**The Greatest of These…**

**Love**

**Hebrews 10:24**

**And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds….**

**Brentwood Hills Church of Christ**

**Summer 2013**

**BRENTWOOD HILLS CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**Adult Education Committee**

**Mission Statement**

**The mission of the Brentwood Hills Church of Christ education program is to build up and equip the body of Christ by adding knowledge to our faith, hope, love, and unity for life in the Spirit and service in ministry by:**

**Promoting text-centered Bible study in an open and acceptant group environment, making plain the glory and Lordship of Jesus Christ;**

**Encouraging and inspiring individual spiritual growth through day-by-day personal devotion, Bible study, and prayer; and**

**Facilitating through Bible study together the creation of Christian relationships that focus on knowing and loving God, serving Him, and keeping his commandments.**

**The Greatest of These…**

**Love**

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**Lesson 1 The Greatest Gift - LOVE**

In our culture Love is widely used to describe a variety of feelings and actions toward people and things. We “Love” a restaurant, a pair of shoes, a movie, a car, our job, our spouse, our children, our church, our class, God, etc. Wow, that is a wide spectrum for one word. Obviously, I would expect that Love would mean something different in all of these contexts. I believe that due to the broad use of the word Love, the meaning is cheapened. Do you think that the Bible uses Love in the way that we often use Love? I believe that due to our cultures’ use of Love, it is difficult for us to understand and put into practice what the Bible means by Love. Love may be difficult to describe, but I bet we have no problem recognizing Love when it is put into action. Love always has an action tied to it. My goal is for us to gain a better understanding of the Bible’s description of Love but more importantly become better at putting biblical Love into action.

Love is the foundation of our Christianity. As Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 13 if I have miraculous gifts but don’t have Love I am nothing, if I have mountainous faith but don’t have Love I am nothing, if I do sacrificial acts of service or sacrifice my body but don’t have Love I gain nothing. Paul, wrote I Corinthians 13 to a group of Christians that had a difficult time practicing Love. Paul's description of Love in verses 4 through 7 is meant to show what practicing Love looks like. All of these actions can be practiced without Love, but do you truly Love someone if you do not practice these attributes of Love toward them? Some of these attributes of Love are more easily practiced than others. We are going to explore these descriptions of Love in the coming weeks in light of Jesus' teachings on Love.

Jesus was asked, "Which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" His reply was to **LOVE**. First we are to Love the Lord our God with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our mind. Second we are to Love our neighbor as our self. Matthew 22:34-40

**Divine examples of Love**

**John 3:16** For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

**Luke 3:21-22**  21 When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened 22 and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”

### John 10:17 The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again.

**All three of these passages show that Jesus showed his love for God by submitting to Him and obeying.**

**Demonstration of our Love for Jesus**

**John 14:21**  Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.”

**John 14:23**  Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.

**John 15:9-10**  9 “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love.

**All three of these passages emphasize that if we love God and Jesus we will obey and submit to Them.**

**Jesus' command to Love**

**John 13:34-35**  34 “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

**John 15:12-17**  12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command. 15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. 17 This is my command: Love each other.

**Luke 6:27-36**  27 “But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. 29 If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. 30 Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. 31 Do to others as you would have them do to you.32 “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. 33 And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. 34 And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. 35 But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. 36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

**Jesus commands us to Love one another. He also wants us to Love others in a way that is not natural for us. He wants us to show Love to those we would consider enemies.**

**Paul's description of LOVE**

**1 Corinthians 13:4-**7 4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

**In Class Discussion:**

1. In what ways do we see the Love of Christ as a perfect form of Love?
2. What characteristics of love separate our type of love from the Love Christ has for us?
3. When we say practice loving each other, how do we make the "practice" become real?

**Take Inventory:**

On a scale of one to ten, rate how loving you are:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

On a scale of one to ten, ask your spouse, children or someone close to you rate how loving you are:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What did you learn from the inventory and scripture?

**Weekly challenge to focus on and practice LOVE**

**Sunday- God's Love for Us**

**Romans 5:6-10**  6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates his own **love** for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him! 10 For if, while we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

**Challenge:** God loves us when we are powerless, unlovable and His enemy. How great it is that our God Loves us beyond measure. How can you better appreciate the depth of God’s Love? Focus on God’s Love for you. Think about the song- How Deep the Father’s Love. Write a note to God telling Him how much you appreciate His Love.

**Monday - Our Love for God**

**John 14:23-24**  23 Jesus replied, “Anyone who **loves** me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. 24 Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

**Challenge:** It sounds simple but at times it is so difficult to practice. If you Love Jesus you will obey his teaching. Pause for a moment and think about how well you obey Jesus’ teaching. Would your obedience be strong evidence of your love for Jesus and God? What can you do to strengthen your love for Jesus? Write down one thing that you want to focus on to deepen your love for Jesus and God.

**Tuesday- Our Love for our Family**

**1 John 3:11-15**  11 For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should **love** one another. 12 Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother’s were righteous. 13 Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters,[[a](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=I%20john%203:11-15&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-30593a" \o "See footnote a)] if the world hates you. 14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death. 15 Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.

**Challenge:** We all experience times that are difficult to practice love toward family members. This passage is telling in that our difficulty in practicing love has to do with dying to self. Focus on a family member that you find it difficult to love. Choose to serve them in love today. Write down what you did and the results.

**Wednesday- Our Love for our Friends**

**Proverbs 17:17**  A friend **loves** at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

**Challenge:** Isn’t it great to have a true friend! A true friend will love you with your faults and will help you through any situation. Focus on a friend and show them love. Write down what you did and the results. Thank God for the friendships that you have.

**Thursday- Our Love for our Neighbor**

**Romans 13:9-10** 9 The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not covet,” and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: “**Love** your neighbor as yourself.” 10 **Love** does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

**Challenge:** God commands us to love our neighbor as yourself and show them no harm. Examine your life with regard to how you treat others. Ask someone close to you to be honest and help you find areas that you could improve on how you treat others. Write down who you want to treat better and what you are going to do. Focus today on doing one thing to show them love.

**Friday- Our Love for our Enemies**

**Luke 6:27-36**  27 “But to you who are listening I say: **Love** your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. 29 If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. 30 Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. 31 Do to others as you would have them do to you. 32 “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. 33 And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. 34 And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. 35 But **love** your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. 36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

**Challenge:** This is one of the most challenging of Jesus’ commands. Love your enemy. Who would you consider to be your enemy? Who hates you or mistreats you? List those that come to your mind. Focus on ways that you can show them love. Pray for them. Choose one way to show them love and write it down. Put it into practice today. How was your experience?

**Saturday- Our Love for the Lost**

**2 Corinthians 5:14-21**  14 For Christ’s **love** compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. 15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.16 So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:[[a](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=II%20Corinthians%205:14-21&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-28895a" \o "See footnote a)] The old has gone, the new is here! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. 21 God made him who had no sin to be sinfor us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

**Challenge:** Like Paul are you compelled by Christ’s love to search for and love those that are lost? Name some individuals you are around daily that you are trying to reach and share Christ’s love? List ways you can show them love. Pray that God will give you opportunities and courage to love them. Write down your experience.

**Lesson 2 Love is Patient**

Love will inspire you to become a patient person. When you choose to be patient, you respond in a positive way to a negative situation. You are slow to anger. You choose to have a long fuse instead of a quick temper. Rather than being restless and demanding, love helps you settle down and begin extending mercy to those around you. Patience brings an internal calm during an external storm.

No one likes to be around an impatient person. It causes you to overreact in angry, foolish, and regrettable ways. The irony of anger toward a wrongful action is that it spawns new wrongs of its own. Anger almost never makes things better. In fact, it usually generates additional problems. But patience stops problems in their tracks. More than biting your lip, more than clapping a hand over your mouth, patience is a deep breath. It clears the air. It stops foolishness from whipping its scorpion tail all over the room. It is a choice to control your emotions rather than allowing your emotions to control you, and shows discretion instead of returning evil for evil. Patience is closely tied to forgiveness and mercy as seen in the following parable of Jesus.

**The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant**

**Matthew 18:21-35** 21 Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?” 22 Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. 23 “Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. 24 As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of goldwas brought to him. 25 Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. 26 “At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ 27 The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. 28 “But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded. 29 “His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’ 30 “But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. 31 When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened. 32 “Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. 33 Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ 34 In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. 35 “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

**In Class Discussion:**

**1.** What are the reasons that can make having patience difficult?

**2.** What are the limits for the command of being patient with others?

**3.** What are qualities in a person foster being patient?

**Take Inventory:**

On a scale of one to ten, rate how patient you are:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

On a scale of one to ten, ask your spouse, children or someone close to you rate how patient you are:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What did you learn from the inventory and scripture?

