



1

Love

?

WHAT
IS YOUR
FAVORITE
UNHEALTHY
FOOD?

The
POINT >

Let love characterize every relationship.

> JOHN 15:9-14

⁹ “As the Father has loved me, I have also loved you. Remain in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commands you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love.

¹¹ “I have told you these things so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.

¹² “This is my command: Love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ No one has greater love than this: to lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command you.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

FACT:

The Super Bowl lasts about four hours, and during that time about 28 million pounds of chips will be consumed by viewers.¹



LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // FAMILY

Families are a part of God's plan for filling the earth with His image-bearers and are responsible for providing for the spiritual, physical, mental, social, and emotional needs of family members.

Though the cliché is that kids don't generally like their vegetables—particularly the green, leafy, brussel-sprouty kinds—the truth is my kids have yet to meet a veggie they didn't like. In fact, among my kids' favorite foods are broccoli and, yes, brussels sprouts. However, my kids also love chips, and my wife will reluctantly buy a bag or two each week for the kids to eat with lunch. But it never fails that the chips become stale before the bag is finished, and what the kids just had to have a few days before is now described as “gross and disgusting.”

Relationships can be like a bag of chips—over time, they tend to become stale. If we don't use our relationships the ways God intended, what was once a source of joy and excitement becomes “gross,” and we'd rather just stay away. But our friendships, as well as relationships with teachers and parents, don't have to follow this pattern.

Fortunately, the Bible gives us a method to keep our connections with others from going stale. For followers of Jesus, we have the power within us to help others feel alive and healthy, refreshed by the love of Christ. The way God accomplishes this is through real love.

JOHN 15:9-10

1 What do we tend to expect from the people who love us?

2 How would you describe the connection between remaining in God's love and obeying His commandments?



Jesus was very clear—we are to love others in the specific way He's loved us. And here's how Jesus showed His love: He was generous. He forgave. He was gracious, kind, merciful, and sacrificial. #BSFLRelationships

JOHN 15:11-12

3 How does our relationship with God impact our relationships with others?

4 What does it look like to love others in the same way Jesus has loved us?

5 How have you experienced the joy of loving others as Christ loves you?

JOHN 15:13-14

6 Why are we tempted to give as little as necessary to get what we want?

7 When have you experienced the power of sacrificial love?

8 List some practical ways you can demonstrate sacrificial love to others.



LIVE IT OUT

LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // FAMILY

Families are a part of God's plan for filling the earth with His image-bearers and are responsible for providing for the spiritual, physical, mental, social, and emotional needs of family members.

We are called to love all people in real ways, and this applies especially to our families. Because God has placed us in such close relationships with our parents and siblings, we have the opportunity to reflect the generous and sacrificial nature of God's love in meaningful ways. As we submit to our parents, we reflect the humility of Christ who lived in submission to the Father. As we serve our siblings, we reflect Jesus' coming not to be served, but to serve the world. As we love the members of our family in practical ways, others see the nature of God in us.

> CHRIST

Jesus said the greatest commandment is that we would love God with all we are. We show what we truly love through the ways we spend our time.

9 How does your time demonstrate a genuine love for Jesus?

10 How will you demonstrate to Christ this week that you love Him with all you are?

GOD

JESUS

HOLY SPIRIT

BIBLE

SALVATION

CREATION

CHURCH

PEOPLE

FAMILY

COMMUNITY
& WORLD



> COMMUNITY

Our relationships can become stale, hard, and flat if we don't love them well. To remain healthy, love requires that we invest ourselves. Here are three ideas to show real love to others:

- > **Give a small gift:** Give an unexpected gift to someone who needs it. Attach this simple note: "Thank you for playing an important role in my life."
- > **Reach out:** Think of a relationship that has become stale or even hostile. Make a phone call to see if you can refresh that connection.
- > **Make a major sacrifice:** Think of something that hinders your closest relationships—TV, social media, video games, and so on. Think about getting rid of it to spend time with the people who are important to you.

