

DEVOTIONAL

Hollywood Prayer Network

LOVE

LOVE is the most beautiful word and emotion when it's used for good. GOD IS LOVE. We're all hungry for love. This week you'll look at God's promises and learn how to love people more, love God more, and be more Christ-like, because of God's amazing, supernatural, unconditional, unending love for every one of us.

DAY 1

HOW MUCH GOD LOVES US

"A NEW COMMAND I GIVE YOU: LOVE ONE
ANOTHER. AS I HAVE LOVED YOU, SO YOU
MUST LOVE ONE ANOTHER."

-CHRIST JESUS

New International Version

1 John 4:9

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.

DAY 1

PRAY: Dear Lord, I'm excited to spend a week focused on Your love for me, my love for You and my love for others. Please help me to learn more about the unconditional love that You offer us and please help me to love more selflessly. Thank You that You showed us Your love through sacrificing Your only Son, Jesus, and that I can live abundantly through Him. That's the greatest gift of all. I praise You, in Jesus' name, Amen.

REFLECT: Reflect on the overwhelming concept that God loves each and every one of us SO MUCH that He sacrificed His only Son for us. He let Jesus be abused, suffer, and die just to show us how much He loves us. And He loves His own Son so much that He then raised Him from the dead. And then, because Jesus was willing to die, we can live forever because of His resurrected life. It's such a wild and crazy concept that it's almost impossible to grasp, and yet it's true. What an awesome God we follow! And it's ALL about LOVE!

ACT: Tell someone today how much God loves them. Or tell someone about how amazing it is that you have eternal life just because God sent Jesus into this world and then let Him die on the cross for you. Tell them it's a crazy concept but you actually believe it. What a fun conversation that will be. Or just tell at least one person today that you love them because God first loved you! You can show others your love for them just like God continually shows each one of us His love for us!

DAY 2

WE MUST LOVE OTHERS

"DID I OFFER PEACE TODAY? DID I BRING A SMILE TO SOMEONE'S FACE? DID I SAY WORDS OF HEALING? DID I LET GO OF MY ANGER AND RESENTMENT? DID I FORGIVE? DID I LOVE? THESE ARE THE REAL QUESTIONS."

-HENRI NOUWEN

New International Version

1 Corinthians 16:14

Do everything in love.

John 15:17

This is my command: Love each other.

DAY 2

PRAY: Father, I want to do EVERYTHING in love and I want to love other people. You have commanded it and I want to do it. But how do I love everyone around me? I need Your help to think loving thoughts, say loving words and act lovingly toward all of the people You have put in my life. Fill up my heart, new and fresh, with Your love. I look forward to how I can show Your love to someone else today. Amen and Amen.

REFLECT: Do everything in love. What does that really mean? It doesn't mean that we're door mats, that we let others abuse us or that we don't speak the truth, even if it's not pleasant. Loving others is hard and tough love is harder. In fact it often takes more effort, more wisdom, and more self-control to love other people than not caring at all. But God commanded it, so we have to do it. What would it take for you to be more actively loving to the people closest to you?

ACT: Choose a person close to you, who is very hard to love, and choose to do something loving for them. It might be serving them, listening to them or encouraging them. Or, it might be speaking the truth to them, in a loving but honest way. Ask God how you can love that person by doing or saying something that will help them, even if it's hard or uncomfortable for you.

DAY 3

HOW TO LOVE GOD, OURSELVES, AND OTHERS, PART I

"I REALIZED THAT THE DEEPEST SPIRITUAL LESSONS ARE NOT LEARNED BY HIS LETTING US HAVE OUR WAY IN THE END, BUT BY HIS MAKING US WAIT, BEARING WITH US IN LOVE AND PATIENCE UNTIL WE ARE ABLE TO HONESTLY PRAY WHAT HE TAUGHT HIS DISCIPLES TO PRAY: THY WILL BE DONE."
-ELISABETH ELLIOT

New International Version

1 Corinthians 13:4

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

DAY 3

PRAY: Dear God, in order to truly love, the way You want me to, I have to change. Will You show me how to be more patient and kind, and how to not be envious of my friends who do more or have more than I do. And don't let me boast about the things I have or do. I don't want to be proud or impatient or mean. I need You to deal with my human emotions that stop me from being more loving and help me to be more like You. I love you. Amen.

REFLECT: It's so hard to love! But that's the whole point of us being here. God created us for one thing – to have loving relationships, with Him and with other people! That's it. But love requires more of us than we are capable of being, doing, or saying on our own. We can't possibly be patient, kind, or never be envious, boast, or be proud, without God. He has created us and the world so that we need Him desperately, and that's just where He wants us – needing Him, turning to Him, and depending on Him for all of our relationships. Are you ready to let Him change you?

ACT: Which is your greatest weakness: patience, kindness, envy, boasting, or pride? Pick one, tell God you need Him desperately to help you change in that area, and then start planning how to tackle it. Your goal is to love more freely and you don't want any of these human weaknesses to get in your way. So, pray, pray, pray, with the goal of being a more loving person. It will be worth it!

