



+ **YOU**

Fall 2024

Thrive: Living on Purpose

Sermon Title: Learning to Love One Another

To be used with Session 5: Purpose Expressed

The Point: We fulfill our purpose as we serve others in love.

Scripture: 1 John 4:7-11

Connection with the Study: To complement the Bible study “Purpose Questioned,” this sermon focuses on this beautiful expression of Christian love from 1 John, urging us to love one another. This passage doesn’t just state that love is a good trait, but it goes so far as to equate the depth of our love with our knowledge of God. As Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 13:13 that the greatest spiritual attribute is love, so John also contended that serving others in love is not just a helpful byproduct of our faith, it is the very evidence of our faith and whether we truly know God. If we are in Christ, our love will be the characteristic that defines who we are and how we are perceived by others.

1. Love is Displayed in God’s Nature (1 John 4:7-8).

God is love. This simple statement is the clearest definition of who God is, why God does what He does, and how God chooses to interact with all of creation. His love is evident in the good gifts that He gives us, as every good and perfect gift is from Him (Jas. 1:17). At the same time, His love is evident in His discipline, as the Lord also disciplines the ones He loves (Heb. 12:6). In every circumstance, the love of God is the driving force in His actions, and likewise our love for God should compel our thoughts and actions in love towards others. One way we show the love of God is by bearing the burdens of others, showing care for those around us, and encouraging both believers and non-believers towards God. John wrote that those who do not love others do not know God at all. This is a startling statement for those who say they love God but show only judgment and anger to those around them. Strong evidence of our salvation itself is not found in knowledge of theology or time in the pews but in how deeply we love and how the love of God flows through us in service to others.

2. Love is Displayed in Jesus (1 John 4:9-10).

Perhaps the most famous verse of Scripture is John 3:16, and here in this passage John again alludes to the ultimate evidence of God’s love for us. If we truly love someone, we seek to understand fully what it is like to be “in their shoes,” and we are willing to make sacrifices on their behalf. God does exactly this for us through Christ. In Jesus, God took on full humanity

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while still being fully God. He walked among us, understanding and experiencing our pain, our hunger, and our needs. He then made the ultimate sacrifice of giving His life for us as an atoning sacrifice. It is astonishing that a perfect, Holy God would endure pain, torture, and death on our behalf. He did not love us because we are capable of doing something worthy of earning His love. Scripture makes clear that God suffered death for our sins not because we are worthy of it, but because we are not. The only way to restore our relationship was through this sacrifice. Through Jesus, God makes us clean, holy, and renewed, and we must respond to this amazing act in deep, abiding love.

3. Love is Displayed in Our Actions (1 John 4:11).

We must love one another, and love is displayed in action. The greatest of the gifts is love, because when we display love for others, we are displaying the core characteristic of God Himself. In His holiness, He alone displays perfect love. When we consider that the God of all creation, who commands the farthest galaxies of the universe still unknown by humanity, chose to become one of us because of His great love, how can we respond otherwise? His love was not only for the world in general, but for each individual who would ever live. His love reaches farther than we can imagine, and when we respond to others in hatred or in anger, we are hindering God's work in us. Our love for both the church and those outside the church must be deep, abiding, sacrificial, and genuine. In this way we reflect the love of Jesus. Our love is displayed fully in service, as we sacrificially give and serve others who have nothing to offer in return and may never even thank us for our service. Through the depths of our love and service to others, we honor Christ and bring Him glory.

Conclusion: Those who do not love do not know God. This is a serious thing to consider as we examine our lives and determine what our service to others says about our love for God. There are many ways that we can serve, many ways for God's love to be manifested through us, and we are truly satisfied in His love when we love in response. Consider ways that you can actively show love this week and show love to people who are in need of seeing God's love in you. Our families, neighbors, and coworkers are the best place to start in considering how the love of Jesus is displayed in and through us.

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