer the following questions.

THINK:

1. According to **verses 9-10** what is real love? How did God show us how much he loved us?

2. Read **verses 15-17**. According to the verses, how do we know if God living in us? According to the verse, what happens when God lives in us?

PRAY

Do you struggle to love others around you? Think of one or two people who you need help to love. Let him know you can’t do it on your own and ask God for his help.

3. Read **verse 19**. How do you think God's love you would help you love someone else?

4. In **verses 20 and 21**, John uses some pretty strong language to describe someone who claims to love God but hates another Christian. What does he call them? How does he explain this idea (hint--*to see or not to see*)? Do you agree with him? Why or why not.

MEMORIZE and MEDITATE:

Memorizing God's word is a very helpful way to implant God's thoughts into our own brains. Pick one verse from **verses 7-21** to memorize. Write it below.

ACT

5. How can you put what you read into action?

Love One Another #2: *Forgive one another....***REVIEW**

What is the Biblical basis for all of the “one another” verses in the Bible? Think 1 John 4.

READ

Read **Ephesians 4:31-32** and answer the following questions.

THINK

1. What does Paul instruct us to do in these verses?

2. Why do you think it is so important to forgive one another? Why is it dangerous if we don't forgive?

3. At the end of **verse 32** Paul says we must forgive one another “**just as God through Christ has forgiven you.**” Below, make a list (don't worry no one else will see it) of all the things that you have been forgiven for that you can think of.

PRAY:

Thank God for all the ways that he has forgiven you. Thank him that Jesus paid the price for your sins. Ask God to show you if there are people in your life that you need to forgive and that you would be motivated by his forgiveness to forgive them.

4. Read **Matthew 18:21-35**. Why do you think Jesus is telling this story? What's his point? What is he trying to teach?

5. Biblical forgiveness involves making a choice to **NOT REPAY** the offender but absorbing the payment yourself. This is what the Bible refers to as **mercy**. **Mercy** is choosing not to give someone what he or she deserves. Can you think of a time in your life when you've been shown **mercy**?

6. Many times in life, we need to not only forgive someone else, but we also need to ask for someone else's forgiveness. This usually involves going to them, admitting our mistakes, and actually asking them to forgive us. Why do you think it is important for Christians to ask for forgiveness from someone who they have offended, hurt, or sinned against?

ACT

7. Is there anyone in your life that you need to forgive? Is there anyone in your life that you need to ask for forgiveness for the way you've acted towards them or even thought about them? How can you put what you've read into action?

Love One Another #3: *Accept One Another...*

REVIEW

1. What is the Biblical basis for loving one another? (1 John 4)

At first glance, you might say, "Isn't accepting one another the same as forgiving one another?" Well, that's a good question, but they are actually two different but related ideas. Again, forgiveness involves laying down our "right" to punish someone for their sin, and choosing not to repay him or her for their action.

On the other hand, acceptance means welcoming someone who is often different from us. This often involves moving towards another person in love despite our apparent differences.

READ

Romans 15:7-9

THINK

2. In Verse 7, according to Paul, how are we supposed to accept one another? He says "just as _____"

What do you think this means?

3. What does Paul say will happen if we accept one another in this way? (end of verse 7) Why is that important?

Important: *This verse Paul is urging two very different groups of people, the **Jews** and the **Gentiles**, to accept one another **just as God in Christ had accepted them.***

5. To your knowledge, what were the differences that existed between the Jew and the Gentiles? List as many differences that you can think of.

We sometimes get confused because we all get hung up on someone's "horizontal" identity **like the things we see**—the color of their skin, their family, neighborhood, wealth and social status, personality, sports interests, hobbies etc. However, according to the Bible, this is not the Christian's true identity and **should never be the basis for how we relate to each other**.

As Christians, we all have the same "vertical" identity. According to the Bible, this is our real identity that truly defines who we are in Christ. This identity also forms the basis for how we are to relate to and accept one another. It is the identity given to us by God in Christ. This is who we really are!

6. Read through **Ephesians Chapter 1**. This passage lists some of the most important aspects of our (**vertical**) identity in Christ. List the different aspects of a Christian's identity according to Ephesians. What are some of the other aspects that Christians share?

7. How does understanding our "vertical" identity (**what God says about us**) make our "horizontal" identity (**the things we see**) less important?

