

Read: 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

Love Overflows

1 Thessalonians 3:12-13 (EHV)

And may the Lord increase your love and make it overflow for each other and for all people, just as ours does for you, so that he may establish your hearts as blameless in holiness before our God and Father, when our Lord Jesus comes with all his saints.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

“Mom, we have a problem!!” Orange, bubbly hot sauce poured out of the bottle, overflowing everywhere. The kitchen counter was turning into a growing lake of orange sauce, while bright orange waterfalls descended to the kitchen floor below. The spicy smell of cayenne and horseradish filled the room. Just a minute before, Jesse saw the bottle of hot sauce on the counter. He thought it would be funny to shake the bottle. He thought it was cool that all kinds of bubbles formed inside the bottle. What Jesse didn’t expect was the sauce to rush bubbling out of the bottle when he opened it... and to keep flowing. Now he had a big mess to clean up.

When something overflows, it usually leaves a big mess. Open a can of Coke that has just dropped on the floor, and you’re left with a sticky mess. Plug a toilet and you’re left with a watery, unpleasant mess. Try to fill a small cup from a full jug of milk without holding on to the cup, and you could end up pouring milk all over the table and floor. We usually want to avoid making things overflow.

Yet in today’s Bible reading, Paul prays that we *would* overflow...with love! Sounds messy, doesn’t it?! Why would he pray for that? What Paul is praying for is that we would overflow with a love that puts other people and their needs first. It’s the kind of love that is willing to care for someone no matter the cost. It’s the love that Jesus shows us.

Why would he pray that we overflow with that kind of love? The problem is we often overflow with other kinds of attitudes—selfish thinking, hurtful behaviors, unloving hearts, “me first” attitudes—and that leaves a big mess. Angry words. Hurt feelings. Broken friendships. Ruined relationships.

So how can we overflow with love? It starts with Jesus. Jesus came into our world not because we overflowed with love, but because he did. Jesus set aside all his glory and power in heaven to become a human being like us. He gave up his life for a world full of people who failed to love. Jesus overflowed with so much love, it healed all our hurts and saved all our souls. His love overflows over you. Now you can overflow from inside with your Savior’s love for the people in your life and the people in your world to see!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- How would you describe Jesus' love for you?
- What is one way you can share Jesus' love with your family and friends?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- What does it mean to *overflow with love*?
- Why would we want to share the love of Jesus with the people in our lives?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- What does a life overflowing with Christ's love look like?
- How will a life overflowing with Christ's love look different to the people around us?

Closing Prayer:

Lord Jesus, help us bottle up any kind of selfish, sinful attitudes in us. Because you love us still, help us to overflow with your self-sacrificing love every day of our lives. Amen.