**Weekly challenge to focus on and practice LOVE through patience.**

**Sunday – God’s Patience toward us**

**2 Peter 3:9** The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is **patient** with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

**Challenge:** Prior to this passage Peter talks about the judgment day. He points out that the judgment day will be coming as God promises. God’s Love for us is so vast that he wants us to have every opportunity to come into a relationship with Him. God is patient with us showing us mercy and forgiveness. Focus on God’s patience toward you even when you were undeserving like the servant in the parable. Think about how clean you felt the day you were baptized with your sins forgiven and starting a new life. Write a note to God thanking him for his patience toward you.

**Monday – Our Patience toward God**

### James 5:7 Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord’s coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains.

**Challenge:** James is encouraging his readers to be patient in suffering. Just like the farmer cannot change the weather but is dependent on God…Christians are to be patient and dependent on God. In what circumstance do you find that it is difficult to be patient with God? Thank God for always being there to support you in times of trial.

**Tuesday – Our Patience toward family**

### Proverbs 15:18 A hot-tempered person stirs up conflict, but the one who is patient calms a quarrel.

**Challenge:** As sure as a lack of patience will turn your home into a war zone, the practice of patience will foster peace and quiet. What was the circumstance around the last time that you lost your patience with a family member? Resolve to not rush to judgment but listen to what the other person is saying next time you are in that circumstance. Pray to God that he will grant you the patience to discuss the topic in love. Talk to that family member about that circumstance. How did it work out?

**Wednesday – Our Patience toward friends**

### Ephesians 4:2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

**Challenge:** A true friend is patient. Write down when you had your patience tried by a friend. Were you disappointed or hurt by your friend? Focus on being humble and gentle with your friend showing them mercy and forgiveness.

**Thursday – Our Patience toward our neighbor**

**Proverbs 14:29** Whoever is **patient** has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly.

**Challenge:** As this scripture states, understanding your neighbors position helps you be patient with them. Listen to your neighbor and try to understand them. Your challenge today is to be a good listener. Write down the circumstance and how you performed.

**Friday – Our Patience toward our enemies**

### Proverbs 16:32 Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city.

**Challenge:** This is one of the hardest ones! How do you be self-controlled with your enemy? As this proverb states you are better than a warrior that takes a whole city if you can do this one. God is the only one that can give you the strength to deal with being patient with your enemy. Practice self control with someone that you have a hard time getting along with. You are showing them the love of God. Write about your experience.

**Saturday – Our Patience toward the lost**

### Romans 12:11-13 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. 12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. 13 Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

**Challenge:** Paul encourages the Romans to be patient in affliction and to share with those in need and practice hospitality. Write down the name of someone that you want to influence for God. What is a way that you can share with them or practice hospitality? Pray for God to give you the patience to minister to them.

**Lesson 3 Love is Kind**

Kindness is love in action. If patience is how love reacts in order to minimize a negative circumstance, kindness is how love acts to maximize a positive circumstance. Patience avoids a problem; kindness creates a blessing. One is preventive, the other proactive. These two sides of love are the cornerstones on which many of the other attributes we will discuss are built.

Love makes you kind. And kindness makes you likeable. When you’re kind, people want to be around you. They see you as being good to them and good for them. The following parable shows that kindness involves a tender heart, helpfulness, willingness and initiative. The Samaritan had a tender heart toward the injured traveler that motivated him to help meet the needs of the moment. The Samaritan’s love for the injured traveler inspired him to be willing to help and show initiative to be merciful.

### The Parable of the Good Samaritan

### Luke 10:25-37 25 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” 26 “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?” 27 He answered, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.28 “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”29 But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”30 In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. 31 A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. 32 So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’36 “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”37 The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

**In Class Discussion:**

**1.** What appears to be the motivation for the questions from the expert in the law?

**2.** Do you think that Jesus’ parable was convicting for the expert in the law? Why?

**3.** What are reasons that people give that they have passed up opportunities to practice kindness?

**4.** Have you ever struggled with an opportunity to practice kindness?

**Take Inventory:**

On a scale of one to ten, rate how kind you are:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

On a scale of one to ten, ask your spouse, children or someone close to you rate how kind you are:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What did you learn from the inventory and scripture?

**Weekly challenge to focus on and practice LOVE through kindness.**

**Sunday – God’s Kindness toward us**

### Ephesians 2:1-10 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. 4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. 6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

**Challenge:** Paul states that when we were by nature deserving of wrath, God showed his great love for us expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. How have you seen God’s kindness toward you lately? Write a note to God thanking him for his loving kindness and mercy.

**Monday – Our response to God’s Kindness**

### Romans 2: 2-4 2 Now we know that God’s judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. 3 So when you, a mere human being, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God’s judgment? 4 Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God’s kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?

**Challenge:** How have you rejected or shown contempt for God’s kindness? As Paul reminds the Romans, God’s kindness is intended to lead us to repentance. How does God’s kindness lead you to repentance?

**Tuesday – Our Kindness toward family**

### Colossians 3:12 Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

**Challenge:** It is easy to take for granted those that we live with and neglect to show them kindness. Paul encourages the Colossians to clothe themselves with kindness. They are to wear kindness all the time. Who have you found difficult to show kindness in your family? Perform one act of kindness for that person. Write down what you did and how it went. Look for more ways to perform acts of kindness.

**Wednesday – Our Kindness toward friends**

### Proverbs 12:25 Anxiety weighs down the heart, but a kind word cheers it up.

**Challenge:** A true friend will show you kindness when you are down. Look for a way to cheer up a friend. Write down what you did and how it went.

**Thursday – Our Kindness toward our neighbor**

### Ephesians 4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

**Challenge:** God was compassionate toward us forgiving us. Pay it forward by being kind and compassionate to someone else. Practice an act of kindness for your neighbor. Write down what you did and how it went.

**Friday – Our Kindness toward our enemies**

### 1 Corinthians 4:12-13 12 We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; 13 when we are slandered, we answer kindly. We have become the scum of the earth, the garbage of the world—right up to this moment.

**Challenge:** Paul tells the Corinthians that following Jesus makes us a target to be mistreated. When mistreated we are to act kindly rather than react in the normal human manner. Find someone that it seems unnatural to show kindness and perform an act of kindness. Write down what you did and how it went.

**Saturday – Our Kindness toward the lost**

### 2 Timothy 2:24-26 24 And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. 25 Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, 26 and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.

**Challenge:** Paul instructs Timothy as the Lord’s servant that he must be kind to everyone, able to teach and not resentful. It is difficult to not be resentful and kind if we are not accepted. Write down the name of someone that you want to influence for Christ. Pray to God that you will be accepted. Practice an act of kindness toward them. Write down what you did and how it went.

**Lesson 4 Love does not Envy, Love does not Boast**

### When we are envious of others’ blessings, we cannot take joy in their abundance, and we cannot truly love them or what our Father is doing in their lives. When we crave what someone else has rather than being grateful for what God has given, we hurt ourselves. Instead of envying others, we are called to love them. True love—God’s love—rejoices when others are blessed. There is no room for envy. Love does not seek to benefit itself and it is content with what it has, because its focus is on meeting the needs of the loved one. Likewise, love will not allow us to be boastful. Those who manifest godly love do not make their own achievements into idols, and they do not build up their self-esteem at the expense of service to others. The reason that love does not boast is simple: love is focused on the loved one, not on oneself. A braggart is full of himself, magnifying his own accomplishments and is too occupied with self-aggrandizement to notice others. Love turns the perspective outward. A person with God’s type of love will magnify others, focus on their needs, and offer help with no thought of repayment or recognition. When someone says, “Look at how great I am!” it’s braggadocio talking, not love. The following situation and parable focus on people that are envious and boastful rather than being thankful, content, and focused on the blessings of others.

### The Parable of the Rich Fool

### Luke 12:13-21 13 Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”14 Jesus replied, “Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?” 15 Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.”16 And he told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. 17 He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’18 “Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. 19 And I’ll say to myself, “You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.”’20 “But God said

### to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’21 “This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.”

**In Class Discussion:**

**1.** How are envy and boasting related?

**2.** What do you believe was the downfall of the Rich Fool? Why?

**3.** What keeps a person grounded so that they do not envy or boast?

**4.** How do you struggle with the things that you have been blessed?

**Take Inventory:**

On a scale of one to ten, rate your lack of envy and boasting:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

On a scale of one to ten, ask your spouse, children or someone close to you rate your lack of envy and boasting:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What did you learn from the inventory and scripture?