ACT

8. What would it look like for you to practically "accept" the Christians around you who are different than you?

PRAY

Ask God to give you opportunities to love people who are different than you. Ask him to give you the motivation and power to do it.

Love One Another #4: Serve one another in love....

REVIEW

1. What is the Biblical basis for loving one another? (1 John 4)

2. In your own words, define the word **Freedom**.

3. What would you do if you had complete and total freedom to choose?

We tend think of **freedom** as the ability to do whatever we want, when we want, and how we want—to be our own boss. However, the Bible has a very different view of **freedom**. **Freedom** is not necessarily the ability to live without limitations, *“it is finding the right ones....Once you realize how Jesus gave himself for you, you aren't afraid of giving up your **freedom** and therefore finding your **freedom** in him.”* (~Timothy Keller)

Think about a fish. A fish isn't **free** if he decides to try living on dry land—he wouldn't be **free**, he'd be dead. Even though the fish has no choice weather to live on land or water, it actually enjoys the most **freedom** living consistently with the way it was designed—swimming in the water.

If we understand what Jesus did for us on the cross, and if we have put our trust in him for our salvation, we are free from having to always to worry about pleasing ourselves. We are free from the need to be selfish because we understand it is not how God has designed us to live—there is a better way!

Jesus said in John 8:32, “you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” The truth that Jesus loves us and died for us gives us real **freedom**—from ourselves. We don't have to be selfish anymore because God was so gracious, generous, and kind to us through Christ.

So, real freedom isn't doing what you want, when you want, and how you want. Real freedom is living consistently with how God made you. Read freedom is living for him and others. It's the only kind of freedom that will ever make us truly happy.

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READ

Galatians 5:13-15

THINK

3. In what ways might we use our **freedom** to “satisfy our sinful nature”?

Here’s another way of thinking about it...

How might you use your **freedom** as an opportunity to be selfish? Give examples.

4. In verse 13, Paul says that we shouldn’t use our freedom to serve ourselves, but we should use it to serve one another in love. How did Jesus serve us in love?

ACT

5. What are some practical ways that we can serve one another in love?

PRAY

Ask God to show you how you could serve someone around you. Ask him to show you what it means to “love your neighbor as yourself.” Thank him that Jesus was the ultimate servant by choosing to lay down his life for you. Thank him that because he did this, you don’t have to be selfish, get your own way, and always worry about someone serving you. Tell him that you don’t want to live to please yourself all the time, but that you want to live consistently with how he created you—to live for him! Ask his Holy Spirit to help you live this way, and to show you opportunities to love others when they come up. Ask him to give you the courage to live this way, and thank him that he will answer this prayer.

Love One Another #5: Be Patient with One Another...

REVIEW

1. What is the Biblical basis for every “one another” passage in the Bible?

MEMORIZE

2. Write down 1 John 4:10. Before the next lesson, commit to memorizing it.

READ

Ephesians 4:2

3. What is Paul asking the Ephesians to do in this verse?

4. What do you think it means to “make allowance for each other’s faults”?

5. Why do you think it is so important to “be patient with each another”?

THINK

Sometimes it’s really hard to be patient with people—especially when they keep doing the same things over and over. It’s even harder to be patient and make “allowance for each other’s faults” when they keep making those faults against me!

However, think about this—this is exactly what we do to God all the time. We keep messing up, over and over again, and in the same exact ways. Yet, God is always so patient with us.

But you, O Lord, are a God of compassion and mercy, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness. ~Psalm 86:15

“Yahweh! The LORD! The God of compassion and mercy! I am slow to anger and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness. ~Exodus 34:6

6. What do those verses tell us about how God deals with us even when we sin against him?

When we lack patience with each other, it really reveals that we don’t understand God’s love for us very well. Read the following verses and answer the questions.

Matthew 18:21-35

7. What do you think Jesus is trying to teach us by telling us this story?

8. How do you think God’s forgiveness towards us can help us be more patient with our friends and family?

PRAY/ACT

Talk to God about what you learned today. Ask him to give you a better understanding of how much he loves you so you can love others the way he does. Thank him that he continues to be loving and patient with you even though you don’t deserve it. Thank him that his Holy Spirit will help you change to be more like Jesus—humble, gentle, and patient.

Loving One Another #6: Teach and Counsel One Another...

