



LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

MON 10-31

▼ **SCRIPTURE** **Matthew 5:43-44**

▼ **THOUGHT** "You have heard that it was said, You must love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who harass you" [CEB] Jesus taught us the law of love. The only way we are able to truly live this out is by allowing the Holy Spirit to transform us. We have to be willing to grow in love which often requires us to change our way of doing things. Ask God for help with making those changes!

▼ **PRAYER** **Lord Jesus, help me to love even when it is hard because your love has changed me. Remind me that everyone is worthy of kindness, and my attitude toward everyone I encounter must reflect that. Amen.**

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TUES 11-1

▼ **SCRIPTURE** **Psalms 128:1**

▼ **THOUGHT** "Everyone who honors the LORD, who walks in God's ways, is truly happy!" [CEB] We honor the Lord by honoring each other! Jesus' instruction to love God and love others is the key to a life of joy. Spend a few minutes in silent prayer and bring to mind those who honor you with their actions and give thanks. Then, bring to mind those you need to work to honor and ask God to renew your way of seeing those people.

▼ **PRAYER** **God of love, I want to honor you with my whole life. Help me to remember the simple truth you have given me that leads to joy. Help me to become more loving to those in my life with whom I struggle. Amen.**

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WED 11-2

▼ **SCRIPTURE** **James 3:10**

▼ **THOUGHT** "And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right!" [NLT] The words we offer people can bring life! Our bodies are made to worship God, and the words we choose are meant to show God's glory. Think of how the week has gone so far. Has there been a conversation where things didn't turn out to be very loving? How might you turn that around?

▼ **PRAYER** **Lord Jesus, controlling my tongue is hard, but I know I can do all things with your strength at work in my heart and mind. Forgive me when my words aren't loving, and show me a better way. Amen**

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THURS 11-3

- ▼ **SCRIPTURE** **Ephesians 4:29**
- ▼ **THOUGHT** "Don't let any foul words come out of your mouth. Only say what is helpful when it is needed for building up the community so that it benefits those who hear what you say." [CEB] Do you think that this scripture is simply addressing when people curse? The second sentence lets us know that ultimately our words must benefit people. If we can pause and ask ourselves that question as we formulate our thoughts, it can make a big impact.
- ▼ **PRAYER** **Lord of life, help me tame my tongue. I want to respond to your grace by living a life that points to your goodness. Remind me in every conversation that I am an ambassador of Christ. Amen.**

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FRI 11-4

- ▼ **SCRIPTURE** **Colossians 3:12**
- ▼ **THOUGHT** "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience." [NIV] Paul lists several qualities we can *put on*. Inner transformation is not as quick and easy, of course, as changing dirty clothes! Wouldn't that be nice? It is a daily choice to make, as God will not force us to grow. It is up to us to decide to grow in the way we display these qualities to those around us.
- ▼ **PRAYER** **God of grace, I am so glad you offer such goodness to me. I want to choose your ways each day. Thank you for the joyful life you offer for those who wisely seek to follow the example of Christ. Amen.**

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SAT 11-5

- ▼ **SCRIPTURE** **Proverbs 15:4**
- ▼ **THOUGHT** "Kind words heal and help; cutting words wound and maim." [MSG] We are called to be healers and helpers. Are you working to heal divides and actively seeking to be a peace maker? If we are busying our minds with thoughts of how to intentionally do this, we won't have room left for cutting words!
- ▼ **PRAYER** **Loving Jesus, when others think of me, I want them to think of peace, love, kindness, and joy. Point out in me the things I am doing that might stifle the development of these qualities. Thank you, that with the help of your Spirit, I am capable of change. 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. We are called to love others--even those with whom we disagree!**

▼ **Reflect**

- We are coming up on election day. What feelings and emotions does that stir up in you? Why?
- Sometimes when we are passionate about a subject, we can forget to be good listeners. Do you struggle with that? When you are in conversation with someone who seemingly doesn't want to listen, how do you feel? How do you handle it?
- Matthew 5:21-22 says, "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment..." [NIV] Jesus felt very strongly about the way we treat each other. Take a minute to think of the people in your circles--work, family, and social. Is there someone you are holding anger against or someone who seems to cause regular frustration for you? What are ways you can actively work against becoming angry?
- Words have power! We can easily damage another's reputation by speaking unkindly about them. What kind of examples do you see in our culture as it relates to politics?
- James 3:5 warns us, "In the same way, the tongue is a small thing that makes grand speeches. But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire." [NLT] One tiny spark can cause much damage. How can you be active and intentional about remembering to use words to encourage and inspire during this time leading up to the election? Make a practical list and set reminders on your phone!

▼ **Prayer** **Lord Jesus, sometimes those who disagree with me bug me so much that I forget they are children of God, just like I am. Remind me that we all ultimately come from your creative heart and help me to see them and treat them as you do. Amen.**



DIGGING DEEPER

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▼ What did I learn? _____

▼ How might it apply in my life? _____

▼ What is a next step I can take? _____

