



**P.C.E.A. ST. ANDREW'S PARISH**

# **BIBLE STUDY**

## **GUIDE 2026**

**DO  
YOU  
LOVE  
ME?**

**Joh. 21:15**

*So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter,  
"Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?"  
He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You."  
He said to him, "Feed My lambs."*

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# PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EAST AFRICA ST. ANDREW'S PARISH, NAIROBI.

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## Do you love Me?

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Bible Study Guide - 2026

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**All scriptural quotations are from the New King James Version (NKJV), unless otherwise stated.**

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# Preface

The 2026 Bible Study Guide, themed “**DO YOU LOVE ME?**” (John 21:15–19), is born out of prayerful discernment, communal reflection, and a deep pastoral longing to see faith take tangible form in the everyday lives of God’s people. Following the journey of *Immovable Hope* that shaped our previous year of study, this guide intentionally leads the church into the lived expression of that hope, even love that is confessed, embodied, tested, extended, and ultimately perfected in Christ. At the heart of this study lies Jesus’ searching yet restorative question to Peter: “*Do you love Me?*” It is a question that confronts every believer beyond words, emotions, and religious familiarity. It presses us to examine whether our love for Christ is merely professed or genuinely practiced. Whether it is comfortable or costly. Whether it is selective or transformative. Throughout the year, this guide invites individuals, families, and groups to sit honestly with this question and to respond to it with obedience, service, forgiveness, and relational faithfulness.

This Bible Study Guide is deeply rooted in the life of the church. Its themes intentionally align with the preaching programme, the liturgical calendar, and the missional rhythm of congregational life. As such, the studies are not designed to exist in isolation but to complement corporate worship, reinforce teaching from the pulpit, and encourage continuity between Sunday proclamation and weekday discipleship. While the guide offers structure, Scripture passages, and guided questions, its true power lies in communal engagement. It assumes honest dialogue, attentive listening, prayerful reflection, and openness to the work of the Holy Spirit. The goal is not merely to complete studies, but to allow the Word of God to search us, reshape us, and send us out as people whose love reflects the character of Christ. As you embark on this year-long journey, may this guide serve as more than a requirement. May it become a mirror that reveals the state of our love, a compass that directs our relationships, and a call that continually draws us back to Christ; He who loved us first and still asks, with grace and truth: “*Do you love Me?*”

## **Brief on P.C.E.A. St. Andrews’**

P.C.E.A. St. Andrew's Parish is one of the parishes that constitute Milimani North Presbytery, within the larger Nairobi region. It is one of the oldest parishes of this Church and thus carries a lot of history of the Church. We are strategically located within the Nairobi CBD with our members spreading all over Nairobi city and its environs. We also have a rich online congregation that constitute of international and local congregants. Over the years the Parish has grown, giving birth to many established parishes within Nairobi region. Currently the Parish has two congregation, namely: P.C.E.A. St. Andrew's and P.C.E.A. Kileleshwa which combined have a total of 35 Elder Districts with potential of creating more Elder Districts.

**Our Vision:** *A Parish that mirrors Jesus Christ in totality*

**Our Mission:** *To worship God and serve humanity in obedience to The Great Commission*

**Core Values:** *Bible Centeredness, Prayerfulness, Presbyterian Governance, Integrity, Stewardship, Ecumenism (Unity in Diversity), Professionalism*

# Forward

## Theme of the year 2026: “Do you love Me?” (John 21:15)

*So, when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?” He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” He said to him, “Feed My lambs.” (John 21:15)*

In the New Testament, the *agape* love is considered as the ideal love between God and the world, but also between the believers themselves. This love is beyond sentiment. It is a volitional love and that implies a covenantal relationship. *Agape* is a love of choice, not of feelings. It is based on God’s character.

### **Agape as God’s love**

God’s love for the world makes him send his son to die for the same. This shows that *agape* love implies sacrifice: “For God so loved the world that He gave his only Son” (John 3:16). The Father’s continuous love for the Son shows that this love is eternal: “The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands” (John 3:35).

### **Christ’s love**

“Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end” (John 13:1). Here love goes hand in hand with service. Christ’s love makes him serve his disciples by washing their feet. The culmination of *agape* love drives him to the cross (Ephesians 5:2).

### **Believers’ love**

The Scriptures first insist on the believers to love God with all their being (Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 6:33; 22:37). Loving God automatically involves obedience to his word: “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them” (John 14:23). A person who does not love the Lord is exposed to spiritual death (1 Corinthians 16:22).

### **Agape love as a commitment to serving God**

1. The *Agape* love makes the believer love his neighbour through tangible service (1 Peter 1:22).
2. It also finds its echoes in a family set-up: “Love your wives, just as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her” (Ephesians 5:25).
3. The believer is also to direct his love towards his enemies: “But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you that you may be children of your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:44).
4. The same *agape* love is the motivation for generosity and service: “Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7).

In summary, *agape* love is the basis of the relationship between believers and God. The purpose of our being into this world is to practice love: to love the Lord, because he first loved us; to love the neighbour and the enemy; and to be at God’s service (1 Corinthians 13:1).

# Mode of Study

**For this study we shall employ Inductive Bible Study mode, which is a transformative approach to studying scriptures.**

What is Inductive Bible Study?

Inductive Bible Study (IBS) is a method of studying Scripture that emphasizes personal discovery and a structured approach to understanding the biblical text. It is a powerful and enriching way to engage with Scripture. It equips believers to seek truth directly from God's word, deepening both knowledge and personal faith. Whether studying alone or in a group, this method provides a pathway for discovering biblical truths and applying them in a meaningful way. By embracing observation, interpretation, and application, one can experience Scripture in a transformative and life-changing manner.

**IBS** involves three key steps: **Observation, Interpretation, and Application**. Unlike other study methods that rely heavily on external commentaries or pre-existing theological perspectives, the inductive method encourages individuals to engage deeply with the text and allow Scripture to speak for itself.

How to Conduct an Inductive Bible Study

The inductive study method follows a structured approach that fosters deeper engagement and understanding.

*The three steps are:*

## **1. Observation – What does the text say?**

This step focuses on carefully examining the passage to understand its content. Key questions to ask include: Who is speaking, and to whom? What is happening in the passage? When and where does this take place? Are there key words, repeated phrases, or contrasts? What is the tone or mood of the passage? What is the literary form (narrative, poetry, prophecy, epistle, etc.)?

**When observing a text**, read the passage multiple times, underline or highlight significant words and phrases, take notes on anything that stands out.

## **2. Interpretation – What does the text mean?**

This step seeks to uncover the meaning behind the passage. It requires understanding the historical and literary context, the original audience, and the intended message. Ask yourself: What is the main idea or theme of the passage? What did this mean to the original audience? How does this passage fit within the larger biblical narrative? What does this reveal about God, humanity, and faith? Are there cross-references that provide deeper insight?

**Some of the helpful tools for interpretation include:** Comparing different Bible translations, using a Bible dictionary or concordance, studying cultural and historical backgrounds and looking at parallel passages and themes in Scripture

### ***3. Application – How does the text apply to me?***

The final step makes the passage personally relevant by reflecting on how it influences one's faith and daily life. What to consider during application includes: What lessons or truths can I apply to my life? Are there any attitudes or behaviors that need to change? How does this passage challenge or encourage me? What specific actions can I take based on what I've learned?

**Some practical Steps for Application include:** Writing down key takeaways and action steps, praying for guidance on applying Scripture and sharing insights with others for accountability and encouragement.

### **Why Choose Inductive Bible Study Over Other Methods?**

Inductive Bible Study stands out from other study methods for several reasons:

- 1. Encourages personal engagement** – Instead of relying solely on external commentaries, inductive study helps individuals uncover biblical truths firsthand.
- 2. Provides a structured yet flexible approach** – It offers a clear framework while allowing room for personal discovery and reflection.
- 3. Enhances understanding of scripture** – By focusing on context and detailed analysis, it prevents misinterpretation and promotes deeper comprehension.
- 4. Fosters spiritual growth** – The process encourages transformation by applying God's word to daily life.
- 5. Works well for individual and group study** – It can be done alone or with others, making it a versatile approach for discipleship and teaching.

## Introduction

Last year, under the banner of *“Immovable Hope,”* we journeyed through the steadfast assurance of our faith, learning to trust God when the winds were strong and the future uncertain. Hope became our anchor, holding us firm amid the storms of life and reminding us that Christ, our Redeemer, never fails. Through that season, we discovered that hope is not passive waiting but active confidence in God’s unchanging promise. This year, the Spirit leads us from anchored hope to active love. Having learned to stand, we are now called to reach. The question that echoes from the risen Christ to Peter, *“Do you love Me?”* now resounds in our hearts. Hope anchored us in His faithfulness; love now sends us forth in His likeness. If last year taught us to endure, this year calls us to *express*. If hope kept us steady, love shall make us fruitful. For the believer, faith, hope, and love are not separate virtues but a single rhythm of grace. And love is the crescendo. It is the visible proof of our hope, the living evidence of our faith. As we step into this new year of study and reflection, may we not only remember the God of our hope but also reflect the God of our love. May we respond to His timeless question with lives that answer, *“Yes, Lord, you know that I love You.”*

Throughout this year, we shall explore what it truly means to love God and others as Christ taught us. We shall trace love from its divine source, its human response, and its expression in relationships and service. We shall do this in four phases, or quarters if you like. Each of the quarters is deliberately designed to build upon the other, helping us to grow in our understanding and embodiment of this sacred call to live as people whose love mirrors the love of Christ Himself. Before we can effectively love God or others, we must first understand the nature of God’s love. The first quarter of our study this year shall help us behold love at its source. Not as an abstract ideal, but as the very essence of God’s being.

Scripture reveals that “God is love” (1 John 4:8); all His actions, commands, and promises flow from that reality. Here, we shall encounter a love that creates, redeems, and restores. Love that is steadfast in mercy, rich in grace, and boundless in patience. We shall see that God’s love is not earned by performance but received through faith. As we meditate on His covenant faithfulness, His redeeming compassion, and His invitation to renewal, it is our hope that the heart of each one of us shall be drawn to trust and adore God more deeply. Understanding God’s love becomes the foundation upon which every other expression of love is built, because we cannot reflect what we have not first understood.

Once we have grasped the depth of God’s love for us, the natural response is to love Him in return, wholeheartedly and exclusively. The second quarter shall focus on our *response* to divine love. Here, we shall explore what it means to love God “with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength” (Mark 12:30). Loving God is not confined to worship services or moments of devotion. It is a lifestyle of obedience, gratitude, and surrender. It means aligning our desires with His will, prioritizing His presence, and trusting His purpose even when it is costly. The quarter shall call us to renew our devotion, so as to rekindle the flame of first love that Jesus desires from His followers. Through these studies, we shall rediscover that loving God fully leads to freedom, not bondage; to joy and not duty. The more we love Him, the more we reflect His heart in the world.

While first two quarters shall see us focus upward and inward, the third quarter shall turn us outward, to express that love toward others. Jesus taught that loving God and loving our neighbour are inseparable (Matthew 22:37–39). The third quarter shall challenge us to move beyond affection for those we find easy to love and to embrace the broader, sacrificial love that Jesus modeled. We will explore love that forgives, serves, includes, and reconciles. Love that crosses boundaries, mends divisions, and uplifts the hurting. Indeed, to love our neighbour is to embody the Gospel. It is to make the invisible love of God visible in our communities, families, and workplaces. It is to practice love that listens, acts, and heals.

Having experienced, returned, and expressed God’s love, we then learn to sustain it. To nurture love that endures and strengthens the bonds of fellowship, family, and community. In the fourth quarter, we shall emphasise on love as the foundation of all healthy relationships. Here, we shall explore the patience, forgiveness, and humility required to maintain godly relationships in a broken world. Love that builds relationships is intentional, reconciling, and restorative. It seeks unity in diversity, peace in conflict, and faithfulness in commitment. In the end, love becomes not just something we understand or express, but something we live. It becomes the atmosphere of our homes, the rhythm of our churches, and the fragrance of our lives. This shall be the mindset for the last quarter’s study.

With this grand narrative of love set before us: From knowing God’s love to living it out, we now embark on the month-by-month journey. We begin with January, a month of *Covenant Renewal*, where we rediscover the faithful love of God and reaffirm our own commitment to loving Him in return.

# JANUARY: RENEWED IN COVENANT LOVE

## Introduction

New Year always invites us to begin again. It invites us to reset, realign, and renew our walk with God. But for believers, renewal is not just about making resolutions. It is about reaffirming relationships. The God of Scripture is a God of covenant. A God who binds Himself to His people in steadfast love and faithfulness. From Abraham to Jacob, from David to the New Testament Church, God's story has always been a story of covenant love. Love that chooses, commits, and endures. In John 21:15–19, Jesus asked Peter three times, “*Do you love Me?*” This was not a question of doubt but of renewal. After Peter's failure, Jesus was restoring him to fellowship and purpose. Likewise, as we begin a new year, Christ's question comes afresh to each of us. It is not meant to condemn, but to call us back, to rekindle our affection, to restore our devotion, and renew our service. To be “renewed in covenant love” means to remember that God's faithfulness never wavers, even when ours does. It means to return, to recommit, and to rediscover the depth of His grace. The covenant is not a cold contract but a living relationship sealed in love. Sealed in love that forgives, restores, and transforms.

This month's studies invite us to do what Israel did at the start of every season of renewal. It invites us to remember the covenant, repent of our wanderings, and reaffirm our devotion to the Lord. In so doing, we shall align our hearts afresh with the One who calls us, forgives us, and commissions us anew.

## Study 1: Do you love Me?

This intimate encounter between Jesus and Peter, set by the Sea of Galilee, takes place after Peter's public failure and Jesus' resurrection. It is one of the most tender and transforming conversations in Scripture. Jesus does not condemn Peter for his denial. Instead, He invites him into restoration by asking the most profound question of discipleship: “*Do you love Me?*” Love is the foundation of all true relationship with God. Jesus doesn't ask Peter, “Will you work for Me?” or “Will you promise never to fail again?” He goes straight to the heart: “*Do you love Me?*” This question reaches beyond Peter's mind to his heart. It measures not profession but devotion, not emotion but surrender. Each repetition of the question deepens the invitation. Jesus moves Peter from wounded regret to renewed purpose; from denial to discipleship, from guilt to grace. With every response, Jesus commissions Peter anew: *Feed My lambs, tend My sheep, feed My sheep*. Love, then, becomes the motive for service, the power for obedience, and the essence of following Christ. This same question echoes to every believer today. Christ's love restores us not to comfort but to calling. To love Him is to serve Him, to care for His people, to walk in His ways, and to follow wherever He leads.

**Study Passage: John 21:15-19**

**Jesus Restores Peter**

*15 So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs." 16 He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep." 17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep. 18 Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish." 19 This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me."*

**Study Questions**

**1. Observation:** In John 21:15-19, how does Jesus approach Peter after his failure? What actions and words show both tenderness and purpose in Jesus' restoration of Peter?

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**2. Interpretation:** Why do you think Jesus asked Peter the same question three times? What does this repetition reveal about the nature of true love and restoration in our relationship with Christ?

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**3. Application:** If Jesus were to ask you today, "Do you love Me?", how would your life answer that question? In what ways can you demonstrate your love for Christ through obedience, service, and care for others this year?

