



### Introduction:

The word “*love*” or derivatives of it are used nearly 500 times in the Bible. From Genesis to Revelation – from the beginning of God’s creation, to the fall of man, to the redemption of the cross, to the restoration of all things in the ages to come, we see the demonstration of love – true divine love. Christ said that the love wherewith He could love originated from the Father (John 15:9). In John 15:9-14, we can see what characteristics are needed for our love to reflect God’s love.

### The Focus:

- **Every believer can love as Christ loves.**
  - **Loving as Christ loves requires believers to “*continue*” and “*abide*” in His love – love needs daily maintenance.**

The word “maintenance” means the “continuation of someone or something by a process.” Another word for it is “upkeep.” Our love is to be continually worked on; our love needs to be daily maintained. In John 15, Christ stated that His disciples needed to continue in His love. Christ never said to love Him or else He and the Father would stop loving them. They were not in danger of losing God’s love – God’s love is unconditional and unmerited; His love remains. Remember, Christ was not only preparing them for the kingdom and glory to come, but for the sufferings which He and they would endure (1 Peter 4:13; 5:1). Therefore, it would have been imperative for them to be constantly focused on Christ’s love.

In order for God’s glory to be revealed, every follower of Christ must devote great attention to continuing in Christ’s love. Remember, we said maintenance is an ongoing process. In the same way, so is continuing in God’s love. It requires us to be desirous of and yielded to His Word. Paul instructed Timothy to give attention to God’s Word and to meditate on its truths. Also, Paul instructed him to apply its principles so that others would see its outworking in his life (1 Timothy 4:13, 15-16). The other aspect to continuing in God’s love is by prayer. Paul taught in Colossians 4:2 that believers should “*continue in prayer.*”

As you work to remain in Christ’s love, it will affect you in your inner man – your spirit. Jesus said in John 15:11 that He spoke those words that their “*joy might be full.*” Paul taught the body of Christ the same thing when he wrote to the believers at Ephesus. Paul desired that believers in Christ be firmly established in love in order to comprehend and know the love of Christ, which enables them to be filled with all of who God is (Ephesians 3:16-19). As followers of Christ, we must seek to love as Christ loves, or the flesh and its desires will prevail in our lives (Galatians 5:19-25).

### Response to the Sermon:

In the sermon this weekend, Pastor Dan talked about that to love and be loved is life’s greatest gift. As well, we know that God’s greatest gift given was His Son, Jesus Christ, and Christ’s greatest gift was His very life which He gave as a payment for the sin of all humanity. How has knowing this love shaped or reshaped your thinking about love – loving God and others?

## **Bible Study Thoughts & Questions:**

In John 15:9-14, the Greek word for “love” and its derivatives is “*agape*.” This type of love speaks to the deep and constant love of God. It is this love that we are to remain in and declare to others who don’t know our God. Because of this *agape* love, followers of Christ should love their enemies (Matthew 5:44), love their neighbor and others (Matthew 19:19; John 13:34), and love the Lord their God (Matthew 22:37). This was the same love that the Father demonstrated to His Son (John 3:35). Paul said to the church in Romans 12:9, “*let love be without dissimulation.*” He was saying that a believer’s love should be true and sincere, without hypocrisy. God’s love isn’t hypocritical, therefore, His love was and is for all people.

If someone were to ask you, “What is God’s love?” what would you tell them?

How has your love grown since you trusted in Jesus? How has it grown this year?

Do you struggle with the fact that God loves you? If so, why or what do you struggle with regarding the truth that God loves you?

Read 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13. According to Paul, what should be happening with our love? The capacity of our love should be growing, but to whom should it be directed? According to verse 13, what is the result of this process? How does this challenge you in your walk with Christ?

## **Application Questions:**

As it was with the disciples, so can it be with every believer! We can be halted or hindered in continuing in Christ’s love. According to John 15:10, what is vital for the believer to do in order to continually remain in God’s love?

What does this mean if you stop dwelling in, and stop comprehending and knowing, God's love (John 15:10; Ephesians 3:17-19)?

What happens when you are in an area or place in your life that causes you to not be abiding in Christ's love (John 15:11)?

How does this affect your relationship with God and others?

**Prayer:**

- Read Romans 5:8 to remember when God loved you and how He demonstrated it.
- Read Romans 8:35, 38-39 to see the strength and power of God's love and what can separate you from it.
- Read Ephesians 3:16-19. Pray that you will be strengthened with God's strength internally. Pray that because you are firmly planted in Christ, you will begin or continue to grow in your comprehension and knowledge of Christ's love. Pray that your character will reflect God's character.