DAY 4

HOW TO LOVE GOD, OURSELVES, AND OTHERS, PART II

"LOVE GOD AND HE WILL ENABLE YOU
TO LOVE OTHERS EVEN WHEN THEY
DISAPPOINT YOU."

-FRANCINE RIVERS

New International Version

1 Corinthians 13:5

Love... it does not dishonor others, it is
not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it
keeps no record of wrongs.

DAY 4

PRAY: Jesus, today's verse is tough. I need You to show me if I dishonor others, if I am self-seeking, easily angered, or if I keep records of others' wrongs. Reveal to me where I need to change and how to become a more loving person. I know I need You desperately and I'm seeing how hard it is to be more loving, but I thank You that You are there for me and You love me so much that You are excited to help me become more like You. Let's do this together! I pray in Your name, Amen.

REFLECT: How do we dishonor others? And how do we see if we're self-seeking? Do we justify our anger or keep mental records of who has hurt us or treated us badly? Let's ponder this verse and ask the Lord to pour His love into us so that our hearts are so filled up that we can't possibly say or do things to hurt others or puff ourselves up. Love is always the answer. Can you see it in this verse?

ACT: Today you get to honor somebody; do something selfLESS, hold your temper, or let go of anger or something negative about that person that you've been holding on to. Write down the name of the person you're going to honor so that you're not self-seeking, easily angered or keeping a record of wrongs. And be sure to reach out somehow by the end of the day. How are you going to accomplish this by the time you go to bed? Ready, set, GO!

DAY 5

HOW TO LOVE GOD, OURSELVES, AND OTHERS, PART III

"TO LOVE SOMEONE MEANS TO SEE
HIM AS GOD INTENDED HIM."

-FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY

New International Version

1 Corinthians 13:6

Love does not delight in evil but rejoices
with the truth.