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**Study 2: Renewed in His Love**

Just as we saw with hope, love is never static, it is living, renewing, and restoring. The love of God does not expire when we falter; it reaches down to renew us when we are weary, lost, or broken. Throughout Scripture, renewal is God's gracious act of calling His people back into covenant fellowship with Him. His love pursues, forgives, and revives those who have drifted away. Israel's

story is marked by repeated seasons of renewal; moments when God’s people rediscovered His mercy and recommitted themselves to His covenant. But renewal always begins with God’s initiative. It is His unfailing love that awakens our hearts to return. In this study, we encounter the God who restores us not because we deserve it, but because He delights in mercy. His love is not dependent on our perfection. It is anchored in His faithfulness. To be renewed in His love is to rediscover that even when we are unfaithful, He remains faithful. It is to rest in the assurance that His covenant of grace still stands firm.

**Study Passage: Hosea 2:14–20**

**God’s Mercy on His People**

*14 “Therefore, behold, I will allure her, will bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfort to her. 15 I will give her vineyards from there, and the Valley of Achor as a door of hope; she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt. 16 “And it shall be, in that day,” says the LORD, “that you will call Me ‘my Husband,’ and no longer call Me ‘my Master,’ 17 For I will take from her mouth the names of the Baals, and they shall be remembered by their name no more. 18 In that day I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, with the birds of the air, and with the creeping things of the ground. Bow and sword of battle I will shatter from the earth, to make them lie down safely. 19 “I will betroth you to Me forever. Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice, in lovingkindness and mercy; 20 I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, and you shall know the LORD.*

**Study Questions**

**1. Observation:** What images and actions in Hosea 2:14–20 reveal the depth of God’s love and His desire to restore His people? How does God initiate renewal in this passage?

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**2. Interpretation:** Why does God describe His relationship with His people in marital terms (“I will betroth you to Me forever”)? What does this teach us about the intimacy and permanence of divine love?

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**3. Application:** Where in your life do you sense God inviting you to renewal, to return, to rest, or to rekindle your love for Him? How shall you respond to His loving call in this season?

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### Study 3: Where Are You?

Every covenant relationship requires honesty. A willingness to face the truth about where we stand with God. When Adam and Eve hid after disobeying God in the Garden, the Lord called out to them, *“Where are you?”* (Genesis 3:9). This was not a question of geography, but of relationship. God knew their location. What He sought was their confession. *“Where are you?”* is a question of divine pursuit. It is a loving call to self-examination. It is God’s way of helping His people realise how far they have drifted, how easily they have hidden behind shame, fear, or routine. Before renewal can happen, there must first be recognition. Recognition of our distance, our disobedience, or our distractions. As we prepare for covenant renewal, this question invites each of us to pause and reflect: *Where am I in my walk with God? Have I shifted from intimacy to indifference, from passion to pretense, from fellowship to formality?* God’s question is not meant to condemn but to restore. His voice calls us out of hiding, into repentance, forgiveness, and renewed fellowship.

#### Study Passage: Genesis 3:8-13

*<sup>8</sup> And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. <sup>9</sup> Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, “Where are you?” <sup>10</sup> So he said, “I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.” <sup>11</sup> And He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?” <sup>12</sup> Then the man said, “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.” <sup>13</sup> And the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”*

#### Study Questions

1. **Observation:** What emotions and actions do Adam and Eve display after their disobedience? How does God’s question, “Where are you?”, reveal His character and His relationship with them?

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2. **Interpretation:** Why does God begin the conversation with a question instead of a statement of judgment? What does this teach us about God’s way of confronting and restoring His people?

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**3. Application:** If God were to ask you today, “Where are you?” in your faith, service, or love, how would you answer? What steps can you take to move from hiding to honesty, from distance to closeness, as you renew your covenant with Him?

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**Monthly Reflection: Renewed in Covenant Love**

Renewal begins where honesty meets grace. This month, God has not merely invited us to start a new year. He has called us to come back to Him. The question “*Do you love Me?*” resounds in the hearts of those who once walked closely but have since drifted. It pierces through our busyness, our pretense, our spiritual fatigue, and is calling us to remember the One whose love has never changed. Covenant love is not a seasonal emotion but a steadfast relationship sealed by God’s own faithfulness. From Eden to Calvary, God has been asking humanity, “*Where are you?*” Not because He doesn’t know where we are, but because He longs for us to realise how far we’ve wandered. Every time we return, He restores. Every time we confess, He renews. His love is relentless and does not demand perfection, but invites us to commune with Him. To be renewed in covenant love is to exchange shame for grace, fear for fellowship, and failure for faithfulness. It is to hear Christ’s question again and respond, not merely with words but with obedience: “*Yes, Lord, You know that I love You.*” As we step into this new year, may this renewal not be a passing moment but a lived commitment. May it be a daily choosing of God above all else. Let us walk forward as a people restored, recommitted, and ready to follow wherever He leads.

**Memory Verse:**

*“The Lord has appeared of old to me, saying: ‘Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore, with lovingkindness I have drawn you.’” (Jer. 31:3).*

# FEBRUARY: LOVING IN GOD'S PERSPECTIVE

## Introduction

To understand love in its purest form, we must first see it through God's eyes. Human love is often limited, selective, and conditional. It loves those who are lovable, those who please us, or those who can love us back. But divine love, the kind revealed in Scripture, flows from a radically different source and follows a higher logic. God's perspective of love is not rooted in emotion, but in His essence. He loves because He is love (1 John 4:8). His love does not fluctuate with our failures or fade with time; it remains steadfast, even when we are faithless. From creation to the cross, God's actions reveal a love that gives, forgives, and transforms. Loving in God's perspective, therefore, means allowing His nature to shape how we perceive others and ourselves. It means moving from a self-centered view of love: "*How does this benefit me?*" to a God-centered one: "*How does this reveal Him?*" It is a love that corrects, protects, and redeems; a love that calls sin by name yet refuses to abandon the sinner.

This month, we are invited to align our hearts with God's vision of love. We are called to see beyond appearance, to forgive beyond reason, and to serve beyond comfort. In doing so, we not only understand His heart but reflect it to the world. Through the study, we shall endeavour to learn to love as God loves, not as the world defines love. We shall also attempt to develop a Christ-centered perspective in our relationships and ministry as we align our emotions, actions, and judgments with the nature of divine love.

## Study 1: This is Love

In a world that speaks much about love but understands little of it, the Bible stands as the only reliable definition. Love, in God's perspective, is not an abstract idea, a fleeting emotion, or a human ideal. It is a revelation; a divine reality that flows from God's very being. John the Apostle writes, "*God is love*" (1 John 4:8). That means love is not just something that God does; it is also the very reflection of who He is. Everything He does: His mercy, His justice, His patience, His discipline, all spring from His nature of love. To know love, therefore, we must know Him. To live in love, we must live in Him. The cross of Christ stands as the ultimate definition and demonstration of divine love. It shows that love is not permissive but redemptive; not indulgent but sacrificial. God's love does not affirm sin, but it meets sinners in mercy and calls them to transformation. It is a love that gives without expecting return, that forgives before being asked, and that heals even those who wound it. When we define love as God defines it, our entire perspective changes. We begin to love not for reward, not from convenience, but from conviction. And in loving as He loves, we reflect the very nature of the One who first loved us.

**Study Passage: 1 John 4:7-12**

**Knowing God through Love**

*7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9 In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.*

**Study Questions:**

**1. Observation:** According to 1 John 4:7-12, how is God’s love revealed and defined? What key phrases in this passage show how divine love differs from human love?

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**2. Interpretation:** What does it mean to say that “love is of God” and that “God is love”? How does this truth reshape your understanding of what it means to love others or even ourselves?

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**3. Application:** How can you live out “this is love” in your everyday life (in your family, church, or community) in a way that reflects God’s definition rather than the world’s?

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**Study 2: Love that Gifts**

The truest measure of love is giving. The world may express love in gifts that fade, flowers that wither, and words that pass. But God’s love gives what endures. Divine love is not about the size of the gift but the sacrifice behind it. It does not give to earn affection. It gives because affection already exists. The entire story of salvation is the story of a God who gives. He gives breath to creation, freedom to the captive, and His only Son for the redemption of the world. When John writes, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son” (John 3:16), he reveals a truth that redefines both love and giving: love that is real will always express itself through self-giving. In God’s perspective, giving is not a mere transaction but transformation. His giving flows from compassion, not compulsion. He gives not from abundance but from essence; not out of obligation but out of joy.

To love as God loves is to live as generous people, giving our time, treasures and talents not because others deserve them, but because love compels us.

This study calls us to embrace the divine rhythm of giving. Not just on Valentine’s Day, but every day. For love that gifts is love that reflects the heart of the Giver.

**Study Passage: John 3:16–17**

*16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.*

**Study Questions:**

- 1. **Observation:** According to John 3:16–17, what motivated God’s giving? How does this passage describe the connection between love and giving?  
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- 2. **Interpretation:** Why is the gift of Jesus the ultimate expression of divine love? What does this reveal about the nature and purpose of God’s generosity  
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- 3. **Application:** What are some practical ways you can express “**love that gifts**” this season; not through material things, but through acts of grace, service, or forgiveness that mirror God’s love  
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**Study 3: Selfless but Tough Love**

In the world’s eyes, love means constant affirmation: Never correction, never pain. But in God’s perspective, true love does not pamper; it purifies. Divine love gives freely, yet it also disciplines faithfully. It is both selfless and tough. It is a love that sacrifices for others and love that shapes others through correction. Selfless love is what Christ displayed on the cross. A love that puts others first, that gives without demanding return. Paul, writing to the Ephesians, captures it this way: “*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.*” (Ephesians 5:25). This love chooses sacrifice over self-interest, obedience over comfort, and service over status. Tough love,

on the other hand, is God’s loving discipline. Hebrews 12 reminds us that “*whom the Lord loves He chastens.*” Divine love never aims to destroy but to develop; never to harm but to heal. It allows us to pass through discomfort so that we may grow in righteousness, just as gold is refined by fire. To love as God loves, therefore, is to embrace both sides of love’s nature: The tenderness that gives and the strength that corrects. In God’s eyes, love and discipline are not opposites. They are inseparable. Love that never corrects is sentimentality, and correction without love is cruelty. But divine love, both selfless and tough, leads to transformation.

**Study Passages:**

***Ephesians 5:25–30;***

*25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. 28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. 30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.*

***Hebrews 12:7–11***

*7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? 8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. 11 Now no [b]chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.*

**Study Questions:**

- 1. **Observation:** According to Ephesians 5:25–30 and Hebrews 12:7–11, how is God’s love both selfless and corrective? What actions of love are highlighted in these passages?

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- 2. **Interpretation:** Why does Scripture connect love with discipline? What does this tell us about God’s purpose when He allows us to experience difficulty or correction?

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**3. Application:** How can we reflect both selfless and tough love in our relationships (in family, ministry, or leadership) so that our love mirrors God’s balance of compassion and truth?

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**Monthly Reflection – Loving in God’s Perspective**

To love in God’s perspective is to see love not through the lens of human desire, but divine purpose. It is to understand that love is more than affection. It is action, sacrifice, and sometimes, discipline. The world often see love through the lenses of pleasure, passion, or preference. But God defines love as a decision to give, to serve, and to shape. His love is not a reaction to our goodness but a revelation of His nature. He loves us not because we are lovable, but because He is love. And when that love takes root in our hearts, it transforms the way we see everything, including ourselves, others, and even our pain. As we saw in this month’s study, God’s love gives; not trinkets or tokens, but Himself. He gave His Son for our salvation. He gives His Spirit for our sanctification, and His Word for our guidance. We also saw that God’s love corrects; not to punish but to purify. His discipline is proof of His fatherhood, not a sign of His distance. Through the study we established that to love in God’s perspective, is to adopt His heart that gives even when it costs, that forgives even when it hurts, that corrects when necessary, and that keeps loving when it’s no longer convenient. This is not sentimental love. It is redemptive love. It is the kind that redeems the lost, refines the proud, and restores the broken. When we love like this, we no longer mirror the world, but Christ. So as February closes, let us stand before the mirror of divine love and ask: “Do I love as God loves or only as I feel?” May the Lord help us to always remember that in God’s kingdom, love is not a holiday to be celebrated but a life to be lived.

**Memory Verse:**

*In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (1 Joh. 4:10)*

# MARCH: LOVE DISPLAYED IN SACRIFICE

## Introduction

The story of redemption reaches its climax at the cross where love is no longer spoken but displayed. This month draws us into the sacred mystery of divine love displayed in sacrifice. As we journey toward Easter, our eyes turn to the One who loved not in word only, but in blood, sweat, and tears. In Christ, we see love stripped off sentiment and clothed in suffering. This is not love that seeks to be served, but love that serves unto death. Indeed, Jesus' sacrifice was not an act of tragic loss, but of triumphant obedience. It was the Father's will, the Son's choice, and the Spirit's power at work in perfect unity, so as to redeem the world through pain and surrender. Sacrificial love is the highest expression of divine character. It gives not what is convenient, but what is costly. It stands firm when rejected, forgives when wounded, and endures when misunderstood. This is the love that restores the broken, reconciles the sinner, and reclaims the lost. As we prepare for Easter, we are invited to gaze once more at the cross to see what love truly looks like. For it is here we learn that love without sacrifice is mere sentiment, and sacrifice without love is meaningless. In Jesus, love and sacrifice meet perfectly. And it is in this holy intersection that humanity is healed and hope is reborn. Thus said, the focus for this month's study is to help us understand the depth of God's sacrificial love revealed through Christ. The study will also focus on helping us to respond to that love with gratitude, obedience, and compassion as we endeavour to emulate Christ's example of self-giving love in daily life and service.

## Study 1: Righteous Sinners

The Gospel's greatest wonder is that God justifies the ungodly. That we, once lost in sin, can now stand righteous before a holy God is the most staggering truth of grace. Yet it is also one of the hardest for human pride to accept. How can sinners be righteous? How can those guilty of disobedience be declared innocent? The answer lies not in who we are, but in the finished work of Christ on the cross. From the depths of David's confession in Psalm 51 to Paul's declaration in Romans 3, Scripture unfolds a breathtaking truth: God's love does not wait for righteousness to appear. It creates it through mercy. David, broken by sin, cries out, *"Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,"* recognising the corruption within him. Yet in the same breath, he appeals to God's cleansing love: *"Create in me a clean heart, O God."* Centuries later, Paul echoes that same reality in theological precision: *"God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement... to demonstrate His righteousness."* (Romans 3:25). At the cross, God's justice and mercy meet. He does not overlook sin but overcomes it through sacrifice. In Christ, sinners are forgiven, cleansed, and clothed in a righteousness that is not their own. To be a "righteous sinner," then, is not a contradiction but the miracle of grace. We remain aware of our sinfulness, yet assured of our standing in Christ. We walk humbly, knowing that by His wound but not our works, our righteousness is given, our holiness bestowed, and our salvation secured.

**Study Passages:**

**Psalm 51:1–5**

*<sup>1</sup>Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. <sup>2</sup>Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. <sup>3</sup>For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. <sup>4</sup>Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight— That You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge. <sup>5</sup>Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.*

**Romans 3:23–26**

*<sup>23</sup>for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup>being justified <sup>[a]</sup>freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup>whom God set forth as a <sup>[b]</sup>propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, <sup>26</sup>to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

**Study Questions**

**1. Observation:** In Psalm 51:1–5 and Romans 3:23–26, how do both David and Paul describe the reality of human sin and God’s response to it? What words or phrases highlight the tension between guilt and grace?

