

DAY 6

John 13:34 NIV

Jesus spoke this verse to His disciples the night He was arrested before being killed and then coming back to life. That means His disciples heard this before they had any idea just how far Jesus' love would go. When Jesus said to love each other as He had loved them, they probably had an idea of being patient and compassionate and forgiving—all great things. But when they remembered Jesus' words after He had been wrongfully accused and sentenced, after dying without so much as a word blaming the disciples, it would have looked different. Because then, Jesus' love went as far as death.

Chances are you'll never have to die for someone else. But giving of yourself, selfless living, is a kind of death. It's a death to your rights, your wants. In other words, it's not easy. But this is the kind of love Jesus invites us to. A love that gives of ourselves, just like He did. Who is someone in your life you need to love like Jesus does—even if it's difficult? What's one way you could love them how Jesus does this week?

DAY 7

Luke 2:14 NIV

Glory is an interesting concept to think about. Most of the time we associate it with winning or being on top, and the attention received from reaching the highest level. In this scripture, angels are singing this statement over the shepherds after announcing the arrival of Jesus, the Messiah. They're making sure the source of this good news isn't missed. God is worthy of the highest glory, and this glorious God offered us peace and showed us God's favor and goodness by sending Jesus to earth.

So, as you memorize this verse, keep in mind the God of the universe, full of glory. This God's favor is on YOU. You have this God's peace. And that is an incredible gift.

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

FOR AN
everyday faith.

WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD / WEEK 1

DAY 1

John 10:10 MSG

This sounds like a big promise. Is Jesus talking about a “when you wish upon a star” your dreams come true kind of promise? You don't have to spend much time on social media to discover the things we think we want don't always seem to be making people as happy as they thought. I think that's what Jesus is talking about here. When He offers real life, more than we could dream, He is suggesting maybe more is possible than what we dream. Maybe we wish for followers and fame, but Jesus knows there's something better, deeper than that, that those things aren't as deep as the needs we have that Jesus actually meets. Security. Acceptance. Safety. Being known and being seen. Those are things that make a full life. And that is what Jesus offers. What if your best life isn't something you earn, but something you're given?

When Jesus moved into the neighborhood, He was “generous inside and out,” inviting us into something no “thing” could ever provide—a full life that's better than anything we could imagine.

Begin to daydream with God. What are some things you think you want, but may be a mask for a bigger need or want that Jesus offers?

DAY 2

1 John 4:10 NIV

The law of reciprocity is the feeling that when you receive something, you feel obligated to give something back.

God's love doesn't work like that. There aren't strings attached. God offers a far-reaching, never-ending, no questions asked, love. The best part is, you have God's love no matter what you do with it. But when you understand it, you can't help but live a life in gratitude for it. John, who wrote this, spent three years living with Jesus and then decades telling others about what he experienced with Jesus. He's an expert. What he saw in Jesus was the very definition of love. The question is, with such amazing love freely given, how do we respond? God's love isn't going anywhere. But what about us? How will we behave knowing this love is already ours?

Write down ways you have experienced God's love. Do you feel like you HAVE to live a certain way to earn it? Or are you living out of gratitude for it? How are the two different?

DAY 3

Romans 5:6 NIV

Ever show up for a test you forgot to study for? The anxiety is the absolute worst. But when you hear a test is canceled? It's a miracle. You don't know why it was canceled, you just know, that changed everything.

The apostle Paul is saying something similar. At just the right time, when we needed it most, Christ displayed His love and mercy on our behalf. In dying on the cross, Jesus showed us the worst people were capable of doing (killing Jesus) alongside our amazing worth—Jesus going as far as death to demonstrate the length of His love. Jesus is saying both are true. We get it wrong. But not even our wrongness can keep Jesus' love away. This is great news.

Have you ever felt powerless in a bad decision you made? Like you don't have any control? In your powerlessness, Jesus' love is more powerful. And it shows up right on time.

DAY 4

Romans 8:39 NIV

We've all done stuff we aren't proud of. Maybe we lied to someone we love or betrayed the trust of a friend. No matter what it is, we all have regrets. And regret often leads to shame—the feeling not just that we did a bad thing, but that we, ourselves, ARE bad.

But the apostle Paul who wrote this verse says there is NOTHING that separates us from God—not our sin, shame, or the worst thing we've done or will do. God isn't going anywhere. And Paul should know. Before he started to follow Jesus, Paul hunted Jesus's followers down to have them arrested and even killed. If Paul could believe in the goodness and the nearness of God despite his past, we can be sure about how God feels about us too.

You've never done too much or gone too far. What a relief, right? Today, write down a few things you may have thought would separate you from God's love. Then put a big red "X" through them, writing below them, "Nothing separates me from God's love." God's love for us is unchanging, even when we are at our worst.

DAY 5

Isaiah 9:6 NLT

Written by Abby, age 14, from Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

When I first read this verse, I was full of confusion. But after reading it more, it's showing us that Jesus came to create a new way for us to look at life. He would show us the way things are supposed to work. If we choose to follow His example, we'll be working with Him to make this world a better place—a place more aligned with what God says is best.

In other words, you have a purpose meaningful to God. If Jesus is over everything and we're working with Him, we can use our gifts to contribute more good to this world.

