

Love, Joy, Peace

5-Day Devotional - 7.19.26

Day 1

God Is Love - The Foundation of Everything

Reading: 1 John 4:7-12

Devotional: "It is easy to think of love as something we generate through willpower or good intentions. But the sermon reminds us that love is not manufactured -- it is poured out. Just as you cannot squeeze orange juice from a rock, you cannot produce genuine, lasting love from your own strength. The agape love described in Galatians 5:22 chooses before it feels. It gives without expecting anything in return. It forgives the undeserving and serves without applause. This kind of love is only possible when the Holy Spirit lives inside of you, because God himself is love. Ask yourself today: Am I trying to love people out of my own strength, or am I allowing the Holy Spirit to pour love through me?"

Practical Application: Identify one person in your life who is difficult to love. Pray specifically and intentionally for that person today, asking the Holy Spirit to fill you with agape love toward them.

Day 2

Known by Your Love

Reading: John 13:34-35

Devotional: The message points out that Jesus did not say the world would know his disciples by their miracles, their church attendance, or their charitable giving. He said they would be known by their love for one another. This is a sobering reality check. The evidence of the Holy Spirit in your life is not primarily what happens on Sunday morning -- it is how you treat the people around you on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and every other day. How you respond when an employee makes a mistake, how you speak to someone who has offended you, how you correct a child -- all of these moments are opportunities for the love of God to become visible through you.

Practical Application: Throughout your day, pause before responding to conflict or frustration and ask: Does my response right now reflect the love of Jesus? Make one intentional adjustment today based on your answer.

Day 3

Joy That Circumstances Cannot Steal

Reading: Hebrews 12:1-3

Devotional: The message draws a powerful distinction between happiness and joy. Happiness depends on what is happening around you. Joy depends on Jesus. Consider what it means that Jesus endured the cross with joy before him. He was not happy about what lay ahead -- his prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane makes that clear. Yet he had joy, because joy is rooted in God's unchanging character and purpose, not in comfortable circumstances. The same Holy Spirit who sustained Jesus through suffering lives inside every believer. When life squeezes you, joy is what comes out -- not because life is easy, but because God is faithful and his purposes cannot be stopped.

Practical Application: Write down one difficult circumstance you are currently facing. Beneath it, write a truth about God's character that remains unchanged regardless of that circumstance. Let that truth anchor your joy today.

Day 4

Thermostat, Not Thermometer

Reading: Philippians 4:4-7

Devotional: The message offers a memorable image: many Christians live like thermometers, simply registering whatever temperature the environment around them produces. If circumstances are good, their attitude is good. If circumstances are hard, their attitude drops. But the Holy Spirit is designed to make believers thermostats -- people who carry the steady warmth of God's presence into every room they enter. This is not emotional denial. It is deep confidence that the Lord is in control. Paul wrote these words from prison, yet he called believers to rejoice. His joy was not dependent on his surroundings. Neither does yours have to be.

Practical Application: Today, before you enter any difficult environment -- a tense meeting, a challenging conversation, a stressful situation -- pause and pray, asking the Holy Spirit to make you a thermostat that brings peace rather than a thermometer that simply reflects chaos.

Day 5

Peace - Trusting the Pilot

Reading: John 14:25-27

Devotional: The message closes with a vivid story about surrendering control and trusting the one who can see the whole picture. Jesus did not promise his disciples smooth water -- he promised to get them to the other side. The storm did not change the destination. It only revealed whether the disciples trusted the one in the boat with them. When you stop trying to fly your own life and surrender control to the Holy Spirit, you are not giving up -- you are finally placing yourself in the hands of the one who created you, knows you fully, and can see every storm on the radar. The peace of Jesus is not the absence of storms. It is the presence of God in the middle of them.

Practical Application: Identify one area of your life where you have been trying to maintain control rather than surrendering it to God. Spend time in prayer today releasing that specific area to the Holy Spirit, and ask him to replace your anxiety with the peace that surpasses all understanding.