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**2. Interpretation:** What does it mean that God is both “just and the justifier”? How does the cross of Christ make it possible for sinners to be declared righteous without compromising God’s justice?

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**3. Application:** How does understanding yourself as a “righteous sinner” shape your humility, gratitude, and love for others? In what ways does this truth prepare your heart to appreciate Christ’s sacrificial love more deeply this Easter season?

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## Study 2: The Atoning Love

At the core of the Christian faith lies one defining truth: Christ died for our sins.

This simple yet staggering statement captures the most profound act of love in human and divine history: The atoning love of God. In the atonement, love meets law, mercy meets justice, and grace meets guilt. What Adam broke through disobedience, Christ restored through obedience, even unto death. From the beginning, humanity's story has been marked by sin and separation. *"Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin."* (Romans 5:12). Every act of rebellion widened the rift between a holy God and sinful humanity. Yet God's response was not rejection but redemption. The prophet Isaiah foresaw this divine plan centuries earlier when he wrote: *"It pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief... when You make His soul an offering for sin."* (Isaiah 53:10). In that single act of atonement, Christ offering Himself as the Lamb of God, the wrath of God was satisfied, and the grace of God was magnified. Love obeyed the Father's will completely, bearing the weight of sin to reconcile the world to Himself. The cross thus stands not as a symbol of defeat but of divine love's victory, a love that was willing to descend into death to bring humanity into life. To understand atoning love is to grasp that sin demanded death, yet love volunteered life. Jesus did not die because He was forced to. He died because He chose to. And in that choice, we see that obedience is the truest language of love.

### Study Passages:

#### **Romans 5:12, 18**

*<sup>12</sup> Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned..... <sup>18</sup> Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.*

#### **Isaiah 53:10**

*<sup>10</sup> Yet it pleased the LORD to <sup>[a]</sup>bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.*

### Study Questions

- 1. Observation:** According to Romans 5:12,18 and Isaiah 53:10, how did one man's disobedience lead to death for all, and how did one man's obedience bring justification? What words or images in Isaiah's prophecy describe the nature of Christ's atoning work?

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2. **Interpretation:** Why does Scripture say that it “*pleased the Lord to bruise Him*”? What does this reveal about God’s purpose in Christ’s suffering and how it fulfills divine justice and mercy simultaneously?

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3. **Application:** How can the reality of Christ’s atoning love shape the way we respond to God and others? In what ways does this truth inspire deeper obedience, humility, and gratitude in your walk of faith

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### Study 3: Love that Lays Down Yet Triumphs

As Jesus approached Jerusalem on that first Palm Sunday, the crowds saw a conquering king. But heaven saw a suffering servant. The people waved palm branches expecting deliverance from Rome, yet Christ was preparing deliverance from sin. In their eyes, victory meant thrones and crowns. In His eyes, victory meant a cross and a tomb. In *John 15:13*, Jesus defines the very essence of divine love: “*Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.*” True love is not proved by what it gains but by what it gives up. It is the willingness to surrender, even life itself, for the good of another. This is the love that lays down yet triumphs. When Christ laid down His life, it was not defeat. It was divine strategy. What looked like loss was victory disguised. Every wound He bore, every nail that pierced Him, and every drop of blood that fell was love’s declaration of triumph. The grave became the gateway to glory, and the cross became the crown of His kingship. To love like Christ is to learn this sacred paradox: That the path to glory runs through humility, the road to resurrection passes through death, and the crown of victory rests upon a cross of surrender. The love that lays down is the love that overcomes. Not by force, but by faithfulness. As we approach Palm Sunday, may our hearts be stirred to worship not just the Jesus who rode in triumph, but the Jesus who *walked to Calvary*, where love conquered through sacrifice and triumphed through surrender.

#### Study Passage: *John 15:9–13*

<sup>9</sup>“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. <sup>10</sup> If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. <sup>11</sup> These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. <sup>12</sup> This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.”

## Study Questions

1. **Observation:** What progression of thought do you notice in John 15:9–13 as Jesus moves from His relationship with the Father to His command to love others? What does He mean by “greater love”?

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2. **Interpretation:** Why is laying down one’s life considered the highest expression of love? How does Christ’s willingness to die demonstrate both humility and divine victory?

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3. **Application:** In your own life, what does it mean to “lay down” something out of love, your comfort, pride, or rights? How can this kind of sacrificial love help you triumph in relationships, service, or ministry?

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## Monthly Reflection: Love Displayed in Sacrifice

At the center of the Christian faith stands a cross; rough, rugged, but redemptive. Upon it hangs not a martyr for a cause, but a Saviour for the lost. It is there that love is fully unveiled, not as sentiment, but as sacrifice. This month’s journey has reminded us that love is costly. It calls us to face the uncomfortable truth of our condition that we are righteous sinners, forgiven not because we deserve it, but because grace demanded it. From that realization springs deep gratitude, for we know that our righteousness is given not earned, and our forgiveness was bought at a price. Then we gazed upon the atoning love, where Christ bore the sin of the world and turned wrath into reconciliation. Love obeyed unto death, choosing nails over comfort and a crown of thorns over the crown of applause. In that surrender, justice and mercy embraced, and humanity found peace. Finally, we beheld love that lays down yet triumphs. The very paradox of divine victory. The One who stooped the lowest was exalted the highest. The cross that seemed to silence Him became the platform of His eternal proclamation: “*It is finished.*” Love’s surrender became love’s song of triumph. As the Church reflects on Palm Sunday and the passion of Easter, we are reminded that the path of true love is the path of the cross. It is love that chooses obedience over comfort, forgiveness over bitterness, and giving over grasping. Such love may seem to lay down, but in God’s wisdom, it always rises; purified, perfected, and powerful. To love sacrificially, therefore, is to participate in the victory of Christ Himself. For every time we forgive, serve, or endure in love, we echo the melody of Calvary. The melody that still redeems, still heals, and still conquers.

## Memory Verse:

“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.” (Joh. 15:13)

# APRIL: LOVING AS CHRIST LOVED

## Introduction

The first quarter of our journey drew us to the heart of divine love, its depth, its cost, and its unrelenting grace. We stood at the cross in awe of a God who did not merely speak of love but demonstrated it through sacrifice. Having understood that love is not an idea but a Person, not a feeling but a force, we now cross into a new quarter, one that calls us to live out that love. In this quarter, we are called to respond to the love revealed to us in quarter one. Now that we have seen how God loves, we must learn to love Him back: *with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength* (Mark 12:30). This love is not theoretical but relational. It calls for obedience, worship, devotion, and surrender. The resurrection of Christ marks not only victory over death but also the dawn of a new way of living. Living a life empowered by the same love that triumphed over the grave. To love the Lord our God, then, is to walk in resurrection power, letting His victory shape our obedience, our worship, and our witness. April invites us into the radiant aftermath of the cross; the season of resurrection, renewal, and radiant hope. Having witnessed the love that was displayed in sacrifice, we now behold the love that conquers through victory. To love as Christ loved means to love with purpose, power, and perseverance. His love was not passive but proactive. It forgave when betrayed, served when rejected, and endured when crucified. And yet, even when buried, love did not die. It rose again. The resurrection is God's eternal declaration that love wins. Evil did its worst, sin struck its hardest, and death celebrated too soon. Love broke through the tomb, the risen Christ standing as proof that no force in heaven or earth can conquer divine love. And now, He calls us to live out that same love. He calls us to reflect it in how we forgive, serve, give, and endure. April's focus: *Loving as Christ Loved*, calls the believer to a love that is active, victorious, and life-giving. It is the love that worships through obedience, that serves in humility, and that forgives in triumph.

## Study 1: Love Wins

On the morning of resurrection, heaven declared what hell feared most: That love cannot be defeated. From Friday's agony to Sunday's glory, the story of Easter is the story of love's victory. The stone was rolled away not just to let Jesus out, but to let the world see that the grave has no claim on love. When the disciples came to the tomb, they found not death but evidence of life. The empty grave clothes, the folded napkin, announced the triumph of love. The same Jesus who had laid down His life in love now rose in triumph by that same love. What the enemy saw as failure was, in fact, heaven's greatest victory. This study celebrates the truth that *Love Wins*, not through might or manipulation, but through meekness and mercy. It is the victory that redefines power, proving that divine love outlasts hatred, outshines sin, and outlives death. As followers of Christ, we are called to live as people of this victory, to walk as witnesses of the love that conquered the grave.

**Study Passage: John 20:1-10**

**The Empty Tomb**

*<sup>1</sup>Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. <sup>2</sup>Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.” <sup>3</sup>Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. <sup>4</sup>So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. <sup>5</sup>And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in. <sup>6</sup>Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, <sup>7</sup>and the <sup>[a]</sup>handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. <sup>8</sup>Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. <sup>9</sup>For as yet they did not <sup>[b]</sup>know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. <sup>10</sup>Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.*

**Study Questions**

**1. Observation:** What emotions and actions are described in John 20:1-10 as the disciples discover the empty tomb? What details in the passage highlight the reality and significance of the resurrection?

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**2. Interpretation:** What does the resurrection reveal about the power and permanence of divine love? How does Christ’s victory redefine our understanding of love’s strength and endurance?

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**3. Application:** In what ways can believers today live as people who believe that “Love Wins”? How does the resurrection shape your outlook on challenges, relationships, and ministry?

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## Study 2: Love that Forgives in Pain

There are moments in life when love is easy; when it is reciprocated, celebrated, and understood. But the truest test of love comes when the heart is breaking. It is in moments of betrayal, rejection, and misunderstanding that love must choose whether to fight back or forgive. At Calvary, Jesus faced humanity at its worst. The very ones He came to save now mocked, scourged, and crucified Him. Yet from that cross, He uttered the most radical words ever spoken: *“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.”* (Luke 23:34) That prayer was not weakness; it was victory. It revealed a love that remains faithful when wounded, gracious when wronged, and prayerful when pierced. Jesus forgave not after the pain had passed, but while the pain was still fresh. The nails were still in His hands, the thorns still on His brow, yet love prevailed. This is the love that God calls His children to reflect. Not sentimental love that avoids pain, but sanctifying love that transforms it. To forgive in pain is not to deny the hurt, but to deny the hurt the power to define us. It is to let love triumph where bitterness seeks to reign. When we forgive amid suffering, we participate in Christ’s redemptive love. We echo His words, extend His grace, and embody His victory. Love that forgives in pain is not natural. It is supernatural. It is the cross living within us.

### Study Passage: Luke 23:32–38

*32 There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. 33 And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. 34 Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.” And they divided His garments and cast lots. 35 And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, “He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God.” 36 The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, 37 and saying, “If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself.” 38 And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew: **THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.***

### Study Questions

- 1. Observation:** What do you notice about the timing and tone of Jesus’ prayer in Luke 23:33–34? What does this reveal about His heart toward those who hurt Him?

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- 2. Interpretation:** Why is forgiveness such a central expression of divine love? What does Jesus’ prayer teach us about the relationship between love, suffering, and mercy?

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**3. Application:** When have you found it hardest to forgive? What might it look like to love like Jesus in moments of pain; to release those who have wounded you, even before they repent or understand?

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**Study 3: Loving the Undeserving**

God’s love is never confined by human boundaries. Where society draws lines, divine love builds bridges. The Gospel of John records one of the most transformative encounters in Scripture between Jesus and a Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well (John 4). To the Jews, Samaritans were outcasts; to men, women like her were unworthy of notice. Yet Jesus, wearied from His journey, sat at the well and began a conversation that would quench not just her thirst but her shame. In this story, love defies social rules and cultural prejudice. Jesus does not see a Samaritan or a sinner; He sees a soul in need. He does not approach her to condemn but to offer living water. In doing so, He reveals that God’s love does not seek the deserving. It seeks the lost. Love that is truly Christ-like does not discriminate; it dignifies. To love as Christ loved is to look beyond titles, tribes, and transgressions, to see humanity where others see scandal, and possibility where others see pollution. It is to recognize that God’s grace flows best through hearts willing to cross uncomfortable boundaries. Christ’s act at the well challenges every believer to ask: *Who is my Samaritan?* Who have I considered too different, too sinful, or too unworthy to love? For if love does not reach the undeserving, it ceases to be love at all.

**Study Passage: John 4:7-14**

*<sup>7</sup>A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give Me a drink.” <sup>8</sup>For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. <sup>9</sup>Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, “How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?” For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. <sup>10</sup>Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.” <sup>11</sup>The woman said to Him, “Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? <sup>12</sup>Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?” <sup>13</sup>Jesus answered and said to her, “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, <sup>14</sup>but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.”*

## Study Questions

1. **Observation:** What cultural and social barriers are evident in John 4:7–14? How does Jesus break through these barriers, and what stands out about His approach to the Samaritan woman?

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2. **Interpretation:** What does Jesus’ interaction with the woman reveal about the nature of divine love? How does His willingness to engage her reshape our understanding of what it means to love those considered “undeserving”?

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3. **Application:** Who are the “Samaritans” in your own life or community — those whom society overlooks or rejects? What practical steps can you take to extend love, dignity, and acceptance to them in Christ-like humility?

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## Monthly Reflection: Loving as Christ Loved

To love as Christ loved is to live as He lived: Selflessly, sacrificially, and steadfastly. April has been a sacred journey from the empty tomb to the living heart. In Love Wins, we celebrated the truth that love cannot be buried; it always rises. Death, sin, and despair all met their match in the resurrected Christ. The grave became a garden because love refused to stay still. Yet the story of resurrection is not only about victory. It is also about virtue. In Love that Forgives in Pain, we stood again at the cross, not in sorrow but in awe. Jesus forgave those who nailed Him while the nails were still fresh. That moment redefined power not as the ability to retaliate, but as the courage to release. To love in pain is to love like Christ. Not because it’s easy, but because it’s eternal. In Loving the Undeserving, we journeyed with Him to the well in Samaria. There, love reached across lines of prejudice and shame. The same risen Saviour who conquered death now conquered division, offering living water to one the world had rejected. Love became inclusive, dignifying, and transforming. Together, these three movements reveal the full rhythm of divine love: Love wins over death, love forgives in pain, and love reaches beyond barriers. This is the love believers are called to mirror. To love as Christ loved is to rise above resentment, to cross every boundary, and to choose mercy over merit. It is love that turns pain into prayer, enemies into mission fields, and tombs into testimonies. As the season of resurrection unfolds, may every believer echo Christ’s heart, loving not because it is deserved, but because it has been demonstrated by our Master. For in Him, we find not only the victory of love but its vocation to go and do likewise.

## Memory Verse:

*<sup>2</sup> And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. (Eph. 5:2)*

# MAY: LOVE THAT FORGIVES AND RESTORES

## Introduction

Forgiveness is love's greatest test, and restoration is love's highest triumph. In a world wounded by betrayal, division, and resentment, the study in the month of May invites us to rediscover the heart of divine love. Such love that does not merely feel pity but acts to heal; a love that does not hold grudges but opens doors; a love that does not abandon the fallen but restores them with tenderness and truth. Throughout Scripture, forgiveness is never portrayed as weakness. It is, in fact, the purest expression of strength; the kind of strength that only love can sustain. When Christ prayed, *"Father, forgive them,"* from the cross, He broke the power of vengeance and opened the floodgates of grace. That same love that pardoned humanity's greatest sin is the same love that now calls us to forgive, restore, and rebuild the broken places in our lives and communities. To forgive is to reflect God's heart; to restore is to participate in His mission. Forgiveness lifts the burden of the past, while restoration points toward a redeemed future. The two are inseparable in the sense that forgiveness without restoration leaves a wound unhealed, and restoration without forgiveness remains incomplete. Together, they reveal the full picture of God's redemptive love: a love that rescues and renews, a love that confronts yet comforts, a love that disciplines yet embraces. This month, as we explore *Love that Forgives and Restores*, we will journey through the stories and teachings that show how divine love brings healing where there is hurt, unity where there is division, and new beginnings where there were once endings. We will see that to love like Christ is to become a restorer of others by extending the same mercy we have received and walking with others toward wholeness. May this be the month when every believer dares to forgive as freely as Christ has forgiven us, and to restore as faithfully as He has restored us. For in so doing, we will not only reflect His love but also release His life into every relationship, every wound, and every heart that dares to love again.

