

October 20, 2026

Loved to Love

October Series: Love Your Neighbor

Week Focus: Don't Just Say It

Scripture – 1 John 4:19 – “We love because he first loved us.”

Devotional Reflection

Yesterday, we were reminded that Jesus Christ demonstrated His love through His sacrifice. Today, we turn our attention to what happens within us when we receive that love through faith. John declares, “We love because he first loved us.” God's love is not simply an example we are expected to imitate through our own determination. Through Jesus Christ, we receive new life, and the Holy Spirit begins transforming our hearts. **THE LOVE WE HAVE RECEIVED SHOULD BEGIN CHANGING THE WAY WE LIVE.**

Sometimes we attempt to love others through sheer willpower. We try harder to become patient, compassionate, forgiving, and understanding, only to discover that our attitudes do not always match our intentions. This is why spiritual transformation matters. The Holy Spirit works within believers, renewing our thinking and producing Christlike character. As we surrender to God's Word and depend upon His Spirit, our responses begin changing. We become less controlled by selfishness, more willing to extend grace, and increasingly sensitive to the needs of others.

This transformation does not mean every relationship becomes easy or that we will never experience frustration. Some situations require difficult conversations, forgiveness, patience, or healthy boundaries. But the Spirit teaches us to respond differently even when circumstances remain challenging. Instead of allowing irritation to determine our words, we can practice gentleness. Instead of withholding kindness because someone disappointed us, we can seek a response shaped by grace and truth. **CHRISTLIKE LOVE IS NOT MERELY A CHANGE IN OUR BEHAVIOR; IT IS THE FRUIT OF GOD'S TRANSFORMING WORK WITHIN US.**

As you move through today, pay attention to your reactions. Notice the moments when impatience, pride, resentment, or self-interest begin influencing how you treat someone. Rather than simply trying harder, invite the Holy Spirit to examine your heart and guide your response. The goal is not to appear loving while remaining unchanged within. The goal is to become increasingly like Jesus Christ. **WE ARE LOVED BY CHRIST, TRANSFORMED BY HIS SPIRIT, AND CALLED TO DEMONSTRATE HIS LOVE.**

FOCUS FOR TODAY

Christlike love is not merely a change in our behavior; it is the fruit of God's transforming work within us.

PRACTICE

- Identify one attitude that makes loving others difficult.
 - Ask the Holy Spirit to transform that area and help you respond differently today.
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PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for loving me first. Continue Your transforming work within my heart through the Holy Spirit. Renew my attitudes, guide my responses, and help me demonstrate the character of Jesus Christ in my relationships.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

REFLECTION QUESTION

What attitude or response in my life needs to be transformed so that Christ's love becomes more visible?