**Weekly challenge to focus on and practice LOVE through lack of envy and boasting but being thankful, content and blessing others.**

**Sunday- God's love expressed in focusing blessings toward us**

### Ephesians 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

**Challenge:** It is amazing that the creator of everything cares for me. Not only does he care for me, He blesses me with every spiritual blessing in Christ so that I can have contentment and power to focus on loving others. Write a note to God telling Him what blessings give you contentment and power to love others. Thank Him for these blessings.

**Monday - Our lack of envy and boasting toward God**

### Genesis 3:4-5 “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. 5 “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

**Challenge:** Adam and Eve envied God and thought more of themselves than God. They did not love God enough to obey Him. How have you envied God? List some things you can do to show God that you love Him and focus on practicing one of those things today.

**Tuesday- Our lack of envy and boasting toward our Family**

### Galatians 5:22-26 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

**Challenge:** Paul contrasts the evidences of the Spirit with conceit, provoking and envy. Have you ever experienced conceit, provoking and envy in your relationships with family? You cannot control others, but you can control yourself. What can you do to show love to those individuals and be thankful for their blessings? Ask God for the strength of His Spirit to be thankful, content and loving toward your family.

**Wednesday- Our lack of envy and boasting toward our Friends**

### 1 Peter 1:22-2:1 22 Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart. 23 For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. 24 For, “All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall,25 but the word of the Lord endures forever.” And this is the word that was preached to you.2 Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.

**Challenge:** Apparently, Peter's hearers had problems with malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander. His cure for these attitudes is to realize what has been done in Christ for them. Each of us are blessed beyond what we deserve. Peter challenges his hearers to have a sincere love for each other and love one another deeply from the heart since they have been born again. Sincerely, thank God for your friends and the blessings that he bestows on them.

**Thursday- Our lack of envy and boasting toward our Neighbor**

### James 3:13-16 13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. 14 But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. 15 Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. 16 For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

**Challenge:** James points out that true wisdom is shown by a good life and deeds done in humility. He contrasts true wisdom with earthly wisdom exhibited by bitter envy and selfish ambition. Focusing on others and serving them helps our hearts to keep from envying and boasting. List something that you can do for your neighbor in humility to practice this aspect of love. Write what you did and how it affected you.

**Friday- Our lack of envy and boasting toward our Enemies**

### Proverbs 23:17 Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always be zealous for the fear of the Lord.

**Challenge:** This Proverb focuses on our heart being zealous for the fear of the Lord. How do we guard against envy by being zealous for the fear of the Lord?

**Saturday- Our lack of envy and boasting toward the Lost**

### Titus 3:3-7 3 At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. 4 But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

**Challenge:** Think of someone you know who is not a follower of Christ that is very blessed. Would you trade what you have in Christ for their material blessings? Perspective is a great thing. Thank God for the love he has shown us in salvation. Pray that God will open a door for you to share his blessing with this person. Be looking because I believe that the opportunity will be there if you have the courage to take it.

### Lesson 5 Love is not Proud

A prideful person is recognizable by their behavior. Pride is manifested in many ways. Prideful people convince themselves that they are always right. This makes it very difficult for them to admit when they are wrong, it makes it difficult for them to admit that they sin, and it makes it very difficult for them to apologize. A prideful person believes they are self-sufficient so they do not depend on God, their spouse, or anyone else. They have a “know-it-all” attitude and are conceited, exaggerating their importance by esteeming themselves above others. They criticize others, yet when criticized they become very defensive. They have a difficult time submitting to others and they are stubborn!

A prideful person may only struggle with one of those things or all of them, the critical thing is to understand how to define pride. Then we need to evaluate ourselves and see if we have pride in our hearts.

The best way to extinguish pride is to practice humility!

### Here are 5 ways to practice humility:

**1. Be Grateful** – Showing gratefulness is appreciating or valuing someone else! It takes the focus off of ourselves and gives attention to others.

**2. Be Teachable** – Pride will halt a person’s ability to grow. If we remain teachable we will expand our wisdom, our understanding, and our knowledge as we mature. You can do this in different ways including listening to opinions, receiving advice, and remaining open-minded.

**3. Be Respectful** – To give someone respect, you must esteem them higher than yourself. You can also show respect through submission and trust.

**4. Be Understanding** – Take into account other perspectives, give others time to share opinions, and convince yourself you do not know-it-all! Coat your heart in compassion any time you enter into conversation.

**5. Be Willing** – A person with humility is always willing! Be a person willing to help others, love others, and serve others. Be willing to apologize often, be willing to compromise, be willing to show love extravagantly, be willing to do what you think and be willing to forgive

### The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector –

### Luke 18:9-14 9 To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: 10 “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’13 “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’14 “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

**In Class Discussion:**

1. How does the Pharisee describe himself? Is his description accurate? Why?
2. What is the Christian’s definition of proud and humble and how does it differ from the World’s?
3. Describe someone who impresses you as humble. What attracts you to them?
4. The World values high self-esteem. How does this conflict from the Christian World view?
5. Jesus makes a statement about being exalted and humbled at the end of the passage. What do you think he is talking about?

**Take Inventory:**

On a scale of one to ten, rate your lack of pride:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

On a scale of one to ten, ask your spouse, children or someone close to you rate your lack of pride:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What did you learn from the inventory and scripture?

**Weekly challenge to focus on and practice LOVE through lack of pride but humility.**

**Sunday- God's love toward us through humility**

### Matthew 11:28-30 28 “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

**Challenge:** We worship a God that is humble in heart. He loves us enough to humble Himself to save us and to show us that true love involves sacrifice. How great is our God! He humbles Himself and shows us how to love. How has God shown you lately that he loves you? Thank God for His love.

**Monday - Our lack of pride toward God**

**James 4:4-10** 4 You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. 5 Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us? 6 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.”7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

**Challenge:** James is writing to prideful people toward God. If they really love God, they will submit to God and come near to Him. If they humble themselves before the Lord he will lift them up. Do something today that shows God today you are submitting to Him. How has he lifted you up?

**Tuesday- Our lack of pride toward our Family**

### Ephesians 4:2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

**Challenge:** Paul doesn't tell the Ephesians to be somewhat humble but he tells them to be completely humble. It doesn't sound like there is much room for pride. Write down a task that has no pride in it that you can do for someone in your family. Show your love by doing it for them.

**Wednesday- Our lack of pride toward our Friends**

### 1 Peter 3:8-9 8 Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. 9 Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

**Challenge:** Peter points that we are called to be different than the world. By Jesus' example and sacrifice we are called to be compassionate, humble and repay evil with blessing. Write down something that you can humbly do for a friend that shows you are following Jesus' example of being humble and serving. Show your love to your friend by putting it into action.

**Thursday- Our lack of pride toward our Neighbor**

### Luke 14:7-11 7 When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honor at the table, he told them this parable: 8 “When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. 9 If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, ‘Give this person your seat.’ Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. 10 But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, ‘Friend, move up to a better place.’ Then you will be honored in the presence of all the other guests. 11 For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

**Challenge:** Jesus tells this parable to illustrate that God expects us to be humble in our actions to others. We have two choices: We can exalt ourselves and God will humble us or we can humble ourselves and God will exalt us. Show love to your neighbor today by serving them in humility. What did you do?

**Friday- Our lack of pride toward our Enemies**

### Romans 12:15-17 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. 17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone.

**Challenge:** Paul points out that we are not to be prideful or conceited toward others and we are not to repay anyone evil for evil. Our love for God demands that we are to be an example of right behavior to the world even when wronged. Do you struggle with practicing this aspect of love? I do. My sense of right and wrong and my stubborn pride get in the way of loving someone when I have been wronged. Think of someone you have difficulty loving that has wronged you. Write down how God would want you to behave around this person and something you can do for them in humble service. Pray that God will give you the strength to have the right attitude and response if you are rejected or wronged in this service. How did it go?

**Saturday- Our lack of pride toward the Lost**

### 2 Corinthians 12:20-21 20 For I am afraid that when I come I may not find you as I want you to be, and you may not find me as you want me to be. I fear that there may be discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, slander, gossip, arrogance and disorder. 21 I am afraid that when I come again my God will humble me before you, and I will be grieved over many who have sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual sin and debauchery in which they have indulged.