REVIEW

1. Write down two things you have learned over the course of this study

READ

Colossians 3:16-17

2 Thessalonians 3:14-15

1 Thessalonians 5:14

THINK

2. What is Paul asking us to do in these verses?

Sometimes God asks us to speak into another person's life by confronting them about something harmful they are doing. This is what the Bible calls **admonition**. When we **admonish** one another our motivation is always love. We confront people because we love them and we don't want to see them continue to hurt themselves and others.

Think about it, God did this same thing with us. He was honest with us about our standing before him. See what **Romans 3:10-11** has to say about our condition.

*No one is righteous—
not even one.
No one is truly wise;
no one is seeking God.
All have turned away;
all have become useless.*

That's what we call the bad news. But the Bible also offers us some really good news as well. See **Romans 3:23**

"For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, with undeserved kindness, declares that we are righteous. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins."

God is very honest with us about our problem—sin, but he also is kind and gracious with us by offering a solution. The Bible says that God moved towards us through Jesus—even when we were his enemies. That’s pretty amazing!

And God offers the same opportunity for us. We can move toward each other by being honest and speaking the truth to each other because of what Jesus did for us.

4. We should always try use the Bible when we confront someone about their sin. Why do you think this is true?

5. True or False: It’s actually unloving of **not** to confront someone when you see them doing something that is harming himself (herself) or others? Explain your answer.

ACT:

6. You overhear one of your friends making fun of another one of your classmates. Even though some people laugh, you know in your heart that this is wrong and you need to confront it. What might you say to this person? How could you use the Bible to support your position?

PRAY:

Thank God that he loves you enough to confront you on your sin. Thank him that he did something about it by sending Jesus to die for you. Ask him to give you the courage to help your friends by laying your life down for them by admonishing them when they need it. Ask him to give the wisdom and love to do this for your friends.

Love One Another #7: Encourage One Another...

REVIEW

1. What is the Biblical basis for all of the “one another” verses we have studied so far?

READ

Hebrews 10:24-25

2. What is the author instructing us to do in this verse? How does he suggest that we do it?

1Thessalonians 5:11

3. What do you think it means to “build each other up”?

DEFINE

The Greek word in the New Testament where we get the word **encourage** is the word *Parakaleo*.

It comes from the root **kaleo** ("to call") and the prefix **para** ("around"). To **encourage** someone means to “come alongside” a person who needs your help. It also means to strengthen, help, affirm/advocate, and comfort someone in need by using our words.

THINK

4. What do you think it would look like to “come alongside” a friend who needed your help?

5. Has someone ever encouraged you? If so, what did they say? What effect did it have on you?

ACT:

6. Do you know someone who you could encourage? What would you say? What impact do you think this could have?

PRAY:

Thank God for what he has done for you—that he is so gracious to you—constantly giving you what you don’t deserve (grace). Ask him to give you insight about who you could extend grace (encouragement) to today. Ask him to give you the words to say.

Love One Another #8: Do Not Lie to Each Other

REVIEW

1. Did you have a chance to encourage anyone in the past week? If so, who? What did you say and how did they respond?

2. What is the Biblical basis for all of the “one another” verses we have studied so far?

3. Have you had a chance to put any of the “one another” verses in action over the past two weeks? If so, how?

READ

Colossians 3:9-10

Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him.

THINK

4. What does Paul ask the Colossians **not to do** in these verses?

4. What does Paul ask the Colossians **to do** in these verses?

5. What do you think Paul means by “put on the new nature”?

6. Do you think life would look different if we lived consistently with who we are in Christ (*our new nature*) and told the truth to each other—even when it’s the hard thing to do? If so, how?

ACT:

Is there someone in your life that you’ve lied to and need to tell the truth? Consider doing this today

PRAY:

Thank God that you are completely forgiven “in Christ” and that he will never leave you or condemn you. Ask him to give you the courage to tell you the truth even when it’s difficult.

Love One Another #9: Pray for Each Other

REVIEW:

1. Write down one verse below that you'd like to memorize that you've learned over the course of this study.

READ:

James 5:16

"Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results."

2. What does James ask the reader to do? (2 things)

3. James mentions that we need to confess our sins to one another and pray for one another so that "you may be healed." How do you think these things are connected?

THINK:

James mentions that prayer has great power and can produce wonderful results. Consider the following quotes on prayer.