## Study 1: Love Displayed in Patience

Forgiveness is never instantaneous for the human heart. It is a process, a posture, and, above all, an act of love sustained by patience. When Peter asked Jesus, *"Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"* he was already being generous by human standards. But Jesus shattered the limits of human mercy with His reply: *"I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven."* (Matthew 18:21–22). In that single statement, Jesus revealed that love does not keep score. It keeps forgiving. Divine love doesn't measure offenses; it multiplies grace. Patience, therefore, becomes the vessel that carries forgiveness beyond the boundaries of reason. Through the parable of the unforgiving servant, Jesus shows us that true forgiveness cannot flow from a heart that forgets how much it has been forgiven. The servant who was released from an unpayable debt yet refused to forgive a much smaller one mirrors our human tendency to demand mercy for ourselves but justice for others. But love displayed in patience sees further. It remembers mercy received, it delays retaliation, and it waits for reconciliation. To love with patience is to reflect the heart of God, who bears with us daily, forgiving again and again. It is to practice long-suffering. The kind of love Paul described in 1 Corinthians 13:4: *"Love suffers long and is kind."* Forgiveness

without patience is shallow; patience without love is impossible. But when patience and love meet, they mend the broken and heal the offended. As believers, we are called to be channels of this patient love — not because others deserve it, but because we ourselves are living testimonies of mercy that never ran out.

**Study Passage: Matthew 18:21–35**

***The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant***

*21 Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” 22 Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. 23 Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. 24 And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. 25 But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. 26 The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, ‘Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ 27 Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. 28 “But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe!’ 29 So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ 30 And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. 31 So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. 32 Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. 33 Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?’ 34 And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. 35 “So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.”*

**Study Questions**

**1. Observation:** What stands out to you in the interaction between Peter and Jesus at the beginning of this passage? What do you notice about the contrasting attitudes of the master and the unforgiving servant?

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**2. Interpretation:** Why do you think Jesus ties forgiveness so closely to patience and remembrance of mercy? What does this parable teach about the dangers of receiving forgiveness without extending it?

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**3. Application:** Where might God be calling you to display love through patience, perhaps in forgiving a repeated offense or waiting on reconciliation? How can remembering God's patience toward you help you extend the same grace to others?

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### Study 2: Love that Bridges Conflicts

Conflict is inevitable, but division is a choice. Even among those who love God, differences arise in opinion, temperament, or understanding. Yet the mark of mature faith is not the absence of disagreement but the presence of love that bridges it. In *1 Corinthians 6:1-10*, Paul addresses believers who, instead of resolving their differences through love, had resorted to lawsuits before unbelievers. To him, this was not only a relational failure but a spiritual one. Love that forgives and restores must also be love that reconciles. When Christ reconciled us to the Father through the cross, He built the ultimate bridge across the deepest divide; between divine holiness and human sin. Now, those who follow Him are called to be bridge-builders, not wall-raisers. The Church is not meant to mirror the world's systems of retaliation and pride, but to embody God's kingdom of grace, humility, and peace. Paul's words remind us that when believers fight to win, the Gospel loses. Love bridges conflicts not by denying injustice but by choosing relationship over revenge. It seeks understanding instead of dominance. It prioritizes forgiveness over fairness. To love in this way requires humility; the willingness to lay down the right to be right in order to pursue the higher calling of unity in Christ. In a culture that thrives on outrage and self-justification, believers are called to model another way: The way of love that builds bridges where bitterness would build barriers. For the same Christ who reconciled us calls us to become reconcilers in our homes, our churches, and our world.

### Study Passage: *1 Corinthians 6:1-10*

#### ***Do Not Sue the Brethren***

*6 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? <sup>2</sup> Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? <sup>3</sup> Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? <sup>4</sup> If then you have <sup>[a]</sup>judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge? <sup>5</sup> I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren? <sup>6</sup> But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers! <sup>7</sup> Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated? <sup>8</sup> No, you yourselves do wrong and cheat, and you do these things to your brethren! <sup>9</sup> Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor <sup>[b]</sup>homosexuals, nor <sup>[c]</sup>sodomites, <sup>10</sup> nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortionists will inherit the kingdom of God.*

## Study Questions

1. **Observation:** What problem was Paul addressing among the Corinthian believers? What does his reaction tell us about how seriously God values unity within His people?

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2. **Interpretation:** Why do you think Paul considers going to court against a fellow believer as a spiritual failure? What principles about forgiveness, humility, and reconciliation does this passage teach?

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3. **Application:** How can believers today embody love that bridges conflicts — in the church, in families, or at work? What attitudes or actions must we lay down in order to pursue peace instead of pride?

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## Study 3: Love that Forgives and Forgets

Forgiveness is love’s greatest miracle; forgetting is love’s deepest mercy. When we forgive, we release others from the chains of their wrongs. But when we forget, we not only refuse to chain the offenders to their past, but we also refuse to chain ourselves to their past offence. The world’s forgiveness often says, *“I forgive, but I won’t forget.”* Or put differently *“I forgive, but the scar will remain.”* While this is pure human logic, divine forgiveness goes further, beyond human logic. God declares, *“I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”* (Jer. 31:34). The psalmist marvels at this truth, proclaiming, *“As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.”* (Psa. 103:12). That is infinite distance, immeasurable, irreversible, eternal. And through the prophet Isaiah, God makes it personal: *“I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake, and I will not remember your sins.”* (Isaiah 43:25). In Christ, love doesn’t just forgive the fallen, it restores their identity, renews their dignity, and rewrites their destiny. True forgiveness requires divine help because human memory clings tightly to hurt. But love that forgives and forgets looks at the cross and learns from its silence. There, God’s justice was satisfied and His mercy magnified. When Jesus taught His disciples to pray, *“Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors”* (Matthew 6:12), He was inviting them into the divine rhythm of grace that receives forgiveness and then release it. To love like God is to forgive freely, to release fully, and to forget intentionally. It is to treat those who hurt us as God treats us. Not by what we have done, but by what His grace has done in us. When we learn to forgive and forget, we don’t lose memory; we lose bitterness. We don’t erase history; we redeem it. And in that redemption, love finishes what forgiveness began.

**Study Passages:**

**Psalm 103:12**

*As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.*

**Isaiah 43:25**

*“I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins.....”*

**Matthew 6:12**

*<sup>2</sup> And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us (New Matthew Bible, NMB, Translation).*

**Study Questions**

- 1. Observation:** What do these three passages reveal about the nature of God’s forgiveness? How do the images of “removing,” “blotting out,” and “forgetting” shape your understanding of divine mercy?

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- 2. Interpretation:** Why does God choose to forget our sins once He forgives them? What does this tell us about His character and about the kind of love He desires us to show others

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- 3. Application:** As far as your memory can serve you, is there anyone in your life that you need to forgive and “forget” as God does; to release both the person and the memory of the offense? How might such love bring restoration in your relationships and peace to your heart?

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## Monthly Reflection: Love that Forgives and Restores

Forgiveness is the melody of God's love. Gentle, persistent, and redeeming.

The month of May has taken us deep into the rhythm of that melody, where love sings not of revenge or resentment, but of reconciliation and renewal. We have learned that forgiveness is not weakness but strength; not forgetfulness but faith. It is the power of love choosing mercy over memory and peace over pride. In *Love Displayed in Patience*, we saw that forgiveness requires time and tenderness. Like the master in Jesus' parable, God bears with our shortcomings and continues to extend mercy that outlasts our failures. His patience invites transformation — reminding us that love does not rush to judgment, but waits in hope. In *Love that Bridges Conflicts*, we learned that forgiveness restores more than individuals. It rebuilds relationships. The Church, called to be the family of faith, must also be a family of forbearance, a people who prefer peace to pride and unity to victory. Love that bridges conflict refuses to take sides; but instead, it takes up the cross. In *Love that Forgives and Forgets*, we reached the summit of divine mercy: The love that not only releases but also removes. God's forgiveness is complete: He blots out our sins and remembers them no more. Such love does not dwell on wounds and scars. Instead, it writes a new story of grace. And because we are recipients of that grace, we are called to mirror it through forgiving fully and forgetting freely. May's lessons remind us that forgiveness and restoration are the twin pillars of divine love. Forgiveness frees the offender; restoration heals both the offender and the offended. When both releases the past, they rebuilds the future. Together, they reveal a love that never gives up on people. The kind of love that raised Peter after his denial, welcomed the prodigal after his rebellion, and embraces us after every fall. As this month draws to a close, let every believer remember this: the power of love is not proven by how much we feel, but by how much we can forgive. For in forgiving others, we make room for God to restore us all. And so, as May closes with the fragrance of mercy, we prepare to step into June a month where love moves from forgiveness to fruitfulness. Our next focus will unfold the beauty of *Love Expressed in Service*, showing that forgiven people are not just restored; they are also called to serve, to grow, and to strengthen one another in love.

### Memory Verse:

*"Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do."* (Col. 3:13)

# JUNE: LOVE EXPRESSED IN SERVICE

## Introduction

Love that forgives must find its fulfillment in love that serves. Forgiveness heals the heart while service extends the healing to others. As we step into the month of June, we move from the quiet work of restoration to the outward expression of love in action. The same Christ who forgave our sins now calls us to serve in humility and compassion, modeling the love that stoops to lift others. In the kingdom of God, greatness is not measured by position but by service. Jesus redefined leadership when He said, *"Whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant."* (Mark 10:43). In that statement, love took on a new language: The language of the towel and basin. The language of open hands and willing hearts.

Love expressed in service does not seek recognition; it seeks redemption. It does not ask, *"What do I gain?"* but *"Whom can I help?"* Service is the visible face of love. When Christ washed His disciples' feet, He wasn't performing a mere ritual but demonstrating a revolution of the heart. Through that act, He taught that true love bends low, takes up the basin, and meets need with grace. Love expressed in service dismantles pride, challenges selfishness, and builds fellowship. To serve is to participate in God's redemptive work. Every act of kindness, every burden shared, every need met in love becomes a reflection of the One who *"did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."* (Matthew 20:28). When we serve others, we mirror the heart of Christ and become instruments of His mercy in a weary world.

Therefore, this month invites us to turn love into labour to embody our faith through hands that help, feet that go, and hearts that give. It is a call to let our love move beyond our emotions into expression; beyond our comfort into compassion, and beyond self into service. For only in serving do we find the fullest expression of God's love at work in us.

## Study 1: Love that Precedes Service

Before Christ served, He loved. That is the divine order. Love first, service next. Every act of service that lacks love becomes self-seeking. Love that precedes service turns every task into worship. In *John 13*, on the night of His betrayal, Jesus gave one of the most profound demonstrations of love ever recorded. He washed the feet of His disciples. But before the towel and basin appeared, John records something deeply significant: *"Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end."* (John 13:1). This phrase reveals the motivation behind the act. Jesus was not performing a duty. He was expressing devotion. His love was not sentimental but steadfast, self-giving, and sacrificial. He washed even the feet of Judas, the one who would betray Him. That single act dismantles all excuses for selective love. It shows that genuine service is rooted in a love that expects nothing in return. In this powerful scene, Jesus turns cultural hierarchy upside down. The Master stoops before His disciples. The greatest among them takes the lowest place. He does not merely teach humility. He embodies it. His action teaches us that service is not about rank but relationship, not about

recognition but reflection: Reflection of the love that first loved us. True Christian service is not a performance for applause but a posture of the heart. It begins in love for God that overflows into love for others. When love precedes service, even the smallest act becomes holy.

**Study Passage: John 13:1-10**

***Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet***

*<sup>1</sup>Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. <sup>2</sup>And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him, <sup>3</sup>Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, <sup>4</sup>rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. <sup>5</sup>After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. <sup>6</sup>Then He came to Simon Peter. And Peter said to Him, "Lord, are You washing my feet?" <sup>7</sup>Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this." <sup>8</sup>Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." <sup>9</sup>Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!" <sup>10</sup>Jesus said to him, "He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you."*

**Study Questions:**

**1. Observation:** What stands out to you about Jesus' attitude and awareness in this passage; especially considering that He was about to face betrayal and death?

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**2. Interpretation:** Why is it important that Jesus' love came before His act of service? What does this teach us about the relationship between love and humility in serving others?

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**3. Application:** How can you ensure that your acts of service (whether in church, family, or community), flow from genuine love rather than duty or pride? What practical steps can help you serve with a heart like Jesus'?

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## Study 2: Love that Gifts Us to Serve

God's love not only calls us to serve but also equips us for service. In the kingdom of God, no one is left empty-handed. Every believer is entrusted with a gift. We all have received divine ability empowered by grace, meant not for self-display but for the good of others. Peter reminds us, "As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Peter 4:10). Love, therefore, is not only the motive of service. It is also the means by which we are empowered to serve. Love that gifts us to serve begins with the understanding that ministry is stewardship, not ownership. The gifts of the Spirit are not badges of status but instruments of grace. When Paul writes in *Romans 12:3–8*, he reminds believers to think soberly about their place in the body so as to recognise that diversity of gifts does not create division but harmony. Each gift, whether seen or unseen, reflects a facet of God's love expressed through His people. In a world where many seek recognition more than responsibility, the Gospel calls us back to the heart of service, where love is expressed through giftedness. The one who teaches, serves; the one who gives, loves; the one who leads, encourages. All serve in different ways, yet all expressing one love. To love is to serve, and to serve is to give. But we can only give what we have received. Therefore, our call is not to compare our gifts but to complete one another in the unity of love. When love fuels our gifts, ministry becomes worship, and service becomes a song of gratitude to the Giver.

### Study Passages:

#### **1 Peter 4:10–11**

*<sup>10</sup> As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. <sup>11</sup> If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

#### **Romans 12:3–8**

##### **Serve God with Spiritual Gifts**

*<sup>3</sup> For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. <sup>4</sup> For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, <sup>5</sup> so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. <sup>6</sup> Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; <sup>7</sup> or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; <sup>8</sup> he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.*

## Study Questions

1. **Observation:** According to Peter and Paul, what is the purpose of the spiritual gifts given to believers? What stands out to you about the diversity of gifts and the unity of purpose described in these passages?

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2. **Interpretation:** Why does the Bible emphasize humility in the exercise of our gifts? How does love ensure that gifts build the body rather than elevate the individual?

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3. **Application:** Which gifts has God entrusted to you, and how can you use them to serve others in love? What would it look like for your ministry, work, or daily acts of kindness to become expressions of God's grace?

