

MONDAY 02.23.26 - Matthew 22:37-39

Our version of love is usually so simple and shallow. We consider the erotic part, eros, so private and personal as between husband and wife. The familial, philia, is often harder, especially when kids fail to follow the teaching we have shared with them. It is even more difficult when relating to friends or colleagues who have turned down a different path than one we are treading, or who have hurt us in some way.

But God loves us with an everlasting love, Agape love, that accepts us as failures and enemies, children who run away and disobey repeatedly and intentionally so. Then He tells us that our love should look like that, too. It is only by His Spirit living in us that we can accomplish this. His love in us becomes His love shared with others. It takes all our heart, soul, mind and strength. That kind of love is God Himself, for God is love.

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

TUESDAY 02.24.26 - 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable and keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

Paul wrote this passage to the Corinthian Church, which at the time was very immature and divided. It refers to **agape love** (God's divine selfless, sacrificial love in action) contrasting behaviors for healing these divisions, creating a healthy Christian life and church.

Before I began researching these verses, I always thought of this passage as a guide for marriage (and after 40 years of marriage, I still believe this!), but it is also a powerful guide for Christians to love others... which was its original purpose!

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

WEDNESDAY 02.25.26 - Ephesians 5:8-14

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light.

Light dispels the darkness and it attracts attention. So, how well is God's light shining through the lamp of your life? How often is it accomplishing its purpose? Does your presence in this world make a difference in your home, school, neighborhood, or workplace? Do you have a vibrant witness that draws people to the Lord, or do you hide your light and save it just for church on Sunday? Does your integrity prick the consciences of those who are sliding ever deeper into the darkness? Would you have to admit that sin has crept in and begun to extinguish whatever light remains in your witness?

The Lord genuinely desires to use you. So, if sin has dimmed His light in your life, take time now to confess it to Him and to seek His cleansing and forgiveness.

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

THURSDAY 02.26.26 - Proverbs 13:9

The light of the righteous doesn't merely glow—it rejoices. There is a vitality, a settled joy, a flourishing that comes from walking in God's ways. Isn't it a privilege to have a bright joy even amid life's darkest moments? For believers, a hard life doesn't equal a dark life! But the lamp of the wicked will be put out. It may appear steady for a time, but it has no lasting fuel; no light to depend on in the long run.

Righteousness produces a life marked by joy because it is aligned with God's ways. Wickedness, however impressive for a season, has an expiration date.

So let your life be one that rejoices in the Lord. A joyful, steady, God-rooted life stands out in a world of flickering lamps. And when others notice, don't just shine—point them to the true Source of light!

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

FRIDAY 02.27.26 - Psalm 27:1-3

*The LORD is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?
The LORD is the stronghold of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?
When the wicked advance against me to devour^[a] me,
it is my enemies and my foes who will stumble and fall.
Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear;
though war break out against me, even then I will be confident.*

Christ is our salvation, but in this verse, we see that He is also the light of our salvation. Trying to navigate difficult terrain in the darkness is almost impossible, we need a light so that we can see the way. Christ is that light. The more we come to realize that the one who loves us and wants good things for us is in complete control, the more His light shines bright even in the darkest of situations. This does not mean that for the Christian life is free from trials, but that the source of the light has overcome the trails of this world. Look to Him for direction and He will guide your paths. Share your heart with Him and He will give you peace. Lean on Him and your burdens will become lighter. That is what He wants to do for you if you will only look to Him.

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

E2 GROUP OPPORTUNITIES



NEW Thursday Morning Ladies Bible Study

Led by Brenda Ross; Thursdays at 9am Starting 3/5

"In View of God's Mercies", by: Courtney Doctor

This 9-week study walks through the book of Romans to discover that salvation doesn't just change your eternal future; it changes your present reality. Because of God's salvation, hope, peace, life, faith, trust, and endurance are yours.

Sign up at the Welcome Center!

SUNDAY MORNINGS - 9:40am

Kids CHILDREN'S CHURCH (Ages 4 – 4th Grade)
LOCATION: Camp Shiloh on the Lower Level
NURSERY (through Age 3) *9:40AM ONLY
LOCATION: Camp Shiloh on the Lower Level

Youth E2 CLASS (5th – 12th Grade)
LOCATION: Youth Activity Center (across street)

Adults **SPRING QUARTER** - Sunday Mornings at 9:40

LOCATION: B8-10 - Dave Heineman- begins Mar. 1
EXPLORE THE BIBLE:
Matthew 14-28
Gaining a better understanding of what it means to live out our faith each day.

LOCATION: B11 - Dave Delcamp - begins Mar. 1
BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE:
Understanding the Character of God
Through the revelation of Scripture—and His ultimate revelation through Jesus Christ—we can see exactly who God is.

SUNDAY EVENINGS - 6:00pm

Youth YOUTH GROUP (5th – 12th Grade)
LOCATION: Youth Activity Center (across street)

Adults LOCATION: Worship Center

TO SIGN UP OR REQUEST MORE INFORMATION FOR ANY OF THESE GROUPS OR CLASSES, USE THE CONNECTION CARD IN THE BULLETIN. THANK YOU.

Ephesians 5:1-7 **Follow The Leader**

The Book of Ephesians is about the Church—the Body of Christ.

In Ephesians 1-3, Paul presents the R_____ of the Church.

In Ephesians 4-6, Paul presents the R_____.

Paul issues a series of commands using the word "walk" or "live."

The 1st "walk" is to live in u_____ (4:1-16).

The 2nd "walk" is to live in h_____ (4:17-32).

The 3rd "walk" is to live in l_____ (5:1-7).

You accomplish this walk in two ways ...

1. Pure _____ (5:3)

Sex outside the commitment of marriage is selfish and self-centered. It's a form of greed because it's seeking our own self-gratification. That behavior is inappropriate for the people of God. We're to imitate God who is generous and giving.

2. Pure _____ (5:4)

Paul is not talking about having a good sense of humor. Rather, he's referring to off color speech and improper jokes.

In verse 5, the key word is "*inheritance*." You see, salvation is a free gift. You don't deserve it. You can't earn it, and you can't lose it. However, rewards require work. If you want an inheritance—if you want rewards in heaven and in the kingdom that Jesus will establish on earth at His return—then that requires work. It requires walking in love.

Therefore, it does matter how you live your Christian life. You lose rewards for living a sinful life as a believer. Additionally, you invite God's temporal discipline in your life right here and now (verses 6-7).

 Edifying and Equipping Every Day

TAKING OUR NEXT STEP TOGETHER IN THE WORD



February 23 – February 27

INTRODUCTION:

Part of our purpose and strategy as a church is to Edify and Equip (E2) every believer. We desire to see every person take their next step with God, both individually as well as with families and small groups (E2 Communities). This devotional is to aid us in just that. We invite you to join us in daily devotion.

OVERVIEW:

Monday and Tuesday's readings will be a follow up on Sunday's message from, February 22nd, "Follow the Leader". Wednesday through Friday's devotions will help prepare us for the message on March 1st, "Ordering Your Private Life".

KEY/MEMORY VERSE:

Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children
Ephesians 1