- 1) *Prayer is simply a two-way conversation between you and God.* –Billy Graham
- 2) *Dont pray when you feel like it. Have an appointment with the Lord and keep it. A man is powerful on his knees.* –Corrie Ten Boom
- 3) *We can do nothing without prayer. All things can be done by [persistent] prayer. It ... removes all obstacles, overcomes every resisting force and gains its ends in the face of invincible hindrances.*
–EM Bounds
- 4) *Prayer should be the key of the day and the lock of the night.* –George Herbert
- 5) *Do not have your concert first, and then tune your instrument afterwards. Begin the day with the Word of God and prayer, and get first of all into harmony with Him.* –Hudson Taylor

4. Which one of the above quotes strikes you most? Why?

5. How do you think life might be different if you actually believed those things about prayer? How would it change the way you prayed for the people in your life?

ACT:

6. Make a list of 5 things you want to pray for people on a regular basis and commit to praying for them for the next two weeks.

PRAY:

Go ahead and start praying through your list.

Love One Another #10: “Share each other’s burdens...”

REVIEW:

1. Have you had the opportunity to put a “one another” verse into action recently? If so, how?

READ:

Share each other’s burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. ~Galatians 6:2

THINK:

2. In your own words, define the word “burden”.

3. Considering this, what do you think it might look like to share a burden with someone?

Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines **burden** as the following:

1.

a : something that is carried : [LOAD](#)

b : [DUTY](#), [RESPONSIBILITY](#)

2

a : something oppressive or worrisome

3

a : the bearing of a load

b : capacity for carrying cargo <a ship of a hundred tons *burden*>

4. Based on these definitions, what do you think it might look like to share someone else’s burden?

5. How do you think sharing someone else’s burden “fulfills the law of Christ” (to love one another)?

ACT:

6. Do you know someone who is carrying a “burden”? How might you help them “lighten their load.”? (Think about some of the other one another verses we’ve studied)

PRAY:

Thank God that he eliminated the burden you had of being separated from him. Ask him to show you how you can share someone else’s burden. Ask him to give you the strength and courage to love someone in this way.

Love One Another #11: Do Not Slander One Another...

REVIEW:

1. What is the basis for every one another verse in the entire Bible?

READ:

Don't speak evil against each other, dear brothers and sisters. If you criticize and judge each other, then you are criticizing and judging God's law. But your job is to obey the law, not to judge whether it applies to you. ~James 4:11

THINK:

2. What do you think it means "speak evil" against someone else?

3. What are some different ways that we can "speak evil" against another person?

4. In the verse, James talks about “criticizing and judging” each other. How do you think those two ideas are related?

Read the following Proverbs about slander and gossip (speaking evil):

Hiding hatred makes you a liar; slandering others makes you a fool. –Proverbs 10:1

Wrongdoers eagerly listen to gossip; liars pay close attention to slander. –Proverbs 17:4

A troublemaker plants seeds of strife; gossip separates the best of friends.- Proverbs 16:28

5. Which one of those verses strikes you the most? Explain why.

6. Instead of “speaking evil”, what do you think God calls us to do? What do you think this would look like practically?

ACT/PRAY

Think through ways that you can speak positively about someone who you are tempted to slander. Write them a note encouraging them and telling them what you appreciate about them. Ask God to allow you to see this person through his eyes. Ask him to give you a positive attitude towards this other person. Consider asking their forgiveness for the ways you’ve gossiped about them in the past.

Love One Another #12: Wrapping Up and Reflecting...

REVIEW:

1. What is basis for every single “one another” verse in the entire Bible?

2. How have you been able to put what you’ve learned into practice over the past month?

3. Has anyone in the class moved toward you in any of these areas over the past month?
How did it impact you?

4. Have you memorized any of the verses we’ve studied? What verse did you memorize
(write it below) Why did you choose that verse?

5. What is the one area (one another) that you still need the most help?

READ:

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

-John 13:34-35

THINK:

6. According to the verse, why is it so important that we practice the one another verses?

7. What will be the result if we refuse to love another one in this way? (what will the world think?)

PRAY:

Thank God that he loved you first. Thank him that he sent Jesus to save you. Thank him that you have his Holy Spirit living inside of you—he will empower you love others in this way. Ask him to change you into a person who genuinely loves others “deeply from the heart” (1 Peter 3:8). Tell him you’ve got a long way to go, but that you are thankful that he has promised to continue to change you until Jesus comes back (Philippians 1:6).