



5 2 W E E K S
O F G R O W T H

Give it a Year
Week 13

WEEK 13

1 John 4:7-12

“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us.”

Mark 12: 28-31

“One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked Him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?” “The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

Love is probably the most overused and misunderstood word. We use it to refer to so many different things, different emotions, and even feelings of affection. We say things like I love that team, or that restaurant, or that movie, or that outfit. We say it and hear it so often that we forget the true meaning of the word.

So, let's take a moment and really think about the word "LOVE". Most people often define love by a feeling. But it actually isn't a feeling at all. Love is a choice. A choice that you make every minute of every hour of every day. In fact, loving when you don't feel like it is actually a higher level of love than when you do feel like it. Love is giving freely to a person what they need, not what they deserve. And that's what God does. God loves us. Freely and without reservation and it's not based on what we deserve. Thank God! None of us would be here today if God gave us what we deserved. That's called GRACE.

As Christians, we need to know this type of love. We need to give this type of love. Love is key to your Christian walk. Love is all over the bible. It's so important to God because God is love and God commands us to love. That's what those two scriptures above show us. And if we are Christians then we need to learn how to love God's way. Jesus says in John 13:35, "They will know you are My disciples by your love". If we are followers of Jesus, others will know because of our love...not because of the cross we wear around our neck or on our t-shirt or hat...but because of our love for others.

So, because love is so important to God and to being a Christian, we are going to spend the next several weeks digging into "LOVE". We all come from different backgrounds and each of us reading this devotional may have a different definition of love. In order to learn how to love like God, often times we need to unlearn how love was taught or shown to us in our past. Even if this makes you feel uncomfortable, I encourage you to dig deep and do the work to figure out your baseline on "love" so that over the next several weeks, we can continue to explore what love is and isn't and how to love like God.

READ:

1 Corinthians 13

REFLECT:

- How do you use the word “LOVE” in your life? Is it based on a feeling? Do you use it often?
- What emotions does the word love bring up in you? (Happy, warm, uncomfortable, anxious, angry)?
- When was the 1st time you ever heard that you were loved and felt loved?
- Do you believe that God loves you?
- Do you love God? Is that love conditional?

***please remember, these questions are meant to make you think and explore your baseline definition of love. Resist the urge to skip these REFLECT questions and allow yourself to feel all that it brings up. It will be worth it in future weeks as we continue to learn how God loves and how opposite it is from how the world loves.

PRAYER:

Father God, I thank You for loving me. I am so undeserving of Your love and so grateful that You would show me grace. Lord, open my mind and heart to explore love through Your lens. Help me to grow and understand that Your love is not the love that the world offers but Your love is unconditional. Teach me to love like You Lord. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.