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## Study 3: Love that Lenders Selfless Service

The purest expression of love is service that seeks no recognition. In a world driven by self-promotion, self-preservation, and self-interest, the Gospel calls us to a radically different way. The way of selfless service. Paul's words to the Philippians pierce through the noise of ambition with a timeless reminder: *"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself."* (Phil. 2:3). True love does not serve to be seen but because it sees not just the worth of others, but the image of God in every person, and the joy of reflecting Christ through humility. In this passage, Paul roots his teaching not in moral instruction but in Christ's own example. Just after these verses, he exalts the One who, *"though being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant."* (Phil. 2:6-7). Jesus did not serve from deficiency, but from abundance. The abundance of love that gives without losing, that stoops without shame, and that sacrifices without seeking repayment. Selfless service, therefore, is not about doing more. It is about becoming less self-centered, less controlling, and less entitled; so that Christ's love may be seen more clearly through us. Love that lends selfless service does not calculate worthiness. It simply acts from compassion. It finds its joy not in what is returned, but in what is released. To serve selflessly is to enter into the mystery of Christ's humility, to be able to lay down our comfort for the good of another, to celebrate others' success as our own, and to find fulfillment not in applause but in obedience. It is the kind of love that changes communities, heals wounds, and draws hearts toward the Savior.

**Study Passage: *Philippians 2:3-4***

*<sup>3</sup> Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. <sup>4</sup> Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.*

**Study Questions**

**1. Observation:** What two attitudes does Paul contrast in this passage? How do these verses redefine what it means to be “great” in God’s kingdom?

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**2. Interpretation:** Why is humility essential for genuine service? How does esteeming others above ourselves transform the way we relate and serve in the body of Christ?

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**3. Application:** What practical changes could you make in your daily life, ministry, or family to model selfless service? How can you intentionally look out for the interests of others as an expression of Christ-like love?

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**Monthly Reflection: Love Expressed in Service**

Love finds its fullest expression not in words, but in works. Throughout this month, we have discovered that love is not a feeling we possess but a force that propels us outward into acts of compassion, humility, and service. To love as Christ loved, we have seen, is to live as Christ lived. To give as He gave, to serve as He served, and pour out our lives for others, just as He did. In *Love that Precedes Service*, we saw that love begins before action. Jesus, knowing all things, including His betrayal and death, chose to serve His disciples in love. He washed their feet not as a gesture of obligation but as an overflow of affection. This reminds us that the truest acts of service spring from the well of divine love, not from duty or recognition. In *Love that Gifts Us to Serve*, we learned that God’s love equips as much as it calls.

Each believer is uniquely gifted by the Spirit to contribute to the good of others. Our gifts are not trophies to admire but tools to employ. When love activates these gifts, ministry becomes more than work. It becomes worship. Then, in *Love that Lends Selfless Service*, we beheld the humility of Christ as our ultimate example. To esteem others above ourselves is not weakness but strength under

surrender. Selfless service transforms relationships and communities because it mirrors the One who *“made Himself of no reputation”* (Philippians 2:7). Such love has no ulterior motive; its only agenda is the good of another. The love expressed in service is therefore the most credible testimony of the Gospel. It builds bridges where walls once stood, restores dignity where pride once ruled, and shines light where indifference once lingered. Every act of service becomes a proclamation that love still reigns; not through dominance, but through devotion. As June draws to a close, may we remember: love that serves is love that reigns. And the more we serve in love, the more the world sees the face of Christ in us.

**Memory Verse:**

*“For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.”* (Gal. 5:13)

# JULY: LOVING OUR NEIGHBOURS

## Introduction

Love is never complete until it reaches outward. In this third quarter, we journey from the sanctuary of understanding love and serving in love into the streets of human connection. We now enter into homes, communities, and relationships where love is tested, stretched, and refined. To love our neighbour is not a suggestion from Jesus; it is the second greatest commandment and the visible proof of the first. The measure of our love for God is reflected in the way we love the people around us. In the Gospel of Luke, a lawyer once asked Jesus, “*And who is my neighbour?*” (Luke 10:29). Beneath this question lay an attempt to limit love through drawing lines around compassion. But Jesus’ answer, through the Parable of the Good Samaritan, shattered every human boundary. He taught that love cannot be confined by tribe, title, or territory. Neighbourliness, in the Kingdom of God, is not defined by proximity but by mercy.

Loving our neighbour therefore calls us to a life of intentional relationship by moving from sympathy to action, from comfort to compassion. It means opening our eyes to the pain of others, our hands to their need, and our hearts to their story. Such love is often inconvenient, sometimes costly, but always redemptive. It bridges divides and builds communities. This month, as we start the season of exploring *Love that Builds Relationships*, we will rediscover that neighbourly love is not about similarity, but solidarity. It’s not about who deserves our kindness, but about who needs it. In loving others, we participate in God’s ongoing work of reconciliation, turning strangers into friends and communities into families.

## Study 1: Who Is My Neighbour?

Every generation must wrestle with the same question the lawyer asked Jesus: “*Who is my neighbour?*” It’s a question that exposes more than curiosity. It reveals the human tendency to limit love. We want to define our neighbour narrowly; just those who look like us, think like us, or live near us. But in the Kingdom of God, love refuses to be fenced in. In this passage, Jesus answers the lawyer’s question not with a definition, but with a story, the Parable of the Good Samaritan. It is a story that overturns social boundaries and reorients our hearts. The Samaritan, despised by Jews and considered an outsider, becomes the unexpected hero. He is the one who saw, stopped, and served. Through this story, Jesus shifts the focus from “*Who is my neighbour?*” to “*To whom can I be a neighbour?*”

Neighbourly love, as Jesus defines it, is not about feeling. It’s about sacrifice. It sees need and responds with compassion. It does not calculate worthiness but acts out of mercy. The Samaritan didn’t just offer comfort; he offered commitment. He gave his time, resources, and care to a wounded stranger, reflecting the very heart of God who reaches out to humanity in our state of being estranged. True love builds relationships through action. It crosses lines of race, religion, and status.

It sees every person, even the stranger and the wandering, as a bearer of God’s image. In loving our neighbour, we join in God’s redemptive mission to heal a fractured world.

**Study Passage: Luke 10:29–37 (NKJV)**

*Every generation must wrestle with the same question the lawyer asked Jesus: “Who is my neighbour?” It’s a question that exposes more than curiosity; it reveals the human tendency to limit love. We want to define our neighbour narrowly and shallowly. Only those who look like us, think like us, or live near us. But in the Kingdom of God, love refuses to be fenced in such a cage. In this passage, Jesus answers the lawyer’s question not with a definition, but with a story: The Parable of the Good Samaritan. It is a story that overturns social boundaries and reorients our hearts. The Samaritan, despised by Jews and considered an outsider, becomes the unexpected hero. He is the one who saw, stopped, and served. Through this story, Jesus shifts the focus from “Who is my neighbour?” to “To whom can I be a neighbour?” Neighbourly love, as Jesus defines it, is not about feelings. It is about sacrifice. It sees need and responds with compassion. It does not calculate worthiness but acts out of mercy. The Samaritan didn’t just offer comfort. He offered commitment. He gave his time, resources, and care to a wounded stranger, reflecting the very heart of God who reaches out to humanity in our brokenness. Indeed, true love builds relationships through action. It crosses lines of race, religion, and status. It sees every person, even the wounded and the wandering, as a bearer of God’s image. In loving our neighbour, we join in God’s redemptive mission to heal a fractured world.*

**Study Passage: Luke 10:29–37**

*29 But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” 30 Then Jesus answered and said: “A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among [a]thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. 33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. 34 So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 On the next day, [b]when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, “Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.” 36 So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?” 37 And he said, “He who showed mercy on him.” Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”*

**Study Questions**

- 1. **Observation:** What do you notice about the different responses of the priest, the Levite, and the Samaritan? How does the Samaritan’s reaction stand out?

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**2. Interpretation:** Why do you think Jesus chose a Samaritan, a figure despised by His audience, as the example of neighbourly love? What does this teach us about the nature and reach of divine compassion?

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**3. Application:** Who might be your “neighbour” today — someone God is calling you to notice, approach, or help despite barriers of culture, background, or convenience? How can you “go and do likewise” in practical terms this week?

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### Study 2: Love and the Annoying Neighbour

Love sounds noble until it meets the neighbour who victimise, mistreat, irritates, offends, or opposes us. It’s easy to love the kind, the grateful, and the agreeable. But what about the difficult, the demanding, and the downright annoying? The Scriptures do not let us escape this question. Both the Law and Christ’s teaching call us to a love that transcends convenience and emotion. Love that mirrors God’s patience toward us. In *Leviticus 19:18*, God commanded Israel, “*You shall love your neighbour as yourself.*” It was a radical ethic for a society built on tribal loyalty and personal honour. Yet by Jesus’ time, some teachers had added a human twist: “*and hate your enemy.*” (Matthew 5:43). Jesus dismantled that distortion with divine clarity: “*But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.*” This Jesus’ assertion promote love from mere feelings to be stirred, to a decision to be lived. A decision that acts contrary to instinct to bless when it’s been hurt, to pray when it is wronged, and to forgive when it’s been wounded. It does not excuse wrongdoing, but it refuses to replicate it. This is the kind of love that makes the Gospel visible. Love that confounds logic, softens hearts, and builds unlikely bridges. The “annoying neighbour” might be someone in our home, workplace, or community. A person who tests our patience, challenges our grace, or offends our peace. Yet God uses such people to refine our character and deepen our love. For love that never costs us anything never changes us. To love the difficult is to grow in the likeness of Christ; the One who loved us “*while we were still sinners*” (Romans 5:8). Such love transforms irritation into intercession, and offence into opportunity for grace.

#### Study Passages:

##### ***Leviticus 19:18***

*You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.*

**Matthew 5:43-44**

*43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ 44 [a]But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,*

**Study Questions**

**1. Observation:** What contrasts do you see between the command in Leviticus and Jesus’ expansion of it in Matthew? How does Jesus redefine the meaning of “neighbour”?

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**2. Interpretation:** Why do you think Jesus calls us to love, bless, and pray for those who oppose or annoy us? What does this reveal about God’s nature and the kind of love He expects from His followers?

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**3. Application:** Who is your “annoying neighbour” — the person or group that tests your patience or grace? What practical steps can you take this week to respond with prayer, kindness, or forgiveness instead of frustration or avoidance?

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**Study 3: Love Consummated in Good Neighbourliness**

Love reaches its highest expression not in words, but in relationships. Throughout Scripture, love is never presented as an abstract virtue, but as a lived reality — tested in human interaction and proven in community. In *1 John 4:17-20*, the apostle reminds us that love’s ultimate test is neighbourliness. We cannot claim to love the invisible God while withholding love from the visible neighbour. John’s language is piercingly clear: *“If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar.”* (v.20). Such words are not meant to condemn but to awaken us to love’s authenticity. For love, when perfected, eliminates hypocrisy. It unites devotion to God with compassion for people. Good neighbourliness, therefore, is not simply friendliness. It is the fruit of divine love working through us. It is the way love matures, finds expression, and builds community. When we love one another, we demonstrate that God’s love has taken root in our hearts. Such love removes fear, heals relationships, and radiates the character of Christ to the world around us. Neighbourliness in the biblical sense goes beyond politeness or civility. It is an active, intentional, and self-giving love that seeks the good of others. It values harmony over arrogance, reconciliation over rivalry, and

understanding over indifference. In practicing good neighbourliness, we embody the truth that love for God cannot be separated from love for humanity. Thus, love is consummated, or is made complete, when it moves beyond private faith to public fellowship. When we learn to see God in others, we begin to live out the fullness of divine love.

**Study Passage: 1 John 4:17-20**

***The Consummation of Love***

*17 Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. 19 We love [a]Him because He first loved us.*

***Obedience by Faith***

*20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, [b]how can he love God whom he has not seen?*

**Study Questions**

**1. Observation:** What key contrasts does John make between love and fear, and between claiming to love God and actually loving others? What stands out most to you in this passage?

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**2. Interpretation:** How does loving our visible neighbour reflect the invisible nature of God? Why is John so firm in linking our love for God with our relationships with people?

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**3. Application:** What does "good neighbourliness" look like in your context at home, in church, or in community life? How can you make your faith more visible by loving others genuinely and fearlessly?

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## Monthly Reflection: Who Is Our Neighbour?

Love finds its truest meaning in interaction and not in isolation. Throughout this month, we have rediscovered that the question “*Who is my neighbour?*” is not a matter of proximity but of compassion. It is not about where someone lives, but how deeply we are willing to care. To love our neighbour is to live out the divine rhythm of grace, receiving God’s love and releasing it to others. In *Study 1: Who Is My Neighbour?*, we learned from Jesus’ parable that love cannot be selective. The Samaritan’s compassion challenges every social and spiritual boundary we build. Love, as Jesus defines it, moves toward the wounded, crosses lines of difference, and offers mercy where others offer excuses. It reminds us that our neighbour is anyone in need of grace, whether friend or stranger. In *Study 2: Love and the Annoying Neighbour*, we came face to face with love’s greatest test: extending grace to those who test our patience. Jesus’ call to love our enemies and bless those who curse us stretches the heart to divine proportions. It shows that love is not a reaction but a choice. It is a deliberate act of mercy that mirrors God’s unfailing kindness toward us. In *Study 3: Love Consummated in Good Neighbourliness*, we arrived at love’s maturity: The point where devotion to God and affection for people become inseparable. John’s words remind us that love is perfected when it becomes relational, when we see in others the reflection of the God we claim to love. True neighbourliness is not limited to politeness but revealed in genuine care, forgiveness, and fellowship. Indeed, this month we have seen that love for neighbour is not an appendix to faith. It is its evidence. A faith that does not translate into neighbourliness is incomplete. For every act of kindness, every word of reconciliation, and every gesture of compassion is a testimony that God’s love abides with and in us. As we close this month, may we remember that neighbours are not chosen. Rather, they are given by God. And every neighbour, pleasant or difficult, is an opportunity to make God’s invisible love visible.

### Memory Verse:

“*Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*” (1 Joh. 4:11)

# AUGUST: LOVE IN THE COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS

## Introduction

The Christian community is more than a gathering of people who share a common faith; it is a spiritual family birthed by the Holy Spirit and held together by the love of Christ. Throughout Scripture, God's people are called both to believe in Christ and to belong to one another, to live in fellowship, and to display love in ways that make the Gospel visible. In a world marked by isolation, conflict, and competition, the Church stands as a counterculture, demonstrating that divine love can knit diverse people into a unified body. This month, brings us into the heart of this sacred fellowship. Having spent the last month exploring love beyond the boundaries of self through our relationships with our neighbours, we now turn inward to strengthen the foundation from which Christian love flows. For if love is to shine brightly to the world, it must first burn steadily within the household of faith. Love in the community of believers is the glue that binds hearts, the oil that eases friction, and the fragrance that draws others toward Christ.

This month invites us to rediscover the beauty and responsibility of belonging to the family of God. It calls us to move beyond individualistic expressions of faith and into relational depth where encouragement replaces criticism, unity triumphs over division, and diversity becomes a tapestry of grace rather than a source of conflict. The Church becomes strongest when every believer is valued, honoured, and connected through love. As we journey through the studies of this month, we will see how love defines a true Christian, how it unites us into one body, and how it sustains coexistence within a diverse community. This is the love that nourishes fellowship, strengthens witness, and demonstrates to the world that Christ indeed lives among His people. May the Spirit lead us into deeper, richer, and more transformative expressions of love in the community of believers.

