

# 40 DAYS OF *prayer*



THE ALLIANCE

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OF *prayer*

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## WEEK 5 THE LOVE OF GOD

*1 John 4:16*

The Beatles famously said, "All you need is love." The reality is that this statement is truer than most realize, but our understanding of love is limited—it is often dependent and conditional. That is not the love that people need; instead, we need true love.

God's love displayed in Scripture and experienced in our lives goes beyond the love we know and experience on a daily basis. 1 John 4:16 says, "God is love." Love is who He is; it is His character. He came to this earth to display this perfect love, to show Himself, and to provide an opportunity for all of us to experience what we long for—love.

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

"All we need is love," and the good news is that love is given to us in Jesus Christ.

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## GOD'S LOVE NEVER FAILS

PSALM 36:7

My family and I live in a very interesting place—in just two-square kilometers, about 80 nationalities of immigrants from different parts of the world coexist. Every day I see how they have to fight against the injustice, poverty, uncertainty, and the challenges they face because they are living in a different culture than their own.

In Psalm 36:7, David shows us the great love that God has with each of us and how, as a good Father, He wants to take care of us in our pilgrimage through life. Life drives us to move faster and be more independent by supporting our daily decisions in our own capacities, not finding moments during the day to stop and ask God what is best for our lives or what we should do each day.

There is an invitation that David makes to us to stop the daily agendas about to explode, the media bombardment of social networks, and the excess of information we are exposed to every day. We need to recover those times alone with our Creator.



### REFLECTION PRAYER

*Father, help me to see Your love that reminds me of Your greatness and Your care for me. Help me to stay in You and do Your will in my life every day. Amen.*

## GOD'S LOVE DRAWS US IN

JEREMIAH 31:3

Our “pandemic pet” was a brown baby bunny. My daughter, Kelsey, carried tiny Floppy everywhere for weeks. Even after the bunny was fully grown and exiled to the backyard, the instant that someone left a door open, he would hop upstairs and hide under Kelsey’s bed. We never found Floppy under my son’s bed (in the same room) or in any other dark cubby-hole. Kelsey alone was Floppy’s safe space. Last year, when we lost Floppy, she was devastated. No new bunny could replace that special bond in her heart.

In *The Other Half of Church*, Jim Wilder describes this type of strong connection using the Hebrew word *hesed*, translated in the verse above as *unfailing kindness*. Jim explains that strong, deep, joy-filled attachments provide the same powerful chemical reaction in the thalamus of our brain as addictive drugs. Once an attachment forms between a mother and infant, for example, no one else can ever replace that bond. However, as we grow and mature, we can form new attachments—for example, when a new child joins the family.

Our Father longs to form a secure attachment with us reminiscent of the way that Kelsey bonded with Floppy. God draws us into a safe space with his *hesed*: all-encompassing, all-consuming, worth-more-than-life-itself love. How can we become fully, unconditionally attached to Him in a way that lights up our thalamus? How can we expand our network of secure attachments with other people, drawing upon God’s compelling love at the core?



## REFLECTION PRAYER

*Heavenly Father, we are so easily entertained and distracted, satisfied with short-term dopamine hits that leave us anxious and empty at the end of the day. We long for meaningful connection and peace. What is preventing us from forming a secure attachment to You? We will be silent now and listen.*

*Draw us with Your everlasting hesed love and unfailing kindness. Satisfy our core longing for attachment. From the overflow of Your love, may we reflect a deep, abiding joy towards one another. In You alone will we find our safe space and peaceful refuge. Amen.*

## GOD'S LOVE REJOICES OVER US

ZEPHANIAH 3:17

Zephaniah starts this passage by emphasizing the presence of God in our lives. It is a pretty special feeling knowing God wants to be with us. Zephaniah wrote this passage to reassure the faithful in Israel that they have not been forgotten but rather have been remembered in love by God Himself. Do we sometimes feel forgotten? Alone in our work in the world? Sometimes, God's presence does not feel close. This is an important reminder that we serve a God who loves us so much that He chooses to be in our midst.

Zephaniah goes further and says that God is not just with us, but He will fight for us victoriously, love us personally, and be exuberantly joyful about that love. When we are alone, defeated, fearful, and sad, Zephaniah reminds us that our God has come to reverse each of these with His love. We are no longer alone when we are in His presence. We are no longer defeated as we share in His victory. We no longer know fear when we feel His love. We are no longer sad when we share in His great joy. What are we struggling with today? Whatever it may be, God has come to relieve our burden with His great love for us.



### REFLECTION PRAYER

*Lord, we thank You for being a God who loves us. We thank You for not abandoning us to ourselves but offering Your love that covers all our inadequacies. When we stray from You in the future, please forgive us and bring us back with Your great love. Maranatha. Amen.*

## GOD'S LOVE IS FOR ALL

JOHN 3:16

The familiarity of this passage makes it easy to miss the challenge it presents to us. We are invited into eternal life with Christ now, to know His love and by His Spirit within us, make His love known. 1 John 3:16 tells us that “Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.” By saying this, John connects the act of Jesus laying down His life for us (John 10:11) to the call for followers of Jesus to lay down their lives for one another (1 John 3:16).