**Challenge:** Does God humble you, and are you grieved over the sins of those around you? Paul stood up for right behavior but he balances that with the humble love for those living in sin. List something you can do to serve those around you that do not know the love of Jesus. Do something for one person today.

### Lesson 6 Love is not Rude

### Nothing irritates others as quickly as being rude. Rudeness is unnecessarily saying or doing things that are unpleasant for another person to be around. To be rude is to act unbecoming, embarrassing, or irritating. This could be a foul mouth, poor table manners, or a habit of making sarcastic quips. However you look at it, no one enjoys being around a rude person. Rude behavior may seem insignificant to the person doing it, but it's unpleasant to those on the receiving end. The contrast to being rude is being polite. Love does not behave gracelessly or dishonorably. Love is considerate of others. In the instance of Jesus being anointed by a sinful woman, we see the rude behavior of the Pharisee contrasted with considerate behavior of Jesus.

### Jesus Anointed by a Sinful Woman

### Luke 7:36-50 36 When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee’s house and reclined at the table. 37 A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee’s house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. 38 As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. 39 When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner.”40 Jesus answered him, “Simon, I have something to tell you.” “Tell me, teacher,” he said.41 “Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?”43 Simon replied, “I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven.” “You have judged correctly,” Jesus said.44 Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. 45 You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. 46 You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. 47 Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.”48 Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.”49 The other guests began to say among themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?”50 Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

**In Class Discussion:**

1. What are reasons people behave rudely?
2. What was the rude behavior exhibited by Simon the Pharisee?
3. What do you think was at the heart of Simon acting rudely?
4. How did Jesus react to Simon?
5. How do you guard yourself from being rude?

**Take Inventory:**

On a scale of one to ten, rate your lack of being rude:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

On a scale of one to ten, ask your spouse, children or someone close to you rate your lack of being rude:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What did you learn from the inventory and scripture?

**Weekly challenge to focus on and practice LOVE through lack of being rude but being polite, gracious and considerate.**

**Sunday- God's graciousness toward us**

### Psalm 86:15 But you, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.

**Challenge:** We serve a compassionate and gracious God. How do you see God's compassionate, gracious love in your life? Thank God for showing you His gracious love.

**Monday - Our lack of being rude (acting dishonorably) toward God**

### Psalm 119:58 I have sought your face with all my heart; be gracious to me according to your promise.

**Challenge:** Do you seek God's face with all your heart? In Psalms 119:57-64 the Psalmist further describes how he seeks God's face by obeying His words, turning his steps to God's statutes, and obeying God's commands. Write down something that you can do to show your love to God by obeying him. Put your love for God into action.

**Tuesday- Our lack of being rude toward our Family**

### 1 Peter 3:7 Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

**Challenge:** Peter is writing to Husbands to be considerate and respectful to their wives. This applies to all family members. We should always be polite, gracious and considerate with our family members. Do you think that your prayers are hindered because of the way you treat your family members? Make it a point to be polite to you family members today. Was it easy or difficult? What happened?

**Wednesday- Our lack of being rude toward our Friends**

### Proverbs 16:24 Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.

**Challenge:** We have all needed gracious words from a friend to mend our soul and heal our bones. Show love to a friend by offering gracious words. Write down what you did and how it went.

**Thursday- Our lack of being rude toward our Neighbor**

### Titus 3:1-2 3 Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, 2 to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and always to be gentle toward everyone.

**Challenge:** Paul tells Titus to remind the people to be considerate and always to be gentle toward everyone. Write down something considerate that you could do for your neighbor. Practice being considerate toward your neighbor.

**Friday- Our lack of being rude toward our Enemies**

### Proverbs 25:21-22 21 If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. 22 In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the Lord will reward you.

**Challenge:** God expects us to be gracious to our enemies. God expects us to follow his example of offering himself to his enemies. We were his enemies and he offered himself to us and it changed us. How better to change someone's heart. The scary part is we have a very good chance of being crucified. Pray to God for his Spirit to give you courage. Write down the name of an enemy that you are going to be gracious to and what you intend to do. How did it go?

**Saturday- Our lack of being rude toward the Lost**

### 1 Peter 3:15 But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect

**Challenge:** In reaching out to the lost we are given a reason for our hope but do it with gentleness and respect. What is your reason for the hope that you have? We will influence others for Christ as Christians. The question is will it be for good or bad. Pray that God will give you the courage and strength to be an example of love to someone that is lost by being gentle and showing respect to them. Think of someone to share your hope with and then do it.

### Lesson 7 Love is not Self-seeking

### We live in a world that is enamored with "self." The culture around us teaches us to focus on our appearance, feelings, and personal desires as the top priority. The goal, it seems, is to chase the highest level of happiness possible. The danger from this kind of thinking, however, becomes painfully apparent in any relationship. If there were ever a word that basically means the opposite of love it is selfishness. Unfortunately it is something that is ingrained into every person from birth. You can see it in the way young children act, and often in the way adults mistreat one another. Almost every sinful action ever committed can be traced back to a selfish motive. It is a trait we hate in other people but justify in ourselves. Why do we have such low standards for ourselves but high expectations for others? The answer is a painful pill to swallow. We are all selfish. Jesus provides the example of serving in love and not being self-seeking by washing the disciple’s feet.

### Jesus Washes His Disciples’ Feet

### John 13:1-17 It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.2 The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. 3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; 4 so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. 5 After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?”7 Jesus replied, “You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.”8 “No,” said Peter, “you shall never wash my feet.” Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.”9 “Then, Lord,” Simon Peter replied, “not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!”10 Jesus answered, “Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.” 11 For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.12 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. 13 “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. 16 Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. 17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

**In Class Discussion:**

1. What do you think the disciples understood about what Jesus did?
2. When do you think they realized the full implications of what Jesus did?
3. What is the most selfless relationship that you have experienced? Why do you think of this relationship in this way?
4. How has that relationship changed you?
5. What have you found to be the best motivator to be selfless?

**Take Inventory:**

On a scale of one to ten, rate your lack of selfishness:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

On a scale of one to ten, ask your spouse, children or someone close to you rate your lack of selfishness:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What did you learn from the inventory and scripture?

**Weekly challenge to focus on and practice LOVE through being humble and not selfish.**

**Sunday- God's humility toward us**

### Philippians 2:5-8 5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

**Challenge:** It blows my mind that the creator of EVERYTHING loves me enough that he would humble himself to make it possible to save a sinner like me. He is all powerful yet he allowed himself to be persecuted and endured immense suffering because he loved me. If that does not make you feel precious and loved and grateful and blessed, I do not know what will! Take time today to consider what Jesus voluntarily did for you by humbling himself. You may want to read one of the Gospel accounts of his trial and crucifixion or Isaiah 53. What about Jesus humbling himself moves you the most? Write a thank you not to Jesus. Now that your love battery has been recharged, as Paul says have the same mindset toward one another.

**Monday - Our lack of selfishness toward God**

### Zephaniah 2:3 Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land, you who do what he commands. Seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you will be sheltered on the day of the Lord’s anger.

**Challenge:** Zephaniah points out that humility is directly tied to obedience. Jesus is our example of humility toward God. Jesus emptied himself and became obedient to death. You cannot be selfish and obedient to God at the same time. What is something selfish that you can empty out of your life so that your love for God can be stronger? Practice not being selfish toward God by empting yourself.

**Tuesday- Our lack of selfishness toward our Family**

### Philippians 2:1-4 2 Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

**Challenge:** We are to value others above ourselves and look not to our own interests but to the interests of others. List something that you can do for a family member that will allow you to practice this aspect of love. Now do it.

**Wednesday- Our lack of selfishness toward our Friends**

### Colossians 3:12-14 12 Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

**Challenge:** Paul encourages the Colossians to clothe themselves with humility and put on love. These virtues are to be as evident as the clothes that we wear. What kind of “clothes” would others say you wear? Would your friends say that being humble and selfless are part of your wardrobe? Write down how you could put on humility and serve a friend today and do it.

**Thursday- Our lack of selfishness toward our Neighbor**

### Romans 15:1-2 We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. 2 Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up.

**Challenge:** In this context Paul is concerned with the Romans' influence on their neighbors and not causing them to stumble. Two things that Paul mentions in Chapter 14 are eating meat and drinking wine. Is there anything in your life that when viewed by your neighbor would cause them to stumble? What is it? Is it something you have to do or is it something that you do to please yourself? Show love to your neighbor by building them up and not causing them to stumble with your actions.