## Study 1: Love that Defines the True Christian

Christianity is not defined by creed alone but by conduct with the clearest evidence of true discipleship being love. In *John 13:35*, Jesus declared that love is the identifying mark of His followers. Not miracles, not eloquence, or even knowledge but love. This love is not sentimental. Rather, it is sacrificial. It is not loud in words, but loud in works. It is the visible signature of an invisible God. Paul echoes this truth in *Romans 12*, where he paints a portrait of what genuine love looks like within the Christian community. Here, love is not just an emotion to feel, but a principle to practice. It is sincere (*"Let love be without hypocrisy"*), compassionate (*"Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep"*), and peaceable (*"Live in harmony with one another"*). This is love in action, love that builds fellowship and sustains unity in the family of faith. In a world fractured by division and self-interest, the Church must model a different, a way shaped by humility, forgiveness, and service. When love defines us, the world begins to see Christ through us. Without love, our faith loses its fragrance. With love, nonetheless, even the smallest act becomes a testimony of grace. True Christian love is not occasional but continuous. It flows from a transformed heart that mirrors the mercy of God. Such love strengthens the weak, restores the fallen, and reconciles the estranged. It is, as Paul would say, *"..... the more excellent way."* (1 Cor. 12:31)

**Study Passage: Romans 12:9–16**

**Behave Like a Christian**

*<sup>9</sup> Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. <sup>10</sup> Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; <sup>11</sup> not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; <sup>12</sup> rejoicing in hope, patient<sup>[a]</sup> in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; <sup>13</sup> distributing to the needs of the saints, given<sup>[b]</sup> to hospitality. <sup>14</sup> Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. <sup>15</sup> Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. <sup>16</sup> Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.*

**Study Questions**

**1. Observation:** According to Paul’s description in this passage, what are some of the key characteristics of genuine Christian love within the community of believers? What specific actions or attitudes stand out to you?

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**2. Interpretation:** Why do you think Paul begins this passage by saying, “Let love be without hypocrisy”? What does this reveal about the nature of love that truly defines a Christian, and how is it different from the world’s definition of love?

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**3. Application:** Which of these qualities of love is God calling you to grow in within your Christian community — patience, humility, generosity, or empathy? How can you demonstrate Christ’s love more intentionally this week in your fellowship or service?

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**Study 2: One Love, One Body**

Unity in the body of Christ is not a human achievement but a divine reality. We are not many competing members trying to get along — we are *one body*, made one by *one Spirit* and held together by *one love*. As Paul writes, “For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.” (1 Corinthians 12:13). This truth destroys every wall that human differences build.

In a world that divides by tribe, class, gender, and status, the Church stands as a living testimony of unity through diversity. We do not belong to one another because we share opinions, but because we

share a Saviour. Christ is the head, and we are His members; each distinct, yet dependent on one another. Paul reinforces this in *Colossians 3:14*, when he says: “*But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.*” Love is the glue that holds the body together. Without love, unity is impossible. Without unity, our witness is incomplete. Love ensures that diversity becomes harmony, not rivalry; a symphony of gifts playing one song: the praise of Christ. In the Church, therefore, there is no room for isolation, comparison, or competition. We are one people, saved by one grace, serving one Lord, empowered by one Spirit, and bound by one love. When the Church lives out this truth, it becomes the most compelling picture of heaven on earth, a place where Christ’s love knits hearts, blends gifts, and builds peace.

**Study Passage: 1 Corinthians 12:12-14**

***Unity and Diversity in One Body***

*12 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink <sup>l</sup>into one Spirit. 14 For in fact the body is not one member but many.*

**Study Questions**

1. **Observation:** What images or comparisons does Paul use to describe the Church in this passage? What do these images teach us about the nature of Christian unity?  
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2. **Interpretation:** Why do you think Paul ties unity to the work of the Holy Spirit? How does love serve as the “bond of perfection” that holds the Church together despite its diversity?  
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3. **Application:** How can you personally contribute to unity within your church or fellowship? What attitudes or actions could strengthen the sense of “one love, one body” in your community of faith?  
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**Study 3: Love that Coexists**

Love that unites must also learn to coexist. The Church is called not only to believe in Christ but to live as His body; a community where differences no longer divide, and diversity becomes a testimony of grace. In a world fractured by race, class, gender, and status, the Gospel declares a revolutionary

truth: *“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”* (Galatians 3:28). This verse does not deny difference; it redefines it. Paul is not saying that believers cease to have distinct identities, cultures, or roles, but that none of these distinctions determine our worth or belonging in the family of God. In Christ, love transcends every human category and creates a new identity: One body under one Lord. To coexist in love is to live out this divine equality. It means accepting others not as they appear, but as Christ sees them. It means refusing to let prejudice, pride, or personal preference destroy fellowship. Love that coexists celebrates diversity as part of God’s design, not as a threat to unity. When the Church learns to coexist in love, it becomes a living testimony to a divided world. In such a community, rich and poor, men and women, young and old, all stand shoulder to shoulder at the foot of the cross; equally loved, equally called, and equally sent. Love that coexists makes the Gospel visible by creating a fellowship that mirrors heaven’s harmony here on earth.

**Study Passage: Galatians 3:26-29**

*26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

**Study Questions**

1. **Observation:** What contrasts does Paul highlight in verse 28, and what do they reveal about the early Church’s social structure and challenges?

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2. **Interpretation:** How does this passage redefine the meaning of equality in the body of Christ? Why is love essential for believers to coexist despite their differences?

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3. **Application:** What barriers (cultural, social, or personal) hinder love and coexistence in your community of faith? What practical steps can believers take to nurture inclusiveness and genuine fellowship?

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## Monthly Reflection: Love in the Community of Believers

Love is the lifeblood of the Church. Without it, the body becomes weak, disjointed, and powerless. With it, the Church becomes a living temple filled with the glory of God. This month's study has reminded us that Christian love is not a theory we admire but a life we embody. In *Love that Defines the True Christian*, we saw that love is not an optional virtue but the very identity of every believer. It is the evidence that we belong to Christ and the badge that the world recognizes as genuine discipleship. It is what defines us. It is sincere, patient, and practical. It is this love that transforms fellowship into family. In *One Love, One Body*, we were reminded that the Church is not a gathering of individuals but a living organism joined by one Spirit. Our diversity is not a weakness but a divine design meant to reveal the many colours of God's grace. When believers honour one another and serve with humility, the Church becomes the most convincing testimony of God's reconciling power. Then, in *Love that Coexists*, we learned that unity is not uniformity. The Gospel calls us to coexist which is to live together in peace and mutual respect, despite our differences. In Christ, all earthly labels lose their power to divide. Love that coexists sees every believer as equal before the cross and necessary within the body. Precisely, the Spirit has reminded us this month that love in the community of believers is both our calling and our witness. When we love one another sincerely, we preach the Gospel without words. When we coexist in harmony, the world catches a glimpse of heaven's peace. And when we live as one body, we demonstrate that Christ still dwells among His people. As we bring the curtains down this month, may we remember that the strength of the Church lies not in its numbers or structures, but in its love. Love that defines our faith, unites our hearts, and sustains our fellowship.

### Memory Verse

*"But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection."* (Col. 3:14)

# SEPTEMBER: LOVE THAT REACHES OUT

## Introduction

The month of September invites us to step beyond the walls of our churches, families, and indeed all our other social circles, and into the world with the love of Christ. Having spent July understanding who our neighbour is, and August strengthening love within the community of believers, we now move outward in obedience to Christ's call. Love that reaches out is the natural and necessary expression of a faith that refuses to remain silent, still, or self-contained. True Christian love is never passive. It seeks, pursues, invites, and restores. It moves toward others with intention, compassion, and courage. This study coincides with our church's mission and outreach season where we are called to the heart of God that beats for the world. Christ did not wait for sinners to come to Him. He, instead, stepped into their stories. He touched the untouchable, ate with the rejected, visited the forgotten, and called the weary to Himself. His love crossed social, cultural, and religious barriers, teaching us that the Gospel is not merely a message but a movement. A movement of love reaching out to the last, the least, and the lost.

In this study, we shall discover that mission is not an event but a lifestyle. It is the Church's ongoing participation in God's redemptive work. Every believer is sent, whether into homes, workplaces, marketplaces, or distant fields. Love that reaches out is love that refuses to be confined to comfort zones. It begins with seeing people as God sees them, listening as Christ listened, and acting as the Spirit leads. It is patient, compassionate, and sacrificial. It is not driven by duty but by the transforming power of God's love within us. This study challenges us to examine our role in God's mission. Are we walking across the street? Are we reaching across cultural lines? Are we speaking hope into broken spaces? Are we offering Christ to those seeking meaning, healing, and truth? As we delve into these studies, may our hearts be stirred, our feet be strengthened, and our love be mobilised to go and reach out. The world is waiting for the touch of God, and God is waiting for His people to reach out in love.

## Study 1: Love that Sends Out

The love of Christ is always in motion. It does not wait behind church doors or hide behind good intentions. It goes forth. It reaches out. It sends. When Jesus called His twelve disciples, He did not merely teach them. He empowered and sent them out to touch lives, heal the sick, confront darkness, and proclaim the kingdom of God. Their mission flowed from His love, a love that saw the crowds, had compassion on them, and desired that none should remain lost or untouched by God's grace. "Love that sends out" is therefore not optional for the believer but the heartbeat of Christian mission. The Church is never meant to be a spiritual reservoir that only collects and keeps. Rather, it is a river through which God's love flows outward into families, communities, and nations. Jesus sending the Twelve reveals that mission is not reserved for the spiritually elite. Ordinary followers, empowered by extraordinary grace, become bearers of God's love wherever they go. In *Mark 6:7-13*, we witness a pattern of mission that still holds today. Christ calls, equips, pairs us for mutual support, empowers

us with authority, and sends us into real human situations where brokenness waits for healing. The disciples went with minimal possessions but with maximum authority. They took no extra bag, no bread, and no money. Yet, they carried the most precious gift: The love and power of Christ. This study invites us to rediscover the call to go beyond comfort, beyond fear, and beyond familiarity. Because love that never leaves the church compound is incomplete. Christ still sends His disciples today, not in their strength, but in His authority. And whenever we go in obedience, we carry the presence and compassion of the One who sends us.

**Study Passage: Mark 6:7-13**

***Sending Out the Twelve***

*7 And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them power over unclean spirits. 8 He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bag, no bread, no copper in their money belts— 9 but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics. 10 Also He said to them, “In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place. 11 And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!” 12 So they went out and preached that people should repent. 13 And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them.*

**Study Questions**

1. **Observation:** What instructions does Jesus give the disciples as He sends them out? What does this reveal about the nature of their mission?

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2. **Interpretation:** Why does Jesus send them out in pairs and with minimal supplies? What does this teach us about faith, dependence on God, and the communal nature of mission?

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3. **Application:** Where or to whom is God sending you today? What fears, comforts, or excuses might you need to “shake off” in order to obey Christ’s call to reach out in love?

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## Study 2: Love that Empowers to Witness

Before Jesus sent His disciples into the world, He first instructed them to *wait*.

Not because the message was incomplete, but because the power to declare it had not yet come. Mission without empowerment is exhaustive. But mission fueled by the Spirit is transformative. The disciples had witnessed Christ's resurrection, heard His teaching, and received His commission. Yet, Jesus knew that human zeal was not enough. They needed the Spirit's power to carry God's love beyond Jerusalem and into the ends of the earth. "Love that empowers to witness" reminds us that Christian mission is not sustained by human ability, clever words, or personal passion. It is rooted in the Holy Spirit, the gift of God's love poured into His people. Jesus' final words on earth: "*You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses...*" reveal that empowerment is not a bonus feature of faith but the engine of witness. The Spirit empowers both for personal holiness and for public testimony. In *Acts 1:4–11*, we see a sequence that defines Christian witness. Here we see that Christ commands, the Spirit empowers, the Church witnesses, and Christ ascends; not to leave us, but to reign through us. The disciples did not become witnesses by travelling but by transforming. Their lives becoming living evidence of the risen Christ. True witness therefore flows from love; love that compels us to speak. Love that strengthens us to stand. Love that empowers us to reach people far beyond our strength. This passage invites us to embrace the Spirit's empowerment not as a distant biblical memory, but as a present mission necessity. To witness is not merely to speak. It is to shine. It is to live in such a way that Christ becomes visible in our attitudes, our words, our courage, and our compassion. Love sends us out (Study 1), but only the Spirit gives us power to go in effectiveness and boldness.

### Study Passage: *Acts 1:4–11*

#### *The Holy Spirit Promised*

*<sup>4</sup>And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; <sup>5</sup>for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." <sup>6</sup>Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" <sup>7</sup>And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. <sup>8</sup>But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be <sup>[a]</sup>witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

#### *Jesus Ascends to Heaven*

*<sup>9</sup>Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. <sup>10</sup>And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, <sup>11</sup>who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."*

## Study Questions

1. **Observation:** What commands, promises, and assurances does Jesus give the disciples in this passage? What events frame His final instructions?

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2. **Interpretation:** Why is the empowerment of the Holy Spirit essential to effective Christian witness? How does the scope of the mission (Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth) reflect the nature of God’s love?

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3. **Application:** In what areas of your life or ministry do you need the Spirit’s empowerment to be a faithful witness? What practical steps can you take to cultivate sensitivity, obedience, and boldness in responding to the Spirit’s guidance?

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## Study 3: Love that Reaches Out to the Needy

Love is never more visible than when it bends low to lift the needy. The Gospel calls believers not only to proclaim Christ with their words, but to display Christ through acts of compassion. In *Matthew 25:31–46*, Jesus identifies Himself with “the least of these”; the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, and the imprisoned. In serving them, He says, we serve Him. This shows that love is not an abstract sentiment but rather a tangible response to human need, rooted in a deep awareness of God’s mercy toward us. Paul’s words in *2 Corinthians 8:1–7* give us another powerful picture of such love. The Macedonian churches, though poor and afflicted, overflowed with generosity. They gave not out of excess, but out of sacrifice. Their poverty became a platform for grace, thus transforming their giving into an act of worship. This kind of love is not forced, calculated, or superficial. It is Spirit-inspired, joy-filled, and deeply rooted in Christ’s own self-giving. Love that reaches out to the needy is therefore not a seasonal call but a lifestyle for every believer and every congregation. It calls us to open our hearts, our hands, and our resources to those who suffer — not because they are deserving, but because Christ loved us when we were without strength. Reaching out to the needy becomes a testimony that God’s love is alive in us. A testimony that our faith is not empty words. A testimony that we understand the heart of the Gospel: grace freely received, and grace freely given. As we reflect on this passage, the central question before us is this: **Does our love merely speak, or does it reach?** Christian love moves toward the broken, the weak, the overlooked, and the forgotten. Just as Christ reached out to us in our need.

**Study Passage: 2 Corinthians 8:1-7**

***Excel in Giving***

*<sup>8</sup> Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: <sup>2</sup> that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. <sup>3</sup> For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, <sup>4</sup> imploring us with much urgency [<sup>a</sup>] that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. <sup>5</sup> And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God. <sup>6</sup> So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this grace in you as well. <sup>7</sup> But as you abound in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us—see that you abound in this grace also.*

**Study Questions**

**1. Observation:** What stands out about the Macedonian believers' attitude toward giving? What words and phrases does Paul use to describe their generosity?

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**2. Interpretation:** Why does Paul describe their generosity as an act of grace? How does their example deepen our understanding of Christ-like love, especially toward the needy and vulnerable?

