



Sermon Notes & Reflection Guide

Date: October 18, 2026

Speaker: Pastor Bob Levins

Title: “When Faith Starts to Feel Like a Duty”
Rediscovering wholehearted love for God and the joy of knowing Him.

Description: You can keep showing up at church and still feel distant from God. In this opening message of a series on love, Pastor Bob Levins asks what it means to love God with all your heart, soul, and strength. Through Scripture and relatable stories, he explores obedience rooted in love, the danger of faith becoming routine, and our need for the Holy Spirit to renew us. If worship and service have begun to feel like obligations, this message invites you to seek a fresh love for God and rediscover the joy of knowing Him.

Key Scripture:

- [Deuteronomy 6:4–7](#): Loving God with all your heart, soul, and strength; keeping His commandments in your heart and teaching them to your children.
- [John 14:15](#): The connection between loving Jesus and keeping His commandments.
- [Matthew 24:12](#): Jesus’ warning that the love of many will grow cold.
- [1 Corinthians 2:4–5](#): Faith grounded in God’s power and the work of the Holy Spirit rather than persuasive human words.
- [Revelation 2:4–5](#): The church at Ephesus being called to return to its first love.
- [Revelation 3:15–16](#): The warning to the church at Laodicea about being spiritually lukewarm.
- [Psalm 51:10, 12](#): David’s prayers for a clean heart and the restoration of joy in God’s salvation.
- [John 13:34](#): Jesus’ command to love one another as He has loved us.
- [Romans 5:8–10](#): God’s love demonstrated through Christ’s death while we were still sinners and enemies.
- [Proverbs 27:17](#): The brief reference to iron sharpening iron.

Main Idea: Loving God involves our hearts as well as our actions. When faith becomes routine, we can seek the Holy Spirit’s renewal and rediscover joy in knowing, obeying, and serving Him.

Takeaways: God calls us to love Him wholeheartedly. Religious routines can continue while our hearts grow distant. Fear and obligation cannot replace a loving relationship with God. Christ’s sacrifice assures us of His love, even when prayers remain unresolved. We need the Holy Spirit to renew our worship and service.



Reflection: Where have prayer, worship, or service begun to feel like duty? What do my daily choices reveal about my love for God? How have unanswered prayers affected my understanding of His love? What would I like to ask God to renew in my heart this week?

Prayer: Father, thank You for showing Your love through Jesus. Where my heart has grown distant, help me be honest with You. Create in me a clean heart, restore my joy in Your salvation, and renew my love for You through Your Holy Spirit. Let that love shape my obedience and my care for others. Amen.