



## Day 5

# Love

**Silence (2 minutes)** Take some time to be quiet, to calm down, and to listen. What has God been teaching you? What are the next steps He wants you to take? How is your spirit doing?

**Scripture** *"Then Jesus said to His host, 'When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.'"* Luke 14:12-14

**Discussion** One Sabbath Jesus was invited to eat at the home of a "prominent Pharisee." (Luke 14:1) He healed someone and tried to discuss this with the religious leaders present, but they wouldn't speak. Jesus also taught how we should be humble instead of exalting ourselves. The above Scripture is what Jesus said next. Jesus spoke here in a cultural hyperbole (an extreme statement, not meant to be taken literally, for the purpose of making a point). His intention was not to identify who we specifically should and should not invite to a meal. His point is that we are to be focused on doing what pleases God rather than on what we get in this life. We are to show love, even to those who cannot return the favor or repay us in this lifetime. Inviting people over for dinner who later invite us over is enjoyable; there is nothing wrong with it. But, to love others as God loves means to assist and be kind to those in need; who likely can't offer anything in return. Jesus had just done this. In front of His host and other Pharisees Jesus had healed a man with dropsy. There was no way this man could repay Jesus for his healing. After telling the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10, Jesus asked who "was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, *"The one who had mercy on him."* Jesus told him, *"Go and do likewise."* (Lk. 10:36-37) In the parable of The Sheep and the Goats, *"The King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and You invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me...I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'"* (Mt. 25:34-36,40) James writes, *"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world."* (Jas. 1:27) How are we living out this teaching of Scripture in our lives?

**Application** What ways are you currently giving to the least of these? Consider how generous you are with your time and the gifts God has given you. Do you feel a connection between giving without expecting anything in return and your desire to follow God? Come up with one way you can give of your time or gifts today and then commit to doing it.

**Prayer** Jesus, I praise You that You are merciful. You healed illnesses and cast out demons. You raised the dead and provided food for the hungry. You blessed children and forgave the repentant. While You were suffering on the cross You showed mercy to a criminal who believed in You. Thank You for Your mercy for me. I was separated from the Father and had no way to eliminate that separation. Thank You that You had mercy on me by dying for my sin and calling me to follow You. I commit myself to follow You by telling people about You and showing mercy to those in need. Help me see the needs of people around me. Please help me see people as You see them. I praise You that You are real and alive. You are good and loving and kind. Praise You, Lord Jesus. Amen.

**Silence (2 minutes)** Talk to God about what you are learning. What are your fears? Where are your hangups? Pray for direction.

**Scripture memory** for the week: *"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."* Mark 12:29-31