**Friday- Our lack of selfishness toward our Enemies**

### Matthew 5:43-45 43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ 44 But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

**Challenge:** How easy it is to react to those that treat us wrong. Jesus challenges to not act selfishly but to love our enemies and pray for them. We will be identified as children of our Father in heaven if we love our enemies. I am ashamed to say that there have been far too many times that my actions have not identified me as a child of God. How about you? Prepare yourself for the next difficult encounter. Write down what you will say and how you will act. Pray to God that he will help you control your emotions and that he will give you the strength to act like his loving child.

**Saturday- Our lack of selfishness toward the Lost**

### 2 Corinthians 4:5 For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake.

**Challenge:** Have you like Paul become a servant to those around you so that you might win them for Christ? Write down how can you serve someone that you want to influence for Christ. Put it into practice. How did it go?

### Lesson 8 Love is not easily Angered, Love keeps no record of Wrongs

### An angry person is one who is filled with anger because of some perceived injustice, which they believe in their hearts, was perpetrated on them. Very often it has to do with something that took place years ago. Because they have not been able to resolve that sense of injustice they carry it with them, and it lurks just under the surface waiting to be triggered by the slightest provocation. They believe in their hearts that they got a raw deal. These people become unapproachable and incapable of having a healthy loving relationship. If you are an angry person you do not have the ability to love. It's impossible. If you want to love you need to resolve the anger issue. Identify it. Bring it into the light where the blood of Jesus is available to bring forgiveness, healing, cleansing and new hope, (1 John 1:7,8). Only then can you begin to receive God's love for yourself and then have it to give to others

Do you sometimes feel like others have a file cabinet hidden away somewhere with files filled with all the things you did wrong? Whenever there is an argument, or you do something wrong, out comes that list of offenses -half of which you already forgot? How will you ever live down the past? The only way the situation can really change is for others to burn up those files and throw out the file cabinet. Then there will be no record of wrongs to keep bringing us back when we want to move forward as a new creation. Love is burning the files and throwing out the file cabinet. The following instance in Jesus' life shows his love for Peter. Jesus was not angry with Peter and he kept no record of Peter's wrongs.

### Jesus and the Miraculous Catch of Fish

### John 21:1-19 Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee. It happened this way: 2 Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. 3 “I’m going out to fish,” Simon Peter told them, and they said, “We’ll go with you.” So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. 4 Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. 5 He called out to them, “Friends, haven’t you any fish?” “No,” they answered. 6 He said, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.” When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. 7 Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, “It is the Lord,” he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. 8 The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards. 9 When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread. 10 Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you have just caught.” 11 So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. 12 Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” None of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. 13 Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. 14 This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

### Jesus Reinstates Peter

15 When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.” 16 Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.” 17 The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my sheep. 18 Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.” 19 Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, “Follow me!”

**In Class Discussion:**

1. What was Peter's reaction when he realized it was Jesus? If you were in Peter's place how would you have reacted after denying Jesus?
2. How did Jesus show love to Peter? If you were in Jesus' place how would you have reacted to Peter when you saw him?
3. Which do you find to be more difficult, not being easily angered or not keeping record of wrongs? Why?

**Take Inventory:**

On a scale of one to ten, rate your lack of anger and keeping record of wrongs:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

On a scale of one to ten, ask your spouse, children or someone close to you rate your lack of anger and keeping record of wrongs:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What did you learn from the inventory and scripture?

**Weekly challenge to focus on and practice LOVE through lack of anger and not keeping record of wrongs.**

**Sunday- God's lack of anger and keeping record of wrongs**

### Psalm 103:8-12 8 The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. 9 He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; 10 he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. 11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; 12 as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

**Challenge:** Read this passage three times. What does it say about God and anger and keeping record of wrongs? When I read this passage I am reminded that God's love is immeasurable for those who fear him and he will wipe our slate clean when we sin. Isn't it great to have a clean slate? Write a thank you note to God for your clean slate.

**Monday - Our lack of anger and keeping record of wrongs toward God**

### Philippians 4:12-13 12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

**Challenge:** God's love for Paul gave him strength to be content in any and every situation. Paul was not angry with God for the things he suffered. Paul put his suffering in perspective compared to what God had done for him and he responded in love and service. Write down some of the things you have suffered. Put them in perspective to what God has done for you. How have you responded?

**Tuesday- Our lack of anger and keeping record of wrongs toward our Family**

### Genesis 50:17 ‘This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.’ Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father.” When their message came to him, Joseph wept.

**Challenge:** Joseph loved his family and he forgave his brothers for mistreating him. Would you have had the same response if you were in his sandals? Think of times you have been hurt by family members. Was being sold into slavery and lying about you being dead on your list? It wasn't on my list either. My list seems pretty insignificant but even if it wasn't, God expects me to have the same attitude that Joseph had. Are you still angry about being mistreated or have you forgiven your family members? Loving your family means that you forgive them. Make an effort to mend fences today. Ask God for strength to forgive your family for anything in the past and prepare your heart to forgive them in the future.

**Wednesday- Our lack of anger and keeping record of wrongs toward our Friends**

### Ephesians 4:31-32 31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. 32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

**Challenge:** When we are wronged by a friend it hurts us deeply and it is easy to become bitter. One of the things Paul identifies that the Ephesians are to get rid of is bitterness. I picture someone that is bitter as being angry and keeping record of wrongs. The bitter person drives down the highway of life looking in the rearview mirror rather than appreciating the journey and the blessings around them. Paul encourages the Ephesians to forgive each other when wronged and focus on the blessings we have in the forgiveness in Christ. Focus on God's forgiveness for you and let go of bitterness that you may have for someone that has wronged you.

**Thursday- Our lack of anger and keeping record of wrongs toward our Neighbor**

### Colossians 3:13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

**Challenge:** Nobody's perfect. Have you ever said that? If you have, you probably said it to defend something that you did. We acknowledge that we need forgiveness but sometimes when we are wronged it is more difficult to acknowledge that those who wrong us need our forgiveness. If we love our neighbor we will forgive them as the Lord forgave us. Pray that God will give you a forgiving heart toward your neighbor. Show love for your neighbor that has wronged you by demonstrating that you have forgiven them.

**Friday- Our lack of anger and keeping record of wrongs toward our Enemies**

### Colossians 3:7-8 7 You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8 But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.

**Challenge:** Our human natural response to someone that has committed a wrong against us is anger, rage, malice, slander, and possibly filthy language. Paul says that was our old life before Jesus. Remember Jesus is our example. Think about all he endured leading up to the cross. Jesus' response to being cursed, falsely accused, hated, beaten, nails driven into his hands and feet was forgive them for they know not what they do.

Who would you consider your enemy?

What have they done to you?

What will be your response?

**Saturday- Our lack of anger and keeping record of wrongs toward the Lost**

### Luke 15:1-2 15 Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. 2 But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

**Challenge:** When I picture the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, I think of someone that is angry and a record keeper because they do not have a true relationship with God. As Jesus pointed out, the Pharisees and teachers of the law were concerned with keeping rules and their love for sinners was not evident by their actions toward the lost Luke 11:37-52. Stop and evaluate your actions toward the lost. Do you share with the lost the love and forgiveness that you experience in your relationship with God? Are you gracious and supportive to help them experience God's forgiveness? Pray to God that you will have the love of Jesus in your heart for the lost as you minister to them. Practice showing love and forgiveness to someone that needs Jesus in their life.

### Lesson 9 Love does not Delight in Evil but Rejoices with the Truth

We don't usually think of ourselves as people who would delight in evil, but think about the last time you quietly gloated over someone else's misfortune, or just thought to yourself, "Gee, I'm glad it's not me." Did you delight in the fact that it was someone else’s tough luck? When someone made a mistake, and had to suffer the consequences of that mistake, were you supportive, or did the look on your face say, "I told you so!"? Love doesn't delight in evil. Love mourns over evil. It is saddened by sin. Love doesn't gloat. It hurts with the hurts of others.

### Isn't it interesting how Paul doesn't contrast evil with good in this passage, but instead he contrasts it with truth. On the one hand you have evil, and on the other, you have not good, but truth! That's because truth is good! "*But the truth of my situation isn't so good,"* you might say. I hear you. But let's first understand that no matter what your situation looks like, you're only seeing part of it. The truth of it goes beyond what you see. Truth has a Name. It's *Jesus!* He said, *"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life"* (John 14:6) Jesus is the truth of your situation. And to the extent that your situation is in His hands it's good, regardless of what you see! Please don't be one of those weird, normal people (talk about an oxymoron!) who are limited by physical reality. The Truth is that no matter what you see Jesus really is able to bring it to a good report. He really is able to do the impossible, to take our mess, and do something beautiful with it -if we'll only let him. That's why no matter where we are, we can rejoice with the Truth, -*with Jesus!* Love stays focused, not on our situation but on Jesus. He is the one who is able to do what we can't, who can provide what we need, who can lift us up when we're down, who can give us the love we need for each other -a love we just don't have in the natural world. The parable of the lost son shows us that love does not delight in evil but rejoices with truth.

