

# A Love That Sacrifices

Today's Reading: Ephesians 5:25–27 | Audio: Day 1

*“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.”*

— Ephesians 5:25–26 (KJV)

## DEVOTIONAL

The first thing this passage shows us is simple but deeply challenging: real love gives. Paul says Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it. He did not love from a distance. He did not love only when it was convenient. He did not wait until we were easy to love. He moved toward us. He gave Himself. He sacrificed. That is the shape of love that looks like the cross.

In our world, love is usually described as a feeling. We say we “fall in love,” as though love is something that happens to us—and if we can fall into it, we assume we can fall out of it. But the love of Christ is different. It is not accidental; it is intentional. It is not based on changing emotions; it is rooted in a settled decision. Christ did not go to the cross because of how we made Him feel. He went because of how He already loved us.

That matters, because feelings change. Some days the people closest to us make love feel easy. Other days love feels like sacrifice. It feels like patience. It feels like forgiveness. It feels like choosing not to keep score, like showing up when part of you would rather shut down. Real love is not proven when everything is comfortable. It is proven when something costs us.

Think about your relationships today—your marriage, your family, your friendships, your church, your coworkers. How often do we love people based on what they give back to us? Their appreciation. Their respect. Their attention. Their agreement.

That does not mean love has no wisdom. It does not mean enabling sin, abuse, or dysfunction. But it does mean love cannot be purely selfish, always looking for the nearest exit when things become difficult. Jesus gave Himself. If we are going to love like Him, something in us must be willing to lay itself down too.

## CROSS-SHAPED LOVE ASKS A DEEPER QUESTION

Not “What am I getting from this person?” • But “What am I willing to give?”

## DAY 1 • JOURNAL & RESPONSE

### REFLECT

---

1. *Where has your love become conditional?*

---

---

---

---

---

2. *Is there someone you have been loving only as long as they meet your expectations?*

---

---

---

---

---

### RESPOND: TODAY'S PRACTICAL STEP

---

Choose one practical act of sacrificial love today—not accidentally, but on purpose:

- ☐ Send the message.
- ☐ Offer the apology.
- ☐ Serve without needing recognition.
- ☐ Pray for the person who has been difficult to love.

***What I will do, and for whom:***

---

---

---

## DAY 1 • PRAYER

### PRAY

*Lord Jesus, thank You for loving us with a love that sacrificed. Thank You for going to the cross, not because we deserved it, but because Your love was already set toward us. Teach us to love on purpose. Remove selfishness from our hearts. Help us to give, to serve, to forgive, and to stay faithful in the places where love costs us something. Shape our hearts until our love begins to look like Yours. In Jesus' name, amen.*

**My own prayer:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

#### REMEMBER THIS

Real love gives itself.

**Going Deeper:** 1 John 4:9–11 • Philippians 2:5–8 • Romans 5:6–8

*This devotional is a tool for reflection, not a substitute for pastoral care or professional counseling. If what surfaces feels too heavy to carry alone, please reach out to a pastor or a trusted, qualified counselor at New Life Tabernacle Carrollwood.*