

Read: Romans 13:1-10

Love Guides Our Life

Romans 13:8-10

Do not owe anyone anything except to love one another, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments—do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not covet (and if there is any other commandment)—are summed up in this statement: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does no harm to a neighbor, so love is the fulfillment of the law.

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

Google the question “What is love?” and you will get 11,240,000,000 results! You will find countless explanations in poems and music, in long descriptions and single-word answers.

Some people will tell you that love is a romantic feeling—all hearts, flowers, and valentines. Others will tell you love is the close connection between husband and wife or parent and child. They all describe love in some way, but are any of those really what love is?

God’s Word is the only place that tells of a different kind of love—a love that cares more about someone else than about yourself; a love that will sacrifice everything for the sake of someone else even if they do not deserve it; a love that guides our lives. Only one person has ever shown that kind of love. His name is Jesus.

Jesus alone has shown us such undeserving love. Too often, we disobey him and the people he places over us to care for us. We are more interested in what we want than what God wants. Too often, we fail to show love towards our family, friends, or classmates. We run away from God and his will so we can do what we want to do, even if it might harm us or others.

Still, Jesus loves us! Jesus loves us with a love like no other. It’s why he became a human being like us and obeyed God’s holy will for us. It’s why he suffered and died on a cross to forgive all our sins and give us life. In powerful love, he rose from the dead! Why? Not because we deserve his love, but because we *need* his love.

Love is not what is owed to you by others, but a daily debt owed by you to everyone: like our neighbors, our families, our classmates and teachers at school, our fellow believers at church, and all the people in our communities. Guided by that love, we encourage. We serve. We support. We follow Jesus. We love.

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 Younger Children

- How would you describe *love*?
- Ask a parent if they love you only when you are loveable or even when you are not so lovable? How does that reflect Jesus' love?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Explain this sentence: *Love your neighbor as yourself.*
- How is the love of Jesus different from other kinds of love?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- In verse 10, we read, "Love does no harm to a neighbor." Explain that phrase and why it is so important for us to remember that phrase right now.
- How does the self-sacrificing love of Jesus impact how you serve others at home? At school? At church? In our community?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Jesus, you have loved me even though I never deserved it. Thank you for loving me first. Guide my life with your love so I reflect your love to others. Amen.

Hymn: CW 304:3,7 – Jesus Sinners Does Receive

Sheep that from the fold did stray are not by the Lord forsaken;
Weary souls who lost their way are by Christ, the shepherd, taken
In his arms that they may live—Jesus sinners does receive.

Jesus sinners does receive. Even I have been forgiven.
And when I this earth must leave, I shall find an open heaven.
Dying, still to him I cleave—Jesus sinners does receive.