



HOLY

1 John 4:8 (NKJV) He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

1 John 4:8 (NLT) But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

1 John 4:8 (AMP) The one who does not love has not become acquainted with God, for God is love.

POINT 1 Love Is the Family Resemblance

Jesus said the world will know we belong to Him not by our doctrine or our attendance, but by our love — it's the family resemblance, and it reaches all the way to loving our enemies.

John 13:34-35 (NLT) So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.

1 John 4:7 (NKJV) Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

1 John 4:20 (NLT) If someone says, I love God, but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see?

Matthew 5:44-45 (NKJV) But I say to you, love your enemies... that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good.

TALK ABOUT IT

1. If someone watched your week with the sound off — just your actions — what would they say you belong to?
2. Agape isn't about how lovely the other person is; it's a decision. Where have you been waiting to FEEL love before you SHOW it?
3. Jesus ties loving your enemies to looking like your Father. Who is God asking you to love that you'd rather not — and what's one concrete way to start?

POINT 2 Love Is the Whole Law in One Word

Every command God ever gave hangs on love like a door on its hinges — pull the love out and you can be gifted, sacrificial, and right, and still be nothing.

Matthew 22:37-40 (NKJV) You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart... You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.

Galatians 5:14 (NKJV) For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 (NLT) If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong... but if I didn't love others, I would be nothing.

Luke 10:36-37 (NKJV) So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves? And he said, He who showed mercy on him. Then Jesus said to him, **Go and do likewise.**

Colossians 3:14 (NKJV) But above all these things **put on love**, which is **the bond of perfection.**

TALK ABOUT IT

4. Love is the breaker — without it, even impressive things amount to nothing. Where have you been running on gifting or being right, with the love switched off?

5. You can be right and still be wrong — win the argument, lose the person. When has that happened to you? What did it cost?

6. The lawyer wanted a list; Jesus gave him a mirror. Who are you most tempted to leave off your neighbor list — and what would loving them require?

POINT 3 You Don't Work Love Up — God Pours It In

You can't pour love from a dry well; we love because He first loved us — at our absolute worst — so love grows out of getting down into how loved we already are.

1 John 4:19 (NKJV) **We love Him because He first loved us.**

1 John 4:10 (NLT) This is real love— **not that we loved God, but that he loved us** and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.

Romans 5:8 (NKJV) But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Ephesians 3:17-19 (NLT) ...Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong... Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

TALK ABOUT IT

7. A dry well can't give water no matter how hard you crank it. Where are you running on empty, trying to love out of a tank that's dry?
8. How well do you actually KNOW how loved you are — not as a doctrine, but as something you feel? How does that show up in how you love others?
9. He loved us at our worst. Whose “worst” are you holding against them — and how does being loved at your own worst change how you see them?

COMMENTARY

Three trusted voices on love as the heart of a holy life.

Matthew Henry

Henry reminds us that love is the fulfilling of the law, not because it lowers the standard, but because it is the standard — every duty we owe God and neighbor is only love in action. Where love reigns, obedience follows naturally; where it's missing, even the most careful religion is empty. This is why he calls love the livery of Christ's disciples: the uniform that marks out whose we are, visible to a watching world long before our words are.

Jack Hayford

Hayford presses that we cannot manufacture this love by willpower — it is the fruit of the Spirit, poured into us, not pumped up by us. Our part is to stay filled: to keep coming back to the Father's heart and letting His love for us overflow toward others. He emphasizes that a believer's capacity to love difficult people is a direct measure of how deeply they have received the love of God themselves.

Jimmy Swaggart

Swaggart anchors it all at the cross. Real love, he insists, is defined by Calvary — not that we loved God, but that He loved us and gave His Son while we were still sinners. Every ounce of love the believer has to give flows from that finished work, received by faith. We don't love our way to God; He loved His way to us, and now His Spirit works that same love out through us.

SOAP — FOR PRIVATE DEVOTION

1 John 4:19 (NKJV) We love Him because He first loved us.

S Scripture

Write out 1 John 4:19 by hand. Slow down enough to actually hear it.

O Observation

Notice the order: He first. Our love is always a response, never the starting point. We don't generate love; we return it. The well was full before we ever came to it.

A Application

Ask yourself honestly: am I trying to love people out of a dry tank, or out of how loved I already am? Name one person who's hard for you to love right now, and one way you'll go to the well first before you go to them.

P Prayer

Write a short prayer asking God to let you feel how loved you are — not just know it — and to let that love spill over onto the person you named. Then go say it or show it out loud.