

October 18, 2026

SUNDAY REFLECTION - Start Right Here

October Series: Love Your Neighbor

Week Focus: Start Right Here

Scripture – Matthew 22:37 - *“Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’”*

Devotional Reflection

This week began with a simple but challenging reminder: God is not asking to be added to our lives; He is calling us to orient our lives around Him. We discovered that loving God with our whole heart, soul, and mind means allowing our relationship with Him to shape our priorities, decisions, attitudes, and relationships. As the week continued, we were reminded that genuine devotion to God cannot remain disconnected from the way we treat the people around us. We considered what it means to love the people already in front of us, extend compassion beyond our familiar circles, make room for somebody else's needs, and demonstrate Christlike love through ordinary interactions. **EVERY STEP BROUGHT US BACK TO THE SAME TRUTH: OUR LOVE FOR GOD SHOULD BECOME VISIBLE IN THE WAY WE LOVE PEOPLE.**

When Jesus was asked which commandment was greatest, He directed attention first to loving God with our entire being and then to loving our neighbors as ourselves. These commandments were not presented as competing responsibilities, but as inseparable expressions of the life God calls His people to live. We cannot claim that our relationship with God is transforming us while remaining indifferent to how we speak, respond, forgive, serve, and demonstrate compassion toward others. At the same time, loving our neighbors does not mean simply becoming more agreeable, accommodating every request, or ignoring the truth and wisdom that should guide healthy relationships. **CHRISTLIKE LOVE IS ROOTED IN DEVOTION TO GOD AND EXPRESSED THROUGH GENUINE CONCERN FOR THE GOOD OF OTHERS.**

As we reflect on everything we have learned, we must remember that the command to love God and others also reveals how deeply we need Jesus Christ. None of us has loved God perfectly, and all of us can recognize moments when selfishness, impatience, pride, or indifference have influenced the way we treated someone else. Yet the good news of the gospel is that Jesus fulfilled the righteousness we could never achieve, gave Himself for our sins, and rose again so that those who trust in Him may receive forgiveness and new life. Through His grace and the continuing work of the Holy Spirit, we are not left to manufacture Christlike love through our own strength. **WE DO NOT LOVE GOD AND OTHERS TO EARN SALVATION; WE GROW IN LOVE BECAUSE CHRIST HAS SAVED US AND IS TRANSFORMING OUR HEARTS.**

As we close this week's devotional journey, the question is no longer simply whether we understand what Jesus has commanded, but whether we are allowing His truth to shape the way we live. Perhaps God has revealed a relationship that needs greater patience, a person who deserves more attention, an attitude that requires repentance, or an opportunity to demonstrate compassion that you have been overlooking. You do not have to wait for a perfect schedule, a special assignment, or an extraordinary opportunity to begin responding to what the Lord has shown you. Take one faithful step today by allowing your love for God to influence the way you treat someone He has already placed within your reach. **YOU DON'T HAVE TO LOOK FAR FOR SOMEONE TO LOVE—START RIGHT HERE, AND LET THE TRANSFORMING LOVE OF CHRIST BECOME VISIBLE THROUGH YOU.**

FOCUS FOR TODAY

You don't have to look far for someone to love. Start right here.

Loving God and loving people are not separate assignments; our devotion to Christ should increasingly become visible through the way we treat others.

LOVE GOD → LOVE PEOPLE → LIVE IT HERE

PRACTICE — PUT LOVE INTO ACTION

- Reflect on your devotion. Consider whether your daily priorities and decisions demonstrate that your relationship with God is shaping your life.
- Examine your relationships. Identify one person who needs greater patience, compassion, encouragement, or understanding from you.
- Respond to what God has revealed. If the Holy Spirit has convicted you about an attitude, conversation, or relationship, take one appropriate step toward repentance or reconciliation.
- Demonstrate intentional love. Choose one practical action today that reflects genuine concern for another person's well-being.
- Carry the challenge forward. Do not allow this week's teaching to remain a devotional experience; ask God to make Christlike love increasingly visible through your everyday life.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your Word and for the ways You have challenged my heart throughout this week. Thank You for reminding me that loving You is not simply about religious activity, but about surrendering every area of my life to Your leadership. Forgive me for the times I have allowed distractions, selfishness, impatience, or personal preferences to interfere with the love You have called me to demonstrate. Search my heart and reveal the relationships, attitudes, and priorities that still need to be transformed by Your grace.

Lord Jesus, thank You for loving me when I could never have earned Your love and for giving Yourself so that I could experience forgiveness and new life. Continue shaping my heart through Your Spirit so that my devotion to You becomes increasingly visible in the way I treat others. Teach me to love with compassion, respond with humility, speak with kindness, forgive with wisdom, and serve with genuine concern for those around me. Help me recognize that I do not have to wait for an extraordinary opportunity to demonstrate Your love because You have already placed people within my reach. As I move forward, let my life reflect the truth of Your Word and bring glory to Your name.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

REFLECTION QUESTION

As you reflect on this week's journey, what specific relationship, attitude, or everyday interaction is God calling you to approach differently so that your love for Him becomes more visible through your love for others?