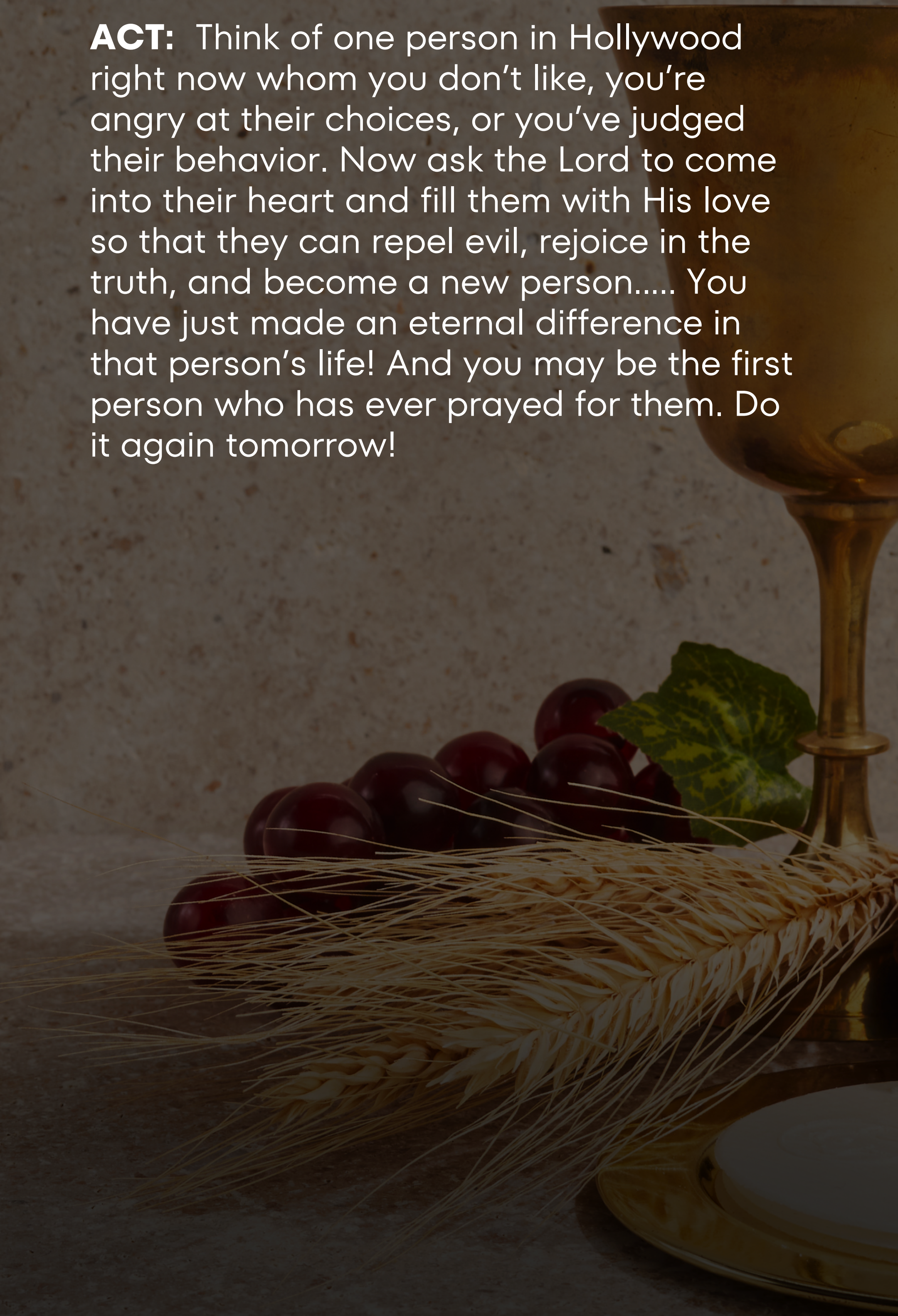
DAY 5

PRAY: Lord, would You help me to love other people and not think evil thoughts, say words that can hurt, or do anything harmful. Fill me with Your love, which rejoices with the truth. And help me to pray that same prayer for others who haven't yet experienced Your love. I want to pray for the celebrities in Hollywood today, who influence our children and our culture. May they find Your love so that they will live lives of truth and rejoice in that truth! I pray for them in Jesus' name, Amen.

REFLECT: Instead of getting angry at people who do evil, have you thought that they just don't know God's love. If they did, they would rejoice with the truth and not hurt others or themselves. That perspective will give you a compassion that can replace your anger or annoyance, and you can more easily understand them and pray for them. Reflect on the people in your world who do not delight in the truth, but delight in evil. Maybe they need to discover God's love so that they can rejoice with the truth. Some of the people in Hollywood delight in evil because they have never experienced God's love. But they are no different than anyone in the world. We should pray for them to find the love of Jesus.

DAY 5

ACT: Think of one person in Hollywood right now whom you don't like, you're angry at their choices, or you've judged their behavior. Now ask the Lord to come into their heart and fill them with His love so that they can repel evil, rejoice in the truth, and become a new person..... You have just made an eternal difference in that person's life! And you may be the first person who has ever prayed for them. Do it again tomorrow!



DAY 6

HOW TO LOVE GOD, OURSELVES, AND OTHERS, PART IV

“WHAT DOES LOVE LOOK LIKE? IT HAS THE HANDS TO HELP OTHERS. IT HAS THE FEET TO HASTEN TO THE POOR AND NEEDY. IT HAS EYES TO SEE MISERY AND WANT. IT HAS THE EARS TO HEAR THE SIGHS AND SORROWS OF MEN. THAT IS WHAT LOVE LOOKS LIKE.”

-AUGUSTINE

New International Version

1 Corinthians 13:6

“Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.”

DAY 6

PRAY: Abba Father, I feel Your protection, I know I can trust You, I have hope because of You and I persevere because I want to please You and I'm excited about heaven. But I need You to help me to protect others, to trust other people, to hope for someone who can't feel hope right now, and to persevere in hard relationships. I want to be more loving. I want to be more like You! Teach me how to love with Your unconditional love. Amen.

REFLECT: Have you noticed that the definitions of love in verse 7 are not usually what we think of when we're trying to be more loving? Read it again and ask God to show you how protecting and trusting someone, hoping for them, and persevering for them, is a way to show your love for them. Who do you protect? Who do you trust? Is there a person you have great hopes for? Do you have someone who helps you to persevere? Because this is exactly how God loves us, thinking about loving others this way takes love to a whole new level.

ACT: These expressions of love in verse 7 are the most intimate ways to show someone you love them. Choose a person close to you, maybe the same one as two days ago, and commit to telling them or showing them how you will protect them, and how you trust them. Then tell them what you are hoping for, for them. And then commit to persevere through a hard time, a difficult decision, or a broken relationship, with them. This is a deep commitment of love that will deepen and enrich your relationship.

DAY 7

NOTHING CAN STOP LOVE

"THERE IS NO PIT SO DEEP, THAT GOD'S
LOVE IS NOT DEEPER STILL."

-CORRIE TEN BOOM

New International Version

Romans 8:38–39

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

DAY 7

PRAY: Dear Lord, I am amazed how I have been stretched to love others through the devotions this week – especially through the 1 Corinthians verses. I realized that I need to show my love for others in all these ways because You do that for me. And I praise You that NOTHING, nowhere, no how, can separate me from Your love through Jesus. Nothing in all of creation will keep me from You. Oh Lord, I open my heart to You, new and fresh today, and run into Your loving arms. Thank You that You love me no matter what I do, who I am, or what I say - SO much that I can't even fully embrace it. I praise You, God! Amen!

REFLECT: Reflect on these truths:

- Not even death can stop God from loving you
 - No spiritual beings can come between you and God
 - Nothing you've done in the past or in the future can change God's love for you
 - No mountain, ocean, forest, jail, or dungeon can keep Him from loving you
 - Nothing in the entire universe can separate you from the love of God!
- Can you believe that God loves you that much?

DAY 7

ACT: Proclaim God's love for you by reading all of I Corinthians 13 out loud to God, one line at a time. And thank Him for every truth in every sentence throughout the entire chapter. By the end, you will be more convinced that His love for you is real, powerful, and unending. Then memorize Romans 8:38 – 39. As you accept His love for you, you will have more love to give away to others. Enjoy this exercise and you will be ending this week a more loving, Christ-like person!

