

Fifth Experience [love]

GOAL – Experience God’s love and express love to others.

So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples. – Jesus, John 13:34-35

CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER

1. What are you thankful for this week?
2. What has been challenging for you recently?

FOLLOW-UP

3. Who did you tell about the things you experienced in the last section? How did it go?

CONTAGIOUS LOVE

You could spend the rest of your life searching out the depths of what it means to love. Scripture sums it up this way: “God is love.” (1 John 4:8). God’s love is the most powerful force in the universe. God created the world through love. Because of love, God sent Jesus. Think of it— if God loves us so much that he would become a human and die for people who rejected and cursed him, how much more does God want to pour out his love on those of us who have become his children? Realizing how much God truly and unconditionally loves you is a secret to discovering how to live with great love. As God’s love captures your heart, it inspires you to love him and love others in return.

³⁶ One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to have dinner with him, so Jesus went to his home and sat down to eat.³⁷ When a certain immoral woman from that city heard he was eating there, she

brought a beautiful alabaster jar filled with expensive perfume.³⁸ Then she knelt behind him at his feet, weeping. Her tears fell on his feet, and she wiped them off with her hair.

Then she kept kissing his feet and putting 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 what kind of woman is touching him. She’s a sinner!”

⁴⁰ Then Jesus answered his thoughts. “Simon,” he said to the Pharisee, “I have something to say to you.”

“Go ahead, Teacher,” Simon replied.

⁴¹ Then Jesus told him this story: “A man loaned money to two people—500 pieces of silver to one and 50 pieces to the other.⁴² But neither of them could repay him, so he kindly forgave them both, canceling their debts. Who do you suppose loved him more after that?”

⁴³ Simon answered, “I suppose the one for whom he canceled the larger debt.”

“That’s right,” Jesus said.⁴⁴ Then he turned to the woman and said to Simon, “Look at this woman kneeling here. When I entered your home, you didn’t offer me water to wash the dust from my feet, but she has washed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair.⁴⁵ You didn’t greet me with a kiss, but from the time I first came in, she has not stopped kissing my feet.⁴⁶ You neglected the courtesy of olive oil to anoint my head, but she has anointed my feet with rare perfume.

⁴⁷ “I tell you, her sins—and they are many—have been forgiven, so she has shown me much love. But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love.”⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to the woman, “Your sins are forgiven.”

⁴⁹ The men at the table said among themselves, “Who is this man, that he goes around forgiving sins?”

⁵⁰ And Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.” (Luke 7:36-50)

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4. What insights do you see about love in this story?

GOING DEEPER

⁷ Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God.⁸ But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

⁹ God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him.¹⁰ This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.

¹¹ Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other.¹² No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us. (1 John 4:7-12, NLT).

¹⁷ Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God’s love and keep you strong.¹⁸ And may you have the power to understand, as all God’s people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is.¹⁹ May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be

made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.(Ephesians 3:17-19, NLT).

³⁴ But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees with his reply, they met together to question him again.³⁵ One of them, an expert in religious law, tried to trap him with this question:³⁶ “Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?”

³⁷ Jesus replied, ““You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment.³⁹ A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’⁴⁰ The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.” (Matthew 22:34-40, NLT).

¹² Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.¹³ Make allowance for each other’s faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.¹⁴ Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony.(Colossians 3:12-14, NLT).

5. Which ways of showing love do you find the most challenging?

6. Which do you find the most exciting?

MAKE IT PERSONAL — Spending Time with God

God is a good dad. He loves you and wants to spend time with you. When you spend time with God, he will often speak to you and encourage you. God can speak audibly, but he often speaks in a gentle, quiet voice within us: “His Holy Spirit speaks to us deep in our hearts and tells us we are God’s children.” –

Romans 8:16

As you spend time with God more frequently, you will learn to discern his voice from other thoughts and influences. Your love for him will grow and empower you to express love for others. The One-thought Method The One-thought Method is a tool you can use to interact with virtually any part of the Bible while spending time with God. (There are innumerable creative ways to spend time with him—this is just a tool to help you get started.)

- Turn to a section of the Bible that interests you. If you don't have one in mind, choose a verse from one of the previous page.
- Underline and reflect on any words or phrases that catch your attention
- What is one thought that comes to your mind that might be from God?

Turn this thought into a prayer back to God. (For example: God says, "I love you." You say, "Thank you for loving me. I love you too.") Think of prayer as simply having a conversation with God.

7. Write your prayer on the back of this page.

ACTION

When you spend time with God, he will help you overflow in love for others. Practical ways of showing love include giving, forgiving, honoring, encouraging, etc.

8. Spend time with God using The One-thought Method as a guide (practice it now if you like). When and where will you spend time with God?
9. Love another person this week in a way that challenges you to grow in your love. Who do you sense God encouraging you to show love to?

GIVE IT AWAY

10. Sharing with others what you've received from God is the greatest blessing. Who do you know who needs to hear what you learned from God in this section?

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES

To read more on this topic, you can look up:

Luke 7:36-50

Luke 15

John 15:9-17

Acts 4:32-37

I Corinthians 13

I Peter 1:22