### The Parable of the Lost Son

### Luke 15:11-32 11 Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. 12 The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them. 13 “Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. 14 After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. 16 He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. 17 “When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! 18 I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ 20 So he got up and went to his father. “But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. 21 “The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ 22 “But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. 24 For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate. 25 “Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. 27 ‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’ 28 “The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. 29 But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’ 31 “‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. 32 But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’”

**In Class Discussion:**

1. How did the main characters in this parable (father, younger son, older son) show love by not delighting in evil?
2. How did the main characters in this parable (father, younger son, older son) show love by rejoicing in truth?
3. How would you feel if you were the older brother?

**Take Inventory:**

On a scale of one to ten, rate your lack of delighting in evil but rejoicing in the truth:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

On a scale of one to ten, ask your spouse, children or someone close to you rate your lack of delighting in evil but rejoicing in the truth:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What did you learn from the inventory and scripture?

**Weekly challenge to focus on and practice LOVE through lack of delighting in evil but rejoicing in truth.**

**Sunday- God's lack of delighting in evil but rejoicing in truth toward us**

### Matthew 18:12-14 12 “What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? 13 And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. 14 In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish.

**Challenge:** God is our Father and like any parent he rejoices when his children follow his truth. Like any parent it pains God when we are rebellious and we choose to reject him. The creator of everything cares enough about us that he is on our side. He supports us and wants to help us follow His truth. When we mess up he does not turn his back on us but he peruses us. What touches your heart the most about God's love toward you. Write a note to God thanking him for the love that he has for you. Spend the day thinking about how special you are to God that he would love you.

**Monday - Our lack of delighting in evil but rejoicing in truth toward God**

### Psalm 1:1-2 1 Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, 2 but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night.

**Challenge:** The Psalmist recognizes that those that love God follow His truth and meditate on it continually. They rejoice in God's truth rather than delighting in evil. Do you show God your love for Him by following and meditating on His truth? What is your favorite passage? Spend 15 minutes reading and meditating on its truth. Thank God for the love he has shown you.

**Tuesday- Our lack of delighting in evil but rejoicing in truth toward our Family**

### Psalm 37:30-31 30 The mouths of the righteous utter wisdom, and their tongues speak what is just. 31 The law of their God is in their hearts; their feet do not slip.

**Challenge:** Loving your family means that you have their best interest in your heart. You speak truth to them. You protect them. You encourage them. You hurt for them when they are tempted and are influenced by evil. Show your love to a family member by encouraging them to faithfully follow God. Rejoice with them in the truth that God has for them.

**Wednesday- Our lack of delighting in evil but rejoicing in truth toward our Friends**

### James 1:26 Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless.

**Challenge:** Do you consider yourself to be religious? How good are you at keeping a tight rein on your tongue when talking about friends? Mamma said, "If you can't say anything nice don't say anything at all." Focus today on building a friend up and rejoice with them in their walk with God.

**Thursday- Our lack of delighting in evil but rejoicing in truth toward our Neighbor**

### Psalm 15:2-3 2 The one whose walk is blameless, who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from their heart; 3 whose tongue utters no slander, who does no wrong to a neighbor, and casts no slur on others;

**Challenge:** David points out that God's person doesn't slander or slur his neighbor. God's person speaks the truth from their heart? Do you have your neighbors back when others are talking about them? If you are God's person you do. Focus on showing love to your neighbor by encouraging them and standing up for them. Find something that is in line with God's truth in your neighbor and rejoice with them.

**Friday- Our lack of delighting in evil but rejoicing in truth toward our Enemies**

### 1 Peter 3:9-10 9 Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. 10 For, “Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech.

**Challenge:** Why is it so difficult to not repeat something negative that you have heard about someone? Especially, if it is someone that has hurt you. Peter reminds us that we should not repay evil with evil and we must keep our tongue from evil. I do not know about you, but the only way that I can do this one is through God's power. Pray to God that you will have the power to repay evil with blessing. Spend time thinking about situations that you wish you had handled differently. Plan for the next time that you may be in that situation so that you can show love to your enemy by blessing them.

**Saturday- Our lack of delighting in evil but rejoicing in truth toward the Lost**

### James 3:9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God’s likeness.

**Challenge:** James points out that everyone is made in God's image. Focus on reflecting God's image to someone that does not have a relationship Him. Love them by sharing God's love and truth with them. Be an example to them by treating all people as God's children made in His image.

**Lesson 10 Love always Protects**

If love always protects, and I love others, then it ought to be true that I always protect others. Not only when they are in physical danger -that's understood- but also from the danger of emotional injury as well. When I hear someone say something derogatory about others do I just "let it slide" or do I protect them so that people will know they dare not say one negative about them in my presence? Do I protect others from hurtful words? Do I protect them from my own hurtful words? Am I approachable? Is it emotionally safe to talk about anything with me, or is it a matter of “walking on eggshells”? Let's be honest. Could it be that I am the greatest source of emotional hurt in others life? If that's the case, then I guess I don't have a clue about what real love is -a love that always, *always* protects. If I'm not protecting others from my own hurtful words, then I'm really not loving them, regardless of what I would like to think. That's the gospel truth -the bottom line. The story of the woman caught in adultery is an example of the love Jesus had for others by protecting them.

**Woman caught in Adultery**

**John 8:1-11** 1 but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. 2 At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. 3 The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group 4 and said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. 5 In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” 6 They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. 7 When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” 8 Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. 9 At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. 10 Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” 11 “No one, sir,” she said. “Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”

**In Class Discussion:**

1. Explain how Jesus protects the woman physically, emotionally and spiritually.
2. Are there limits to protecting love?
3. Why is difficult to protect someone you don't love?
4. What do you believe was the impact of Jesus' protecting love on this woman?

**Take Inventory:**

On a scale of one to ten, rate your showing love through protecting:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

On a scale of one to ten, ask your spouse, children or someone close to you rate your showing love through protecting:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What did you learn from the inventory and scripture?

**Weekly challenge to focus on and practice LOVE through protecting.**

**Sunday- God's protection toward us**

### John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

**Challenge:** Have you thought about God loving you by giving you protection? God protects us from sin, death, eternal punishment and separation from Him. God demonstrates his protecting love by sacrificing His one and only Son so that we can have a relationship with Him. Have you accepted His love by believing in Him and following Him? What else does he protect you from? Thank God for his protection.

**Monday - Our showing love toward God through protection**

### James 1:27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

**Challenge:** Our love for God is shown how we treat others and protect/take care of them. Especially, those that are in need. Take a moment and write down the names of some people that you can show you love for God by taking care of them. Be God's hands and feet today and show his love through protecting and taking care of others.

**Tuesday- Our protection toward our Family**

### 1 Peter 4:8 Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

**Challenge:** Love is reluctant to drag a person into scandal in front of everybody else. It protects in the sense of being disposed to cover the ugliness rather than make sure everybody knows about it. Aren't you glad that you have family that loves you in spite of your faults? Thank someone in your family for showing you this protecting love. Thank God for your family. Show protecting love to a family member today.

**Wednesday- Our protection toward our Friends**

### 1 John 3:16 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.

**Challenge:** We love our friends by protecting them and being willing to sacrifice for them. Show a friend Jesus' love by protecting them. List specific things that you can do for a friend that show your protecting love for them. Do one thing today.

**Thursday- Our protection toward our Neighbor**

### Proverbs 10:12 Hatred stirs up conflict, but love covers over all wrongs.

**Challenge:** Hatred pulls out a magnifying glass and looks for faults but protecting love covers wrongs. Think about how to have protecting love toward your neighbor. Show love to your neighbor by being gracious to them and overlooking their faults.

**Friday- Our protection toward our Enemies**

### 1 Samuel 24:8-12 8 Then David went out of the cave and called out to Saul, “My lord the king!” When Saul looked behind him, David bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground. 9 He said to Saul, “Why do you listen when men say, ‘David is bent on harming you’? 10 This day you have seen with your own eyes how the Lord delivered you into my hands in the cave. Some urged me to kill you, but I spared you; I said, ‘I will not lay my hand on my lord, because he is the Lord’s anointed.’ 11 See, my father, look at this piece of your robe in my hand! I cut off the corner of your robe but did not kill you. See that there is nothing in my hand to indicate that I am guilty of wrongdoing or rebellion. I have not wronged you, but you are hunting me down to take my life. 12 May the Lord judge between you and me. And may the Lord avenge the wrongs you have done to me, but my hand will not touch you.

