

Read: James 3:13-18

Living for the Lord

James 3:17

But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.

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

There was something very different about Kyle. He didn't act like the other kids at his school. Whenever there was an argument at recess during kickball, Kyle was the one who helped figure out a solution. After lunch, Kyle was the one who stayed longer and helped clean up the lunchroom. When a classmate was struggling with math, Kyle would spend his free time helping with the problems instead of playing on the classroom computer.

Kyle was different because he was a Christian. His parents, his pastor, his Sunday School teacher—they all taught him about Jesus and how much he has loved us. They also taught Kyle about how to show that kind of love to other people. Kyle was not trying to win any special awards or treats at school by being nice. He simply loved other people because he loved Jesus.

In the Bible verses for today, James tells us that this is the way all Christians can act when they have "wisdom that comes from heaven." This means Christians can make good choices that are God-pleasing when God is guiding them. When we make these God-pleasing choices, James says that we will have pure thoughts and words (not sinful or dirty). We will love peace (instead of arguing or fighting). We will be considerate and submissive as we put others before ourselves. We will be full of mercy and good fruit as we do good things in love, and we will be sincere (which means to be fair and genuinely kind).

That's a lot of things to think about and a lot of things to do! But not to worry! Jesus did all these things perfectly and forgives all your sins. He is the one who gives you the strength to live such a godly life. His love and his power are just what we need to help us do good things for others.

When we show this kind of love for other people—whether at school or on sports teams or at the store or anywhere—we will look different. We will stand out as people who live in love. And this is very important! Why? Well, when Christians stand out as different because we love other people, that points them to Jesus who loves other people. One Bible verse says this, "We love because he first loved us." Our great motivation is to love other people because God has shown us love first in Jesus. Now go out into the world and show love to others so that they can see the love of Jesus too!

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

- Why would Christians want to do nice and loving things for other people?
- Name two good things that you can do for other people that would make God happy.

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- What makes it challenging for us to show love to other people in the ways we heard described today?
- Identify a way that you can become a more loving person toward others.

Questions for Middle School and Above

- How would you show love to someone who tells you they don't believe in Jesus and thinks the Bible is dumb?
- Some people say that they are Christians, but they don't live like it or show it. Why is that dangerous both for them and their relationships with other people?

Closing Prayer:

Dear God, thank you for so loving the world that you sent your one and only Son. Fill me with your love so that I can show that same kind of love to other people. Amen.

Hymn: CW 484:1,3 – Brothers, Sisters, Let Us Gladly

Brothers, sisters, let us gladly
Give to God our all, our best—
Service hearty, thorough, honest,
With a living love impressed.
All our duty, all our striving,
All our time to him belong;
Praise him, then, with true devotion;
Come before him with a song.

Gracious Lord, accept our service
For the sake of Christ, your Son;
Lo, our hope abides now only
In the righteousness he won.
Bless and save us; help and guide us;
Watch to comfort and restore
Till in heav'n we rest rejoicing,
Praising you forevermore.