



LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

MON 10-3

▼ SCRIPTURE

Luke 19:10

▼ THOUGHT

"For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost." [NLT] At the heart of Jesus' mission was seeking people who needed his love to heal and save them. As followers of Jesus, this must also become our mission. It can be tough to love some of the people in our lives, but not one of them can be dismissed. Each one is a treasure in God's eyes.

▼ PRAYER

Loving God, help me this week to grow in my compassion for the difficult people in my life whom I find hard to love. I know you care deeply for them, and I need to seek ways to reach out and deliver your saving love. Amen.

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TUES 10-4

▼ SCRIPTURE

Colossians 3:13

▼ THOUGHT

"Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the LORD forgave you, so you must forgive others." [NLT] Do you think you are easily offended? One way we can love the people in our lives more deeply is to choose not to take offense when people say things we disagree with. We can choose to love and let go!

▼ PRAYER

Merciful God, help me to choose not to become upset by people who think differently than I do. Give me a heart of forgiveness because I have been forgiven of so much. Amen.

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WED 10-5

▼ SCRIPTURE

1 Corinthians 13:7

▼ THOUGHT

"Love puts up with all things, trusts in all things, hopes for all things, endures all things." [CEB] Jesus modeled this perfectly for us. Even in the face of unjust punishment and taunting, Jesus endured and continued to love. He didn't insist on being treated a certain way. He showed humility to the point of death.

▼ PRAYER

Precious Jesus, thank you for your persistent love. Help me to keep in perspective what you did for me when I begin to allow disagreements to damage relationships. I want to love as you did. Amen.

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THURS 10-6

▼ **SCRIPTURE** Proverbs 16:24

▼ **THOUGHT** "Gracious speech is like clover honey—good taste to the soul, quick energy for the body." [MSG] When we limit our words to things that build up and provide encouragement, we find *ourselves* encouraged! Try it today--make an extra effort to only speak positive words. When you notice it becoming difficult, say this breath prayer. As you inhale, say, "Gracious God," and as you exhale, say, "Give me your words."

▼ **PRAYER** **Holy Spirit, nudge me each time I begin to say something that isn't loving. I want to use my words to speak life to others. When I am tempted to speak negatively, remind me to listen to your voice. Amen.**

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FRI 10-7

▼ **SCRIPTURE** 1 John 4:21

▼ **THOUGHT** "This commandment we have from him: Those who claim to love God ought to love their brother and sister also." [CEB] As we grow in grace and our faith matures, we will be empowered to carry out this fundamental command. There were no ifs, ands, or buts laid out here--no exceptions for who we are to love! John ties our love for God with our love for each other!

▼ **PRAYER** **Lord Jesus, I long to continually grow in my ability to love like you. Forgive me when I get sidetracked, and I am not intentional about my spiritual growth. Thank you for inviting me to walk closely with you. Amen.**

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SAT 10-8

▼ **SCRIPTURE** Romans 14:12-13

▼ **THOUGHT** "So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God. So stop judging each other. Instead, this is what you should decide: never put a stumbling block or obstacle in the way of your brother or sister." [CEB] Feeling judged because of personal beliefs can disrupt unity in the church. We must treasure unity so that everyone feels welcome to experience the love of God.

▼ **PRAYER** **God of grace, help me to speak with gentle, gracious words that invite others into our church community. Help me never to prioritize being right over being loving. Amen.**

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DIGGING DEEPER

▼ **Intro** **In this series, we'll focus on the biblical ideas of kindness, love, and good deeds that are meant to be our way of life as followers of Jesus. As we head into the political campaign season, these are virtues that we want to highlight and unpack. Living these out can bring people together, depolarize a city and replace divisiveness with joy.**

▼ **Reflect**

- Consider your next-door and other nearby neighbors. Is it easy or hard for you to act kindly toward them? Why?
- Loving others in the face of conflict or disagreement is tough, but it is precisely what God is calling us to move toward. How do you tend to deal with those in your life with whom you disagree?
- Matthew 22:36-40 reads, "'Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?' Jesus replied, '*You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.* This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: *Love your neighbor as yourself.* The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.'" [NLT] If we hold an opinion, political view, or religious practice that undermines these primary commands, we are out of balance! Have you ever experienced someone being unloving because of a belief of theirs? Describe the relational repercussions.
- Loving during a conflict looks like listening, breathing, waiting, & focusing on God rather than ourselves. It means using gentle words and not thinking of yourself more highly than others. How does that make you feel? Great? Guilty? Condemned? Remember that none of us get this right all of the time! What is one thing you can focus on this week that will help you grow in the way you respond to others?

▼ **Prayer** **Gracious God, thank you for loving me unconditionally. Help me to recognize the moments in my life when I can make the choice to relentlessly love someone else, despite the difficulty of that choice. Thank you for the embodiment of your love in Christ Jesus. Shape me so that I embody that same love. Amen.**