> CULTURE

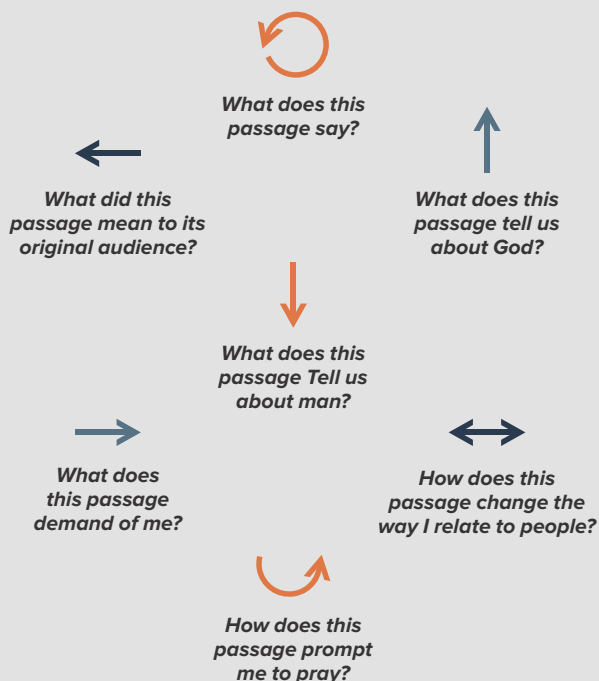
Scripture teaches that, while we were sinners separated from God, He loved us enough to send Jesus to die for us. We are called to love lost people, as well.

11 How will you show real love to a lost friend in order to show him or her the love of Christ this week?

DAILY DEVOTIONS



The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



Day One

1 JOHN 4:12

In John 1:18, we read that no one has ever seen God. God is spirit, and though He's manifested His presence among His people throughout the generations—as light, as a pillar of cloud or fire, and even in human form—God doesn't exist in physical form as humans do. However, John 1:18 also teaches that Jesus, through the ways He lived and loved, has allowed us to see God. Because Jesus has ascended and is no longer with us on the earth (at least not in bodily form), we need to ask, "How is God seen today?" Here's the answer: People see God when His children reflect His character by expressing genuine love to one another. Christ dwells in us and reveals Himself through us when we treat others as He would.

➤ In your own words, how do people see God?

➤ How have you seen God through the actions of someone else?

Day Two

1 JOHN 4:13-14



Jesus told His disciples that it was better if He left, because He would send the Holy Spirit (John 16:7). The Spirit ministers to us in various ways, including opening our eyes to the truths of Scripture, comforting us when we hurt, guiding us in the right paths, supplying the strength to follow God, and helping us to love others well. One more way the Spirit helps us is that He causes us to believe in Jesus as the Savior. When these characterize our lives, we can know the Spirit is at work in us.

➤ **How do you know the Spirit is in you?**

➤ **Which ways do you need to grow in allowing the Spirit to work in you?**

Day Three

1 JOHN 4:15-16

To confess means to agree with God about what He says is true. For us to experience salvation, it is necessary that we confess our sins to Him (1 John 1:9). Further, we must confess that Jesus is Lord (Rom. 10:9), which means surrendering to Him. Here in 1 John, we read that we must agree with God that Jesus is His Son in order to be in God. Though confess means “with-speak,” it entails much more than simply agreeing in the things we say. What we say is certainly important, but the way we live often communicates more powerfully. A life of love that aligns with God’s standards truly shows that we belong to God in ways words alone never could. If we say we love God, then let us show it through living like Jesus.

➤ **What does God say about your sin? Have you agreed with Him about these things?**

➤ **What do you need to change in order for your life (not just your words) to show that you agree with God?**

Day Four

1 JOHN 4:17-18

Scripture teaches that “there is no fear in love.” What a statement! However, chances are we often experience fear on many levels. Sometimes, it’s a scary movie, a roller coaster, or performing on a big stage. At other times, we may fear not getting into the right college or losing someone we love. So does this mean we don’t really know love? Not necessarily. The fear God is talking about is related to the judgment. For those not found in Christ, they will be judged for their sins, and they should be desperately afraid of God’s wrath poured out on their sin. However, for those who have known the love of God and have in turn loved others well, there’s no need to fear the judgment. We live in a real world where we experience real things that will make us afraid—at least on an immediate level. However, for the Christian, we’re called to set our hearts on eternal things, and because we’ve known the love of God, we have no reason to fear!

➤ **What makes you afraid?**

➤ **How can you learn to focus on eternal things in order to overcome your fears?**

Day Five

1 JOHN 4:19-21



There are certain things that just go together like peanut butter and jelly, right? Others can never go together—for instance, math class and my enjoyment. (I have never understood how some people can love math.) Here, John teaches us that loving God and loving others always go together. And if someone claims to love God but doesn’t love others, they’re simply wrong about their love for God. If we are to live in relationship with God, His greatest command is that we demonstrate genuine love to Him and others. This is what it means to follow Christ.

➤ **Love of God and hatred (lack of love) for others can never go together. How do you see this reality in your life?**

➤ **How do you need to grow in loving others well?**