**Challenge:**  Is this what it looks like to love and protect your enemy? How did David protect his enemy? Do you have someone that you would consider an enemy? How can you show them love by protecting them? Ask for strength from God to show love to them.

**Saturday- Our protection toward the Lost**

### Luke 15:3-7 3 Then Jesus told them this parable: 4 “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? 5 And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders 6 and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ 7 I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

**Challenge:** Love will warn, and love will exhort and love will rebuke and love will discipline but love will cover... not expose. It is a beautiful characteristic of love. Love is genuine and it wants to help and protect others. Jesus tells the parable of the lost sheep to Pharisee's and teachers of the law that were bent on judging the lost rather than trying to save them. Is your love for the lost genuine? Do you want to help and protect the lost by sharing what they could have in Jesus? Choose someone that needs to know about Jesus and share with them how he has changed your life.

### Lesson 11 Love always Trusts

In the deep and private corridors of your heart, there is a room. It's called the Appreciation Room. It's where your thoughts go when you encounter positive and encouraging things about others. And every so often, you enjoy visiting this special place. On the walls are written kind words and phrases describing the good attributes of others. These may include characteristics like "honest" and "intelligent," or phrases like "diligent worker," "wonderful cook," or "beautiful eyes." They are things you have discovered about others that have embedded themselves in our memory. When you think about these things, your appreciation for others begins to increase.

Down another darker corridor of your heart lies the Depreciation Room, and unfortunately you visit there as well. On its walls are written the things that bother and irritate you about others. These things were placed there out of frustration, hurt feeling, and the disappointment of unmet expectations. This room is lined with the weaknesses and failures of others. Their bad habits, hurtful words, and poor decisions are written in large letters that cover the walls from one end to the other. If you stay in this room long enough, your love for others begins to die.

You may say, "The things in the Depreciation Room are true!" Yes, but so are the things in the Appreciation Room. Everyone fails and has areas that need growth. Everyone has unresolved issues, hurts and personal baggage. This is a sad aspect of being human. We have all sinned. But we have this unfortunate tendency to downplay our own negative attributes while putting others failures under a magnifying glass.

Love knows about the Depreciation room and does not live in denial that it exists. But love chooses not to live there. Love chooses to believe the best about people. It gives them the benefit of the doubt. It refuses to fill in the unknowns with negative assumptions. And when our worst hopes are proven to be true, love makes every effort to deal with them and move forward. As much as possible love focuses on the positive. The story of Jesus walking on the water is an example of love trusting.

### Jesus Walks on the Water

### Matthew 14:22-33 22 Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. 23 After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, 24 and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. 25 Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. 26 When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear. 27 But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” 28 “Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.” 29 “Come,” he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!” 31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?” 32 And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. 33 Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

**In Class Discussion:**

1. In what ways did Peter trust Jesus? In what ways did Jesus trust/believe in Peter?
2. How are love and trust related? Can you love someone and not trust them? Can you trust someone and not love them?
3. If you were in the boat with the other disciples how would you show your trust in Jesus?
4. What is the biggest obstacle to trusting and believing in others?

**Take Inventory:**

On a scale of one to ten, rate your trusting:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

On a scale of one to ten, ask your spouse, children or someone close to you rate your trusting:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What did you learn from the inventory and scripture?

**Weekly challenge to focus on and practice LOVE through trusting.**

**Sunday- God's trust toward us**

### Genesis 2:15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

**Challenge:** The Lord God put man in the Garden knowing that he would violate the trust God was placing in him. If God knows the hairs on our head and the sands on the shore, He knows our actions from before our conception. Yet He gives us free rein to make our own choices. Those times when you, or I, have violated God’s trust, did we think, “God knows, and forgives?” Or did we think, “Who’s to know? What’s it going to hurt?” Or did we think at all? Consider the times when you have violated a trust – have you been forgiven by God? By the offended party? Have you forgiven yourself? Have you restored your trust in yourself? God expects you to do so – to be humble, contrite, forgiving of yourself. (Consider Job’s response to God after God’s humbling of his faithful servant – Job 41:5-6)

**Monday - Our trust toward God**

### Psalm 37:3-4 3 Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. 4 Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

**Challenge:** Can we trust in the Lord and do good even when “good” is not happening to us? What better example can there be than Hosea? He did not marry Gomer then learn that she was a prostitute. God instructed Hosea to take an adulterous wife. Hosea went into the marriage knowing he could not trust his wife, but he went into the marriage trusting God. His pleasure came from serving God in his suffering, just as Paul’s was when he was in prison. Think of situations when you have trusted God to see you through. If you are here, if you are reading this, is it because He did in fact bring you to the other side of what may have seemed insurmountable?

**Tuesday- Our trust toward our Family**

### 1 Chronicles 22:11-13 11 “Now, my son, the Lord be with you, and may you have success and build the house of the Lord your God, as he said you would. 12 May the Lord give you discretion and understanding when he puts you in command over Israel, so that you may keep the law of the Lord your God. 13 Then you will have success if you are careful to observe the decrees and laws that the Lord gave Moses for Israel. Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged.

**Challenge:** As Christians, we are challenged to distinguish the voice of God from our own desires. Focus on times in your life when you might have rationalized what you wanted to do by searching for scripture to justify your actions. And think of those times when you have asked God to reveal His will to you. What was the difference in the end result when you “manufactured the answer” rather than when you opened your mind to hear God?

Apply this to your own family – to the proverbial “black sheep.” Can you trust/love/support that person because he/she is a part of who you are, regardless of their behavior?

**Wednesday- Our trust toward our Friends**

### Acts 15:37-38 37 Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, 38 but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work.

**Challenge:** Paul was going against the advice of his first supporter and greatest encourager. Yet he followed his own instinct and left John Mark. Was his motivation a backlash to “get back at John Mark?” Or did he feel that Barnabas’ “always seeing the bright side” might at times be a weakness? Or did Paul know that John Mark needed time for soul-searching and discipline? We would do well to ask ourselves the same questions about decisions we make that affect the lives of others….whose interest is being served?

**Thursday- Our trust toward our Neighbor**

### Luke 9:49-50 49 “Master,” said John, “we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we tried to stop him, because he is not one of us.” 50 “Do not stop him,” Jesus said, “for whoever is not against you is for you.”

**Challenge:** Can we as Christians afford to not trust fellow followers of Jesus? Their interpretation and practice may differ from ours, but their intent parallels our own. The percentage of believers is shrinking – we must be united in heart and spirit with those who share our conviction that Jesus is Lord. Focus on verse 50 above, and incorporate it into your life.

**Friday- Our trust toward our Enemies**

### Acts 9:27 But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus.

**Challenge:** Based on Paul’s reputation, Barnabas had earthly reason to stay away from him. But Barnabas put conventional wisdom aside and followed the directive of God. Perhaps similar challenges are met by the passerby who risks their life by pulling someone from a burning fire – natural instinct is to stay away, Godly instinct is to risk your own life for others. Pray that you will have the courage to serve in whatever capacity you are called to serve.

**Saturday- Our trust toward the Lost**

### 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 19 Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. 20 To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. 21 To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law), so as to win those not having the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. 23 I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

**Challenge:** Paul says that he meets people where they are. Do you hear him saying that he became their friend before he became their preacher? Can I become a friend to the lonely, the dirty, the atheist, the arrogant, the Muslim? Can I win them to Christ if I don’t?

### Lesson 12 Love always Hopes

The writer of Hebrews tells us that we have this hope, (the hope of His promises) as an anchor for the soul, (Heb 6:19a). We all need to be anchored in a firm and secure truth that will keep us steady through the uncertain times and stormy seasons in our relationships. Otherwise we may find ourselves adrift in a sea of confusion, discouragement and aimlessness. If we let go of the dream we had when we said, “I do“ we may find ourselves tossed on the seas of uncertainty and insecurity with an overriding fear that we may find ourselves one day washed up on a desert island all alone.

### But love always hopes. It’s always anchored in the promises of God. That is our anchor. That’s what will keep us steady and focused, not on the stormy seas, but on the calm beyond the horizon. God’s promises are still good. That’s why we can hope, and why that hope will not disappoint us if we will persevere. No matter how long the stormy night, the sun will still rise, and God’s promises are still good. That is the anchor for my soul. That’s why real love always hopes. The story of Lazarus is a story of love and hope.

