



+ YOU How to Love Your Neighbor

SUMMER 2022

Sermon Series: How to Love Your Neighbor
To be used with: What Does Love Look Like?
Sermon Title Possibilities: The Way God Loves Us
Scripture: Genesis 3:8-21

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the small group study “*What Does Love Look Like?*” this sermon will examine the love of God as displayed in Genesis. The sermon will invite all hearers to personally embrace and rest within God’s love.

Introduction: Love, in its purest form, is without condition. If someone fails to meet expectations, authentic love is not lost. If someone engages in behaviors that are outside of stated bounds, genuine love offers instructive correction. If someone feels shame and embarrassment because of error, true love seeks to cover shame while eliminating embarrassment. Today’s text reveals the purest and truest form of love that can only be found in a relationship with the heavenly Father. This love is not something new as it was on full display in Adam and Eve’s original sin, and it is still on display in the cross of Jesus Christ.

1. God’s love will call out to us (v. 9)

How many of us tried to hide or at least cover up our mistake when we knew we had done something wrong? We would hope that our parents would not discover what we had done. We have all felt this and it would be safe to say that Adam and Eve felt this too. They knew they were wrong, and they were hiding from God.

God, while being fully aware of their sin, came seeking after them. The fact that He called out, “Where are you?” does not mean that He was unaware. Instead, it shows His love for them in that He was pursuing them even during their rebellion. If God’s love was tied to our obedience, we would all be in trouble in that we have all sinned and fallen short of His glory (Rom. 3:23). His love is unconditional. Therefore, even when He knows we have fallen short, He will call out to us and offer us a relationship with Him.

2. God’s love will ask us needed questions (v. 11-13)

Many parents are great at asking questions in which they already know the answers. For example, do you know anything about the broken cookie jar in the kitchen? Or do you know what happened to the toothpaste in the bathroom? As kids, we knew we were caught and yet we would act innocent. We see the exact same thing playing out in Genesis 3.

Adam and Eve had disobeyed God and God was asking them obvious questions. They responded by blaming others. Adam went so far as to blame God in saying it was the woman *You* gave me. Many of us blamed our brother or sister.

God's love, however, was not deterred as the blame game was being played. He displayed His love by continuing to ask questions. God asking questions offered Adam and Eve the chance to confess and repent. If God was unloving, He would have merely banished them from the garden. He pursued them and asked them questions to reestablish the relationship that had been broken by their sin.

3. God's love will provide needed discipline (v. 16-19)

Many of us have observed the following situation: a child throws a temper tantrum and the parents cave to the child's demands. We know that the child's fit is an effort to avoid punishment. The parent's decision not to discipline the child is evidence the parent is unwilling to set boundaries.

God's children never need to wonder if He is going to discipline us or not. He is a loving Father, so He will provide us with the needed discipline. We find this in today's passage, and we also find evidence of this in the New Testament. The author of Hebrews said, "for the Lord disciplines the one He loves and punishes every son He receives" (12:6). God's discipline is not of such a nature that He sends us to our rooms only to allow us to come out until after we have paid a sufficient price for our errors. His discipline allows us to experience consequences so that we want to avoid the sin that yielded the discipline. His discipline is instructive and corrective.

4. God's love will provide covering for our sin and shame (v. 21)

The Bible teaches us that after all of this was over, the Lord God made clothing from skins for the man and his wife. God is the one who initiated this action. Early in the story, we find Adam and Eve hiding because they knew they were naked and therefore felt shame. We do not find either Adam or Eve asking God to cover their nakedness. Yet, the story concludes with God sacrificing an innocent animal to cover their sin and shame. This is the mark of true love and God is the author of this kind of love.

Conclusion: While this story ends with God providing for Adam and Eve, this is not the end of God's love. He is still providing love for us today. We, like Adam and Eve, want to hide from God and yet He pursues us. We, like Adam and Eve, tend to blame everyone else for our sins and yet God lovingly asks us questions as He provides loving discipline. We, like Adam and Eve, are ashamed of our sin and God has provided His one and only Son to cover our sin and shame. Will we learn from Adam and Eve today and accept the sacrifice of His one and only Son for our sins?

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