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**3. Application:** How can our church (and you personally) embody the same spirit of joyful, sacrificial generosity? What concrete steps can you take this month to reach out to someone in spiritual, emotional, or material need?

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**Monthly Reflection: Theme: Love That Reaches Out**

This month has called us to step beyond the familiar and into the world with the heart of Christ. True love does not retreat into comfort but stretches, it goes, it seeks, and it responds. The study this month has confronted us with a critical spiritual question: *Is our faith inward and contained, or outward and compelling?* The Gospel is not fulfilled when it is understood but when it is fulfilled when it is shared. Love that reaches out requires a surrender of fear, pride, and excuses. It asks us to see people as Christ sees them, not as interruptions, but as invitations. It calls us to loosen our grip on self-preservation and embrace the vulnerability of compassion. The mission field is not only across

the seas. It is across the street, within our families, at our workplaces, and in the broken spaces of society. Every believer is a carrier of God's love, and every day presents an opportunity to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

As we sit with the weight of this month's theme, we must ask: *What holds me back from reaching out?* Is it uncertainty? A sense of inadequacy? The fear of rejection? Or perhaps the busyness that numbs us to the needs around us? Love that reaches out does not wait for perfect conditions. It simply obeys. It listens to the Spirit's prompting. It notices the overlooked. It offers what it has, however small, knowing that God multiplies the little we bring. May this month's journey birth in us a deeper compassion and a holy courage. May we become a church that does not merely preach Christ but presents Him through sacrificial acts of care. May our presence in the world be a reminder that God has not forgotten the broken. And as we move into a new season, may our hearts remain open, our feet ready, and our hands stretched toward those who long for hope, healing, and belonging.

### **Memory Verse**

*"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."* (Mat. 5:16)

# OCTOBER: LOVE EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

## Introduction

Relationships are the spaces where love is tested, proven, and perfected. But human love alone is fragile. It is easily exhausted, easily wounded, easily distorted by fear, pride, or past hurts. To build relationships that reflect the heart of God, believers need more than goodwill or emotional strength. We need the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Love empowered by the Spirit is not a natural affection. Rather, it is a supernatural outpouring of God's own heart through His people. The Holy Spirit is the divine presence who makes Christian love possible. He produces in us what we cannot manufacture. The Spirit produce in us patience when offended, gentleness when provoked, kindness when ignored, forgiveness when hurt, peace when misunderstood, and joy when stretched. Without the Spirit, relationships often become transactional and conditional. But when He fills us, love becomes transformational. It transcends personality differences, overcomes barriers, softens hardened hearts, and restores what was broken.

This month's study invites us to rediscover the Spirit's role in shaping our relationships. In Christ, we are not left to love from depleted wells. We draw from the fountain of God's own love poured into our hearts by the Spirit (Romans 5:5). He enables us to love not only those who love us back, but even those who disappoint, frustrate, or oppose us. He gives us the courage to reconcile, the wisdom to listen, the strength to persevere, and the humility to serve. This kind of love is not sentimental. It is sacred. As we study this month's passages, we will see that healthy relationships are not built on human effort but on divine empowerment. The Spirit equips us to build connections that honour God, nurture fellowship, and strengthen the Church. When believers walk in the Spirit, love ceases to be a burden and becomes a joy; relationships cease to be draining and become life-giving. May this month open our hearts to the transforming work of the Holy Spirit, who empowers us to love as Christ loved: Deeply, truthfully, and sacrificially.

## Study 1: Love Poured Out by the Spirit

Christian love does not originate from human emotion. Instead, it is a divine deposit, poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. When Paul declares, "*the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us*" (Romans 5:5), he reveals a profound truth: "The capacity to love like Christ does not come from us; it comes from Him." This love is not a drip but a pouring. A lavish, ongoing outflow of God's own heart into the believer's life. In the wider context of Romans 5:1–8, Paul connects the pouring of divine love to our justification, peace with God, hope in suffering, and the assurance of God's commitment to us. This means the Spirit's love is not fragile or conditional. It is anchored in God's unchanging nature. Even in seasons of pressure, disappointment, and hardship, the Spirit does not withdraw His love. He increases it. While human love falters under strain, divine love intensifies.

This poured-out love becomes the foundation of all Christian relationships. It enables believers to love beyond their natural limit, to forgive deeply, to persevere patiently, to embrace sacrificially, and to seek peace intentionally. Without the Spirit, relationships are sustained by emotion, but with the Spirit, they are sustained by grace. Every time we love beyond ourselves, it is evidence that the Spirit is at work within us. This study invites us to reflect on the source of our love. Are we relying on natural strength, which quickly empties, or on the divine supply poured into us by the Spirit? The secret of building healthy, resilient relationships lies here. Not in loving from our own hearts, but in allowing God’s heart to flow through ours.

**Study Passage: Romans 5:1-8**

***Faith Triumphs in Trouble***

*<sup>1</sup> Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup> through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup> And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; <sup>4</sup> and perseverance, character; and character, hope. <sup>5</sup> Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. <sup>6</sup> For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup> For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. <sup>8</sup> But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

**Study Questions**

**1. Observation:** How does Paul describe the progression from tribulation to hope in this passage? What connection does he make between hope and the pouring out of God’s love?

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**2. Interpretation:** What does it mean that God’s love is “poured out” rather than given in small measure? How does this poured-out love empower believers to build relationships that reflect Christ’s character?

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**3. Application:** Where in your relationships do you feel the limits of your natural love? How can you intentionally open your heart to the Spirit’s empowerment so that His love, not yours, becomes the source of your actions?

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## Study 2: Love as a Fruit of the Spirit

Love is not only the greatest commandment. It is the first evidence of the Holy Spirit’s work in a believer’s life. While human love is conditional, selective, and often inconsistent, the love that comes from the Spirit is steady, pure, and transformative. Paul begins the list of the Spirit’s fruit with love because every other virtue flows from it. Joy is love rejoicing. Peace is love resting. Patience is love enduring. Kindness is love serving. Goodness is love reflecting God’s character. Faithfulness is love keeping its word. Gentleness is love yielding. Self-control is love disciplining the body. Love is both the root and the crown of the Spirit’s fruit. *“Love as a fruit of the Spirit”* reminds us that love is not achieved through willpower or personal effort. It is cultivated through surrender. Just as fruit grows naturally on a healthy tree, love grows naturally in a heart yielded to the Spirit. When believers walk in the Spirit, they do not produce love, the Spirit produces love in them and through them. This is why love expressed in the life of a Spirit-filled believer has a supernatural quality. It forgives what seems unforgivable, embraces the unlovable, perseveres through trials, and seeks reconciliation even when wounded. In the context of relationships, this fruit is essential. Without the Spirit’s love, relationships quickly become strained by human weaknesses such as impatience, selfishness, pride, resentment, and emotional fatigue. But when the Spirit empowers love, relationships become spaces of healing, restoration, and growth. Love softens sharp words, dissolves grudges, humbles pride, and nurtures unity. It creates an atmosphere where people feel safe, valued, and supported. This study challenges us to examine whether our relationships reflect the fruit of the Spirit or the works of the flesh. It invites us to lean more fully into the Spirit’s transforming presence, allowing Him to prune, shape, and cultivate within us the kind of love that mirrors Christ. For the greatest testimony of a Spirit-filled life is not power, eloquence, or gifting. It is love.

### Study Passage: Galatians 5:22–26

*22 But the fruit of the Spirit is Love, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such, there is no law. 24 And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.*

### Study Questions

- 1. Observation:** What contrasts does Paul draw between the works of the flesh (before verse 22) and the fruit of the Spirit? Which specific fruit accompanies love in this passage?  
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- 2. Interpretation:** Why do you think Paul lists love first among the fruit of the Spirit? How does understanding love as *fruit* rather than effort shape our approach to building relationships?

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**3. Application:** Which area of your relationships most needs the Spirit’s cultivation of love right now? Is it patience, kindness, gentleness, forgiveness or self-control? What intentional steps can you take to walk in the Spirit so that this fruit becomes visible in your daily interactions?

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**Study 3: Love That Bears Fruits**

Christian love is not measured merely by emotion or intention. It is measured by fruit.

In John 15, Jesus reveals the secret to a life that is spiritually productive and relationally transformative; abiding in Him. Fruitfulness is not a goal we achieve. It is a consequence we experience when we remain connected to Christ, the true Vine. The power to love, forgive, restore, and build healthy relationships does not come from personal strength. Rather, it flows from continuous union with Christ. *“Love that bears fruit”* is love that is rooted in Christ, sustained by Christ, and expressed through Christ. When we abide in Him, His life becomes our life, His strength becomes our strength, and His love becomes our love. This abiding relationship shifts our efforts from striving to surrender; from pushing to remaining; from forcing fruit to allowing fruit to grow. Jesus insists that *“without Me you can do nothing”* meaning no real love, no lasting impact, no sustained spiritual growth is possible apart from Him. Fruitfulness is not optional; it is evidence of genuine discipleship. Jesus says, *“By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.”* (John 15:8). This fruit is not merely external achievements but internal transformation. It is a character that reflects Christ, relationships marked by His love, and actions that reveal His presence in our lives. A fruitless Christian life is a disconnected Christian life. But one who abides continually in the Vine, becomes a living testimony of God’s power. This study invites us to examine the connection between our relationship with Christ and the quality of our love. Are we bearing fruit that nourishes others? Are we embodying the patience, forgiveness, humility, and strength that come from abiding in the Vine? True love that builds relationships cannot be manufactured. It must flow from life in Christ.

**Study Passage: John 15:5-8**

*<sup>5</sup> “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup> If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. <sup>7</sup> If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you<sup>[a]</sup> will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. <sup>8</sup> By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.*

## Study Questions

1. **Observation:** What contrasts does Jesus draw between a branch that abides and one that does not? What promises are given to those who remain connected to the Vine?

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2. **Interpretation:** Why is abiding in Christ essential for bearing fruit? How does Jesus link fruitfulness to discipleship and to the Father's glory?

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3. **Application:** What practical steps can you take to deepen your abiding relationship with Christ (through prayer, obedience, Scripture, or fellowship)? What specific fruit of love do you desire to see God grow in your relationships this season?

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## Monthly Reflection: Love Empowered by the Holy Spirit

The study this month has invited us to pause and reflect on a profound truth. The truth that we cannot love well without the Holy Spirit. Relationships stretch us, disappoint us, refine us, and expose our weaknesses. But they also reveal the places where God desires to work most deeply within us. The Spirit's empowerment is not simply for spiritual gifts or ministry expression. It is for the daily grace of loving people in ways that reflect the heart of Christ. This month calls us to examine the source of our love. When love dries up, it is not a sign that people have become too difficult. It is a sign that we need to return to the Vine, to the Spirit, to the One who pours God's love into our hearts without measure. Love without the Spirit becomes duty. Love with the Spirit becomes delight. When we yield to Him, He births in us a love that apologises first, forgives quickly, listens carefully, waits patiently, and serves joyfully.

At the heart of Spirit-empowered love is abiding. It is remaining open, surrendered, and responsive to God. Such love does not depend on how others behave, but on how deeply we remain connected to Christ. It is the kind of love that bears fruit that lasts, fruit that blesses those around us, fruit that glorifies God long after our words and works are forgotten. As we stand at the threshold of a new month, this month leaves us with this invitation: Do not strive to love more. Just learn to surrender more. Let the Spirit shape your attitudes, soften your responses, heal your wounds, and guide your steps. For where the Spirit leads, love will flourish; and where love flourishes, relationships will be restored, strengthened, and transformed.

**Memory Verse**

*“The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”*  
(Rom. 5:5)

# NOVEMBER: LOVE THAT IMPACTS RELATIONSHIPS

## Introduction

Relationships are the arenas where love either proves its strength or reveals its weakness. Throughout the year, we have explored love from many angles: As God defines it, as Christ displays it, as the Spirit empowers it, and as the believer expresses it. But in this month, we shift the focus from understanding love to demonstrating its transforming power in the real, everyday relationships that shape our lives. Love that impacts relationships is love that leaves a mark. It is love that influences character, restores brokenness, strengthens families, and deepens community. Every relationship we are part of becomes an opportunity for love to take root and bear fruit. Some relationships are easy and life-giving. Others are demanding and refining. But in all of them, love becomes the divine agent through which God works in us and through us. The great test of spiritual maturity is not how much we know, but how we relate, how we speak, how we forgive, how we respond, how we reconcile, how we serve, and how we influence those God has placed around us. Christian love was never meant to remain private; it is meant to flow into our families, friendships, marriages, workplaces, and communities.

The Scriptures show that love has generational influence. It can be passed on like a treasured inheritance, shaping destinies long after we are gone. It has the power to restore what pain has broken, to soften hardened hearts, and to rebuild trust where wounds once festered. When love is practiced consistently, it transforms relationships into sacred spaces where God's grace is experienced, shared, and multiplied. This is why Jesus said, *"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."* (John 13:35). Love is our greatest impact. This month invites us to examine the relationships closest to us. Those we are born into, those we choose, and those God has assigned us for His purpose. It calls us to allow the Spirit to reshape how we influence others, how we respond to conflict, and how we carry the legacy of faith within our families and communities. Love that impacts relationships does not simply coexist. It builds, strengthens, heals, and inspires. It becomes a witness to the world that Christ is alive in us.

## Study 1: Love that is passed on through the Family Tree

Some of the greatest legacies ever received are not material possessions, but the spiritual imprints left on the hearts of those who come after us. Paul's words to Timothy reveal a powerful truth: Love and faith can be inherited, nurtured, and passed down through generations. Timothy's sincere love for God did not begin with him. It began with a grandmother who believed, a mother who embraced that faith, and a young man who received it, like a flame passed carefully from hand to hand. We live in a world where families are often marked by conflict, brokenness, silence, or emotional distance. Yet Scripture reminds us that God can write a different story. Through love, forgiveness, prayer, and consistent witness, families can become sacred spaces where faith is born, strengthened, and transmitted. A godly heritage is not accidental. It is intentional. It grows through the quiet, unseen acts of love. It grows through a whispered prayer, a Bible left open, a word of encouragement, and a

life lived with integrity. This study invites us to reflect deeply on the impact of love within our own family trees. Whether your family has been a fountain of love or a field of struggle, God calls us to be generational bridges. He calls us to be recipients of godly influence where it exists, and initiators of it where it does not. The love of Christ can heal generational wounds, break destructive patterns, and plant seeds of faith that will outlive us. God can use you to shift the story of your lineage. The question before us is simple yet profound: What spiritual legacy are we receiving, and what spiritual legacy are we passing on? Paul's affirmation of Timothy, not for his abilities but for his heritage, is a reminder that love of God cultivated in the home becomes love of God that stands firm in the world.

