

Read: John 15:9-17

Love as Jesus Loved Us

John 15:12-13

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

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

Start this devotion with an exercise. Stand up, stretch your arms wide, and say, "Jesus loves me this much!" Your arms are indicating a large amount of love, as far as you can reach, fingertip to fingertip. You are also acting out what Jesus looked like when he hung on the cross, giving his life for you, for all people.

Let's sit down now and think about this.

Most of us would agree that giving up your life for someone is the greatest act of love. We hear stories of people who risk their lives for others. A firefighter who runs into a burning building. A nurse who cares for people during a pandemic. A soldier who goes to war. We call these people brave, and we appreciate them. Then there are those of us who have less daring lives: students, office workers, mechanics, waitresses, teachers, and other important but more "everyday" roles.

In today's word of God, Jesus said, "Love as I have loved you." But what does that look like? What if our lives don't involve anything as grand as giving up life for someone else?

If we think our everyday actions aren't important, that is Satan whispering a lie to us. He tries to convince us that "Love as Jesus loved" is something we say, not something we can actually do.

Is that true?

Stand up once again and stretch out your arms as wide as you can reach. As you look at the members of your family in this pose, what do you observe?

- Your arms are wide open and ready to embrace someone.
- Your heart is wide open and ready to receive love and give love.
- Your hands are not clenched but open and ready to serve.

This is the pose Jesus assumed for us—arms out, exposed to insults hurled at him yet open to receive all our sins. Jesus surrendered himself to that position because he loved us. Now that love of God that flowed through him gushes out to each of us!

What does it mean to love as Jesus loved? Give up stubborn poses. Open your arms wide for those around you. Offer your hands in service to others—wherever God has placed you. What you do—what Jesus does *through* you—is important!

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

- Finish this sentence: Jesus loved me so much that he...
- Give two ways you can show your love to two people in your family.

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Besides his life, recall two other things Jesus gave up when he agreed to be our Savior from sin.
- Give an example of a way you can give up something important to show love for someone else.

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Share an example of someone you admire who shows love to others the way Jesus showed love to us. How is that person a good role model?
- How can our acts of love and service to others lead to a conversation about Jesus' love for us?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Jesus, thank you for loving me enough to send your Son to save me from my sins. Help me to share this love with others not only through my words but also through my actions. Amen.

Hymn: CW 488:1,3 – Savior, Thy Dying Love

Savior, Thy dying love
Thou gavest me,
Nor should I aught withhold,
Dear Lord, from Thee:
In love my soul would bow,
My heart fulfill its vow,
Some off'ring bring Thee now,
Something for Thee.

Give me a faithful heart,
Likeness to Thee,
That each departing day
Henceforth may see
Some work of love begun,
Some deed of kindness done,
Some wand'rer sought and won,
Something for Thee.