



Day 9

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 *"We love because He first loved us."* 1 John 4:19

Discussion The passage 1 John 4:7-21 is an intricate description of God's love and our call to love each other. It says we should love each other because love comes from God, because God demonstrated His love for us by sending Jesus to die for our sins, because He first loved us, and because He commands us to love each other. If we believe in Jesus and live in love then love is completed in us and we are like Jesus, which gives us confidence when we are faced with God's judgment. God is changing us, believers in/followers of Jesus, to become more like Him by living in love. Jesus' love is exorbitant, personal, and costly. He died for all our wrongs, pettiness, arrogance, selfishness, and our damaging behavior. He chose to die for a people who are lost, broken, and rebellious toward the generous God who created us, knowing beforehand that many would refuse His love. Our call to love like Jesus is deep and complex, while at the same time it is quite simple. Jesus first lived out His love for us and He tells us to love each other. So, we just need to do it.

Application What are the needs in the Church? What gifts has God given me and how will I use them now to build up the Body? What people are already around me? How can I love them today, this week? What person or situation has God unexpectedly put on my path today and how does God want me now to live out being like Jesus by being loving? Will I daily ask God to reveal to me opportunities to love others? Am I committed to look for and act on these opportunities each day? At the start of the day ask God to teach you how to show more love to Him and others.

Prayer Lord Jesus, it is such a blessing to think about Your love, how immense and relieving it is to me. And it is amazing to think about how You are changing and maturing me, a very slow change, to be more loving like You. This pondering is good for me and I'm grateful for it; it shapes my thinking about You and about myself. But I know You also expect, require, that I follow and obey You by loving others. Jesus, I submit myself to You to love others each day. Father, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done," in me and through me (not my kingdom or my will). Father, please mature me to see people, situations, and needs as You see them and to take initiative to act as You would. Father, I will fumble and make mistakes, but You have taught me that it is really Your Holy Spirit who will be acting through my actions. You have taught me to trust Your wisdom, involvement, and power. Praise You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Praise You. 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

