Hope Church
CLAYTON, NC

The little church with a big heart.

Sermon Notes & Reflection Guide

Date: October 25, 2026

Speaker: Pastor Bob Levins

Title: When You Don't Feel Close to God

Loving God through faithful choices, even when the feelings aren't there.

Main Idea: Love for God is expressed in faithful commitment and daily choices. Feelings can change, but we can keep responding to His love through obedience, worship, and care for others.

Description: What happens when you pray or worship but don't feel close to God? Continuing the series on love, Pastor Bob Levins explores the difference between changing emotions and a faithful commitment to God. Through Jesus' commands to love God, our neighbors, and one another, he shows how love takes shape in daily choices, obedience, service, and kindness. Christ's sacrifice gives us a foundation for trust when feelings fluctuate. This message invites you to renew your commitment to God and express His love through the way you live.

Key Scripture: John 3:16 — God's love for the world demonstrated in giving His Son.
Deuteronomy 6:4–5 — The call to love the one God wholeheartedly.
Matthew 22:34–40 — Jesus names love for God and neighbor as the greatest commandments.
John 13:34–35 — Christlike love for one another identifies Jesus' disciples.
Matthew 24:12 — The warning that increasing wickedness will cause love to grow cold.
Romans 5:6, 8, 10 — Christ's death demonstrates God's love; the spoken quotation combines and abbreviates these verses.
John 4:23 — True worship in spirit and truth.
Psalm 51:10 — David's request for a clean heart.
Psalm 22:3 — God inhabiting the praises of His people, quoted in familiar traditional wording.

Other Quotes: Ten Commandment excerpts and "we are the temple of the Holy Spirit" are also quoted. Their specific locations are not given; no single reference is assigned.

Takeaways: God's love is demonstrated through Christ's sacrifice. Loving God involves commitment, not only emotion. Our love for Him becomes visible in how we treat others. Love can include truthful care without approving every choice. We can seek mercy and a renewed heart when we fall short.

Reflection: When have I treated a feeling as the measure of God's love or presence? What does commitment to God look like in my current circumstances? Who could experience His love through one choice I make this week?

Prayer: *Father, thank You for showing Your love through Jesus. Help me trust You when my feelings change. Create in me a clean heart and strengthen my commitment to You. Let my words, decisions, and care for others reflect Your love. Where I have fallen short, help me receive Your mercy and take a faithful next step. Amen.*