**Study Passages: 2 Timothy 1:5-7**

*5 when I call to remembrance the <sup>[a]</sup>genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also. 6 Therefore, I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. 7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.*

**Study Questions**

- 1. **Observation:** What does Paul highlight about Timothy’s spiritual heritage? Which individuals does Paul mention, and what is significant about the order?  
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- 2. **Interpretation:** What does this passage teach us about the influence of family in shaping spiritual identity? How does verse 7 reinforce the idea that spiritual legacy includes both example and empowerment?  
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- 3. **Application:** What aspects of your faith have been shaped by family members or mentors? In practical ways, how can you intentionally pass on faith, love, and godly influence to your children, siblings, extended family, or younger believers around you?  
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**Study 2: Love That Submits and Seeks the Good of Others**

Love is never self-centered. It always looks outward. It always seeks the good of the other person. Paul’s instruction to “submit to one another in the fear of God” (Eph. 5:21) is often misunderstood as

weakness or loss of dignity. But in Scripture, submission is not about inferiority. It is about humility, mutual honour, and the willingness to put another's wellbeing before your own. It is the posture Christ Himself demonstrated when He washed His disciples' feet and when He gave His life on the cross. In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul paints a portrait of this kind of love in action: Love that is patient, kind, selfless, gentle, and long-suffering. These qualities are not abstract ideals. They are the daily expressions of love that submits for the sake of others. Submission becomes practical when we choose patience over irritation, kindness over harshness, forgiveness over revenge, humility over pride, and perseverance over withdrawal. Love that seeks the good of others is love that actively resists selfishness. When believers embrace this kind of love, relationships are transformed, families are softened, marriages are healed, and friendships are deepened. Indeed, when we embrace love that seeks the good of others, conflicts dissolve and our relationships become safe places of honour and service. Submitting to one another is not about losing your dignity. It is about allowing God's love to win. Seeking the good of others is not about diminishing ourselves. It is about elevating Christ in all that we do. This study invites us to examine the posture of our hearts. Do we insist on being right? Do we demand our way? Do we love conditionally (only when it suits us)? Does our love reflect Christ's others-centered character? Indeed, true Christian love is not passive but intentionally poured out for the flourishing of others.

**Study Passages:**

***Ephesians 5:21***

*Submitting to one another in the fear of God.*

***1 Corinthians 13:4-8a***

*<sup>4</sup> Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not <sup>[a]</sup>puffed up; <sup>5</sup> does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, <sup>[b]</sup>thinks no evil; <sup>6</sup> does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; <sup>7</sup> bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. <sup>8</sup> Love never fails.....*

**Study Questions**

- 1. Observation:** What qualities of love stand out most strongly in these passages? Which actions, attitudes, or behaviours does Paul highlight as essential for genuine love?  
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- 2. Interpretation:** How does mutual submission in “the fear of God” reshape our understanding of relationships? Why is selflessness central to the kind of love described in 1 Corinthians 13?

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**3. Application:** Where in your relationships is God inviting you to practice mutual submission? What is one practical change you can make this week to actively seek the good of someone else especially when it requires humility or sacrifice?

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**Study 3: Love That Perfects Family Bonds**

Family is the first school of love. It is the place where we learn how to give and receive affection, how to forgive, how to submit, how to honour, how to communicate, how to sacrifice, and how to persevere. When family bonds are strong, they become a sanctuary of stability and strength. When they are fractured, the wounds can run deep and affect every other part of life. Paul’s instructions in Ephesians 6:1–4 are not merely rules. They are relational wisdom for nurturing love in the household. Children are called to honour their parents, not because parents are perfect, but because honour trains the heart to value the relationships God has given. Parents (and especially fathers as heads of households) are commanded to nurture, guide, and discipline their children in a manner that reflects God’s tenderness, not exasperation or harshness. Love perfects family bonds when children honour, and when parents discipline with grace. But the Song of Songs adds a poetic depth. Relationships do not fall apart because of large catastrophes alone; they erode through “the little foxes” that sneak in unnoticed. The small irritations, the unspoken resentments, the lingering misunderstandings, the neglected affections, the seemingly harmless habits that become lifestyles, the unresolved conflicts, these are the foxes that steal the vineyard of love. When combined, these passages call us to pay attention to two essential truths:

- 1. Family bonds thrive when each member fulfils their God-given responsibility with love and humility.
- 2. Family bonds weaken when we ignore the small issues that nibble away at affection and unity.

Subsequently, this study invites us to examine the health of our family relationships, not with guilt, but with a hope-filled desire for restoration, attentiveness, intentionality, and growth. Love that perfects family bonds is a love that notices, nurtures, protects, forgives, and continually pursues wholeness.

**Study Passages:**

***Ephesians 6:1–4***

<sup>1</sup> Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. <sup>2</sup> “Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise: <sup>3</sup> “that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”

*<sup>4</sup>And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.*

**Song of Songs 2:15-17**

*<sup>15</sup> Catch us the foxes, The little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes. <sup>16</sup> My beloved is mine, and I am his. He feeds his flock among the lilies. (To Her Beloved) <sup>17</sup> Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, Turn, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag Upon the mountains of Bether.*

**Study Questions**

**1. Observation:** What responsibilities are given to children and to parents in Ephesians 6:1-4? What are the “little foxes” mentioned in Song 2:15, and how are they described as affecting relationships?

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**2. Interpretation:** How do love, honour, discipline, and tenderness work together to strengthen family bonds? What might “little foxes” symbolize in modern family life, and why do small issues often cause the greatest long-term damage?

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**3. Application:** What is one “little fox” you need to confront in your family relationships? What practical step can you take this week to deepen honour, affection, or understanding within your family?

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**Monthly Reflection: Love that Impact Relationships**

Love is never confined to words. It is most truthfully expressed in the spaces where our lives intersect with others. And nowhere is love more severely tested or more beautifully displayed than in our closest relationships: Family, marriage, friendship, and the community that shapes us. This month has invited us to look beyond the surface of our actions and into the silent currents that define our relational world. Love that impacts relationships is not just emotional. It is spiritual. It flows from God, works through us, and leaves traces of grace wherever it touches. It is a love that is inherited, submitted, and perfected in the quiet, unseen choices we make every day. Love impacts relationships when we honour our heritage, not by idolising the past, but by allowing the faith of those before us

to kindle the flame within us. It impacts relationships when we submit to one another in humility, seeking the good of others above our own comfort. It impacts relationships when we nurture our families with patience, when we slow down to catch the “little foxes,” and when we guard the tender vineyard of affection before it withers.

True love restores broken bridges, softens hardened hearts, confronts hidden resentments, and transforms households into places of peace. It does not demand perfection from others, but inspires growth in ourselves first, and then in those around us. It is not loud, but it is strong. Not demanding, yet deeply compelling. Not proud, but powerfully redemptive. As we step into the final stretch of the year, let us ask ourselves: What kind of love is shaping our relationships? What legacy are we building? What vine must we guard? What step of humility or healing is God calling us to take? Because in the end, love that truly impacts relationships is love that mirrors Christ. A love that listens, heals, protects, and perseveres.

### **Memory Verse**

*“And above all things have fervent love for one another, for love will cover a multitude of sins.”*  
(1 Pet. 4:8)

# DECEMBER: LOVE PERFECTED IN GLORY

## Introduction

The last month draws the curtain on our year-long pilgrimage through the corridors of love: Love observed in God's character, embraced in obedience, expressed in service, and extended to neighbour and family. Now, at the very climax of our journey, we stand before the final and greatest revelation: *love perfected in glory*. This is the love that is no longer strained by weakness, wounded by sin, or hindered by human frailty. It is love brought to completion in the presence of God, where all things broken are restored, and all things hidden are unveiled. Throughout the year, we have explored the many dimensions of love in a fallen world: Love that forgives, serves, sacrifices, perseveres, and heals. But this last month lifts our eyes beyond the present struggle to the eternal horizon. Here, love is not merely a virtue to practice but a destiny to inherit. It is the love of Christ brought to its full expression when He returns, gathers His people, and ushers us into the fullness of His eternal kingdom. All our earthly attempts at loving will find their ultimate meaning in that final unveiling of glory.

This month also reminds us that the Christmas story is not simply about a Child in a manger; it is the opening chapter of a redemptive love that ends in triumphant glory. The One who came as a humble infant will return as the reigning King. The love that was wrapped in swaddling clothes will be clothed in majesty. What began in vulnerability will culminate in victory. Here, love is not only celebrated but also consummated. As believers, this month invites us to live with a holy longing. To love with eternity in mind. To persist when love is painful because glory awaits. To endure when love is misunderstood because Christ is coming. To give ourselves fully to God and others because our labour of love is not in vain. This last month declares that the story is not over; and neither is our love. In Christ, it shall be perfected in glory.

## Study 1: Love Came Down

Christmas is not merely a season for merry making. It is a divine declaration. It is the unveiling of love that did not wait to be summoned, earned, or deserved. It is love that came down. It descended into our darkness, clothed itself in our flesh, and walked our dusty roads so that we might behold the heart of God. In Jesus Christ, love did not remain an abstract ideal; it became a living, breathing reality in human form. John 3:16 tells us why love came down — because *“God so loved the world.”* 1 John 4:9–10 tells us how that love came. *“God sent His only begotten Son into the world... to be the propitiation for our sins.”* The sending was an act of love, while the sacrifice was the proof of love. This is the love that does not simply sympathise; it saves. A love that does not merely feel but acts. A love that does not wait for us to rise but bends low to lift us. A love that does not condemn but redeems. In Christ, God came down not to judge the world but to rescue it. Not to demand from us, but to give Himself for us. Not to call the righteous, but sinners. Christmas is heaven's movement toward earth. It is the holy bending toward the broken, the infinite embracing the finite, and the pure pursuing the polluted. To understand Christmas is to understand love. To behold Christ is to behold God's heart. And to receive Him is to be transformed by the love that came down.

**Study Passage: 1 John 4:9-10**

*<sup>9</sup>In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. <sup>10</sup>In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

**Study Questions**

**1. Observation:** According to this passage, what two actions does God take to reveal His love, and what is the intended result of those actions?

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**2. Interpretation:** How does the phrase “not that we loved God, but that He loved us” reshape your understanding of divine love compared to human love? What should this teach us about the initiative, depth, and purpose of God’s love?

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**3. Application:** If God’s love came down to meet us at our worst, how should this shape the way we approach those who are difficult, broken, or far from God, especially during this Christmas season?

**Study 2: Love That Abides with Us**

There are truths so profound that the human heart can barely contain them. *God with us* is one of them. In these three words lies the entire mystery of the incarnation, the heartbeat of redemption, and the comfort of every believer who walks through life’s darkest valleys. Christmas reminds us that God did not remain distant, silent, or aloof. Love came near, not as an idea, but as a Person. Not as a fleeting presence, but as a permanent abiding reality. Matthew 1:23 is not merely an announcement; it is a divine invitation into companionship with God. Emmanuel means *proximity, presence, and permanence*. It is God stepping into our world, not from a throne of intimidation, but from a cradle of tenderness. God with us (not just the righteous, the strong, or the faithful) but us the weak, the wandering, and the wounded. The abiding presence of God is not seasonal. It is not limited to the manger. It continues through the Cross, the resurrection, Pentecost, and into the daily life of every believer through the indwelling Spirit. Emmanuel was not a Christmas slogan; it was God’s eternal declaration: “*I will never leave you nor forsake you....*” (Hebrew 13:5). In a world filled with loneliness, fear, rejection, and uncertainty, *Love that abides with us* speaks deeply to every human longing. God is not merely watching over us. He is walking with us. Not only hearing us, but understanding us. Not only leading us but dwelling within us. To encounter Emmanuel is to encounter the God who refuses to love from a distance.

**Study Passage: *Matthew 1:23***

*“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.”*

**Study Questions**

**1. Observation:** What names, descriptions, and meanings are given to Jesus in this verse, and what do they reveal about God’s character?

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**2. Interpretation:** What does the title Emmanuel *“God with us”* teach us about God’s posture toward humanity? How does Christ’s incarnation change the way we understand God’s nearness and involvement in our daily lives?

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**3. Application:** In which areas of your life do you most need to consciously embrace Emmanuel, God with you, this season? How does knowing He is with you change how you face struggles, decisions, or relationships?

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**Study 3: God’s Ultimate Act of Love**

All of Scripture crescendos toward one defining moment: When God would not merely speak love, send love, or promise love, but become love in human flesh. Isaiah 7:14 opened the prophetic window centuries earlier: *“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”* This was not a symbolic gesture. It was not a poetic metaphor. Rather, it was the blueprint of divine intervention. God Himself would enter our world, not as a mighty warrior from the sky, but through the humble womb of a virgin. Luke 1:26–38 gives us the earthly unfolding of this eternal plan. In Mary’s encounter with the Angel Gabriel, we witness heaven’s greatest announcement colliding with human vulnerability. God chooses a young, obscure, humble girl to carry His Son. This reveals that God’s greatest acts of love often begin in the quietest places, with the least expected people. The incarnation is God’s ultimate act of love because it is God giving Himself. Not Him giving blessings, miracles, or protection... But Him giving His very being, wrapped in fragile flesh, bound to a human story, destined for a cross. This act of love is costly. God would suffer, bleed, and die. Love would feel pain. Love would be rejected. Love would be misunderstood. But love would not stop. Because true love completes what it begins. Christmas is the reminder that the greatest gift God ever gave the world was not a thing, but a Person. Not a promise, but a Presence. Not a theory, but a

Saviour. In Christ, God withheld nothing but gave Himself fully for our redemption, our restoration, and our eternal joy.

**Study Passage: Luke 1:30–38**

*30 Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 33 And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.” 34 Then Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I do not know a man?” 35 And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. 36 Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. 37 For with God nothing will be impossible.” 38 Then Mary said, “Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.*

**Study Questions**

- 1. **Observation:** What roles do God the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, and Mary each play in the unfolding of this divine plan as described in verses 30–38?

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- 2. **Interpretation:** What does the incarnation (God becoming flesh through a virgin birth) reveal about the nature, initiative, and intensity of God’s love for humanity? How does Mary’s response (“Let it be to me...”) model a proper response to God’s costly call?

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- 3. **Application** Since God’s ultimate act of love involved both sacrifice and submission, how does this shape the way you approach God’s purposes for your life? Where is God inviting you to say, “Let it be to me according to Your word”?

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**Monthly Reflection: Love Perfected in Glory**

The story of love does not end in Bethlehem. It begins there. Christmas is the dawn of a divine romance, God stepping into history, not only to comfort us in our suffering, but to redeem us fully and lead us into glory. This last month has invited us to lift our eyes from the manger to the majesty

of Christ's eternal purpose. The Child who came down, the Saviour who walked with us, the Son who gave Himself for us. He is also the King who will return to perfect all things in love. This month's journey has shown us love in its purest forms: A love that came down to meet us in our brokenness. A love that abides with us, refusing to leave us in loneliness or fear. A love that gives itself completely, becoming flesh, embracing suffering, and securing, for us, eternal salvation. What began in gentle humility will culminate in blazing glory. What started with a virgin's obedience will end with a redeemed creation. What was whispered in Nazareth will thunder across eternity.

Love perfected in glory means that God's love is not fragile, fading, or temporary. It is moving toward a climax, toward a day when every tear will be wiped away, every wound healed, every injustice reversed, and every longing fulfilled. On that day, love will not merely comfort us. It will consume us. We will stand in the radiance of Christ and know, finally and fully, that every act of divine love along the journey was preparing us for this eternal union. As we conclude the year, this theme presses a final question upon our hearts: Are we living now in light of the glory to come? Are we loving with eternity in mind, forgiving quickly, serving joyfully, giving generously, obeying willingly, and walking humbly? The love perfected in glory calls us not merely to celebrate His first coming, but to long for His second. And in that longing, to love as He loved.

### **Memory Verse**

*"Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."*

(1 Joh. 3:2)



This study guide has been put together to enhance members understanding and grounding themselves with the annual theme. It has been put together through the dedicated effort of the P.C.E.A. St. Andrew's pastoral team.

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