### Jesus Comforts the Sisters of Lazarus

### John 11:17-44 17 On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. 18 Now Bethany was less than two miles[[a](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2011:17-44&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26542a)] from Jerusalem, 19 and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. 20 When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home. 21 “Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.” 23 Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” 24 Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” 25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; 26 and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?” 27 “Yes, Lord,” she replied, “I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.” 28 After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. “The Teacher is here,” she said, “and is asking for you.” 29 When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. 30 Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. 31 When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there. 32 When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” 33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. 34 “Where have you laid him?” he asked. “Come and see, Lord,” they replied. 35 Jesus wept. 36 Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” 37 But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

### Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead

38 Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. 39 “Take away the stone,” he said. “But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.” 40 Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?” 41 So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. 42 I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.” 43 When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” 44 The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

**In Class Discussion:**

1. In what did Mary and Martha place their hope and what did they hope for?
2. What is the difference in the way we use the word hope today and the hope that Mary and Martha had?
3. How are hope and trust related with regard to love?

**Take Inventory:**

On a scale of one to ten, rate your hope:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

On a scale of one to ten, ask your spouse, children or someone close to you rate your hope:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What did you learn from the inventory and scripture?

**Weekly challenge to focus on and practice LOVE through hope.**

**Sunday- God's hope toward us**

### Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

**Challenge:** God loves us and has plans for us if we choose to follow him. God loves us and eagerly waits for us to accept him. He is the father that waits and looks over the horizon to see if we are coming back to him. How blessed we are to have a father that never gives up on us and loves us. Take a moment to pray to God and thank him for never giving up on you.

**Monday - Our hope toward God**

### 1 Peter 1:3-6 3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, 5 who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.

**Challenge:** Our love for God is shown in the hope that we put in him. When times get to be the toughest is when our hope is tested. Think of a time when your hope has been tested. Name some ways that God has worked in your life during that trial. Thank God for protecting you.

**Tuesday- Our hope toward our Family**

### Proverbs 19:18 Discipline your children, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to their death.

**Challenge:** Our love and hope for our family is shown in the way we encourage them to be followers of God. This passage in proverbs is written to parents to point out that they should take an active role in helping their children realize the hope that God has for them. Do you take an active role in your family members (children, siblings, spouse etc) lives to help them realize the hope God has for them? Show a family member love by expressing your hope in them that they will be faithful followers of God.

**Wednesday- Our hope toward our Friends**

### 1 Thessalonians 1:3 We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Challenge:** Paul's love for the Thessalonians was inspired by the hope they have in Jesus. Your love for your friends is likely inspired by the hope they have in Jesus. Take time to notice the hope that your friends have in Jesus. Encourage your friends by telling them about the hope that you see in them.

**Thursday- Our hope toward our Neighbor**

### Romans 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Challenge:** Do you overflow with hope? Is the hope that you have in God through the Holy Spirit evident to your neighbor. Think about how you can encourage your neighbor to have the joy and peace that you have as you trust in God. Show them your love by sharing your hope.

**Friday- Our hope toward our Enemies**

### 1 Peter 3:13-16 13 Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? 14 But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.” 15 But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, 16 keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

**Challenge:**  Do you suffer for what is right? Pray that God will open a door for you to give the reason for the hope you have. Loving your enemy means that you share the hope that you have in Jesus.

**Saturday- Our hope toward the Lost**

### 1 Timothy 4:10 That is why we labor and strive, because we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all people, and especially of those who believe.

**Challenge:** Our love and hope for the lost is the same hope that we have. We put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all people.Pray that God will give an opportunity to share the hope that you have with someone that doesn't know God.

### Lesson 13 Love always Perseveres

### Of all things love dares to do, this is the ultimate. Though threatened, it keeps pursuing. Though challenged, it keeps moving forward. Though mistreated and rejected, it refuses to give up. If love is really love, it doesn't waffle when it's not received the way you want it to be. If love can be told to quit loving, then it's not really love. Love that is from God is unending, unstoppable. If the object of its affection doesn't choose to receive it, love keeps giving anyway. That's what Jesus' love is like. His disciples were nothing if not unpredictable. After their final Passover meal together, when Jesus told them they would all forsake Him before the night was over, Peter declared, "Even though all may fall away because of You, I will never fall away.... Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You (Matthew 26:33,35) All other disciples echoed the very same promise. But later that night, Jesus' inner circle of followers---Peter, James and John---would sleep through Christ's agony in the garden. On the way to Christ's crucifixion, Peter would deny Him three times in the courtyard. But at that precise moment, the Bible says Jesus "turned and looked" at him (Luke 22:61). His men had failed Him again within hours of their sworn promises. Yet he never stopped loving them.

### When you have done everything within your power to obey God, others may still forsake you just as Jesus' followers did to Him. But if that happens let it not be because you gave up or stopped loving them. No matter what they've done or how often they've done it, you choose to love them anyway. Though you've been far from steady in your treatment of them over the years, your days of being inconsistent in love are over. Love is consistent and persistent. Love does not go through the motions. The story of the rich man and Jesus is an example of someone that claimed to love but was unwilling to persevere and make the sacrifices.

### The Rich and the Kingdom of God

### Mark 10:17-31 17 As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” 18 “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. 19 You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.’” 20 “Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.” 21 Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” 22 At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth. 23 Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!” 24 The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.” 26 The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, “Who then can be saved?” 27 Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.” 28 Then Peter spoke up, “We have left everything to follow you!” 29 “Truly I tell you,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel 30 will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. 31 But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

**In Class Discussion:**

1. What are the evidences that this rich man loved God?
2. What do you believe it means that "Jesus looked at him and loved him."?
3. What was the one thing that the rich man lacked to be able to follow Jesus? Do you lack something to be able to follow Jesus?
4. What did Jesus mean when he said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God: all things are possible with God."?

**Take Inventory:**

On a scale of one to ten, rate your showing love in perseverance:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

On a scale of one to ten, ask your spouse, children or someone close to you rate your showing love in perseverance:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What did you learn from the inventory and scripture?

**Weekly challenge to focus on and practice LOVE through perseverance.**

**Sunday- God's perseverance toward us**

### Luke 19:9-10 9 Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

**Challenge:** Jesus came to seek and save the lost. He does not give up on us but his love perseveres. When others might give up on us, Jesus doesn't. Many had over looked Zacchaeus likely because he was a tax collector. Jesus noticed him and loved him. How have you seen God's love persevering in your life? How have you responded? Thank God for his continuing love.

**Monday – Our perseverance toward God**

### James 1:12 Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

**Challenge:** Our persevering love for God gets us through difficult times. List some of the difficult times that you have experienced. How has your love for God helped you through those times?

**Tuesday- Our perseverance toward our Family**

### Deuteronomy 11:19-21 19 Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 20 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates, 21 so that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land the Lord swore to give your ancestors, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth.

**Challenge:** Just like God our father's love for us perseveres, our love for our family is to persevere. This passage shows that our love is to be constant and demonstrated in every area of life through teaching our family to follow God. Take time to share your love with a family member and state to them that you will always love them and you want to encourage them to be close to God.

**Wednesday- Our perseverance toward our Friends**

### Ephesians 6:18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.

**Challenge:** Paul encourages us to always pray for all the Lord's people. Show your love for your friends by praying for them. Do you let your friends know that you are praying for them? Demonstrate that your love perseveres by telling them that you are thinking about them and have been praying for them.

**Thursday- Our perseverance toward our Neighbor**

### 1 Thessalonians 2:7-9 7Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, 8 so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. 9 Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you.

**Challenge:** Paul's love for the Thessalonians persevered. He shared his life with them. He cared for them as a mother would care for her children and he worked day and night in order to not burden them. How does your love for your neighbor persevere?

**Friday- Our perseverance toward our Enemies**

### 1 Peter 2:17-19 Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor. 18 Slaves, in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. 19 For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God.

**Challenge:** When treated harshly it is difficult to do what is right. The love that we have for God should motivate us to persevere and do what is right to those that mistreat us. Do you have someone that mistreats you? Persevere in loving them by serving them and acting in a manner that brings glory to God.

**Saturday- Our perseverance toward the Lost**

**Matthew 28:18-20** 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

**Challenge:** Our love for the lost is to persevere. When we become followers of Jesus our whole life is to be devoted to following him, telling others about him and demonstrating his persevering love.