The invitation to follow Jesus requires daily surrender to His way. This is the essence of godliness, that we become like Him by doing the things that He does—first and foremost loving God, neighbor, and self by the grace of His Spirit within us. This means that John 3:16 is not only a statement of fact or a pithy summary about what God has done for us. It is also an invitation for us love the world the way God does—He gave the best of Himself in order to transform the world that was distant from Him, that even opposed Him. What about you? What would it look like for you to give of yourself, trusting that God might use that act of love to transform others? Who is He inviting you to love today in a tangible way?



### REFLECTION PRAYER

*Lead me, Lord, in loving the world as You do. Transform my thinking about those around me to see that You withheld (and withhold) nothing in order to redeem the world. As I receive the grace You have given me through Christ, guide me in reflecting and extending that same grace to others. Amen.*

## GOD'S LOVE IS OUR GIFT

ROMANS 5:5

“And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us” (Rom. 5:5).

God is a self-revealing God, and He is always eager to reveal His love. This is an invitation to an encounter with God, which is an encounter with love. Love is who He is. He can’t differ from unconditional love.

I often meet with those who are so burdened with shame that they cannot approach God. Together, we ask Jesus for a fresh revelation of God’s love for them. He never disappoints. I frequently witness the weeping that comes when God pours out His love into their hearts through the Holy Spirit. Honor replaces shame. Joy returns.

Likewise, when we teach our youth to hear God’s voice for the first time, the words they first hear and recognize are “I love you.”

In Acts 2:17–18, God declares He will pour out His Spirit on all flesh and they shall prophesy. This is an act of God’s character of love. He has made Himself known to us through His “rhema” words to our hearts, inviting relationship and intimacy.

The Holy Spirit is constantly communicating God’s character, truth, and will. We must actively participate in acknowledging and receiving God’s love. This means continually being filled with the Holy Spirit, the expression of His love, the promise of the Father.



## REFLECTION PRAYER

*Dear Father, thank You that You are love. I repent for not keeping myself in the love of Christ and falling into shame and fear. In Jesus’ name, now I receive a fresh revelation of Your love for me and the filling of Your Holy Spirit and joy. Thank You for hope and healing from shame and fear. Your perfect love casts out fear. Help me live daily knowing the love of God the Father, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit for the glory of Your name, Jesus. Amen.*



## GOD'S LOVE IS NEAR

ROMANS 8:35-39

Nothing.  
Nothing can undo it; no one can take it away; no act can break it down.

Nothing.  
Not my past, mistakes from yesterday, failure still remembered, regret and sorrow.  
My past cannot separate me from Jesus' love.

Not my present morning threats, daily disappointments, missed opportunities.  
My present cannot separate me from Jesus' love,

Not my future; no weakness; no helplessness; no fading health.  
My future cannot separate me from Jesus' love.

Nothing inside—  
Not arrogance and pride, not anxious thoughts and fears, neither confusion nor discouragement.

Nothing outside—  
Neither enemies, nor persecutions, nor economic decay.

Nothing could, nothing can, nothing will separate me from Jesus' love.  
Nothing.  
Nothing.  
Nothing can separate me from Jesus' love.

Jesus' love transforms threatened weaklings into victors, failures and losses into triumphs, fretful servants into more than conquerors, weakness into perfected strength—all through the love of Jesus.



## REFLECTION PRAYER

*I praise You for giving us the love of Jesus Christ. I praise You that nothing can separate us from that love. I praise You that I need not fear those realities that cannot come between me and Your love. Now, Lord, please teach me to live that love with the people I meet here so that they can know this love that conquers all. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

## GOD IS LOVE

1 JOHN 4:8, 16

In his letter to the Early Church, John addresses false teachings and issues that they were facing. These included things like denying Christ as the Son of God and people who claimed to know Christ but didn't obey His commands. In addition, there were those who claimed to love God but had become indifferent to those in need—I wonder how this could have been? Yet, as I look around, I see how very real these issues are still today. Verse eight says, "Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love." If we claim to love God, we must believe in Christ, obey His commands, and love others.

"God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him" (1 John 4:16). He first loved us and sent His Son to be the sacrifice for our sin while we didn't yet love Him nor believe in Him. He, our Lord and Savior, is love. This should generate a response in us to run out into the world loving one another with servitude, knowing we are then abiding in God and He in us. This requires risk and doesn't promise to be easy; it will come with challenges and maybe even pain. God is powerful, and His love casts out fear! Where we live, the enemy deceives many with lies that bind people in fear to evil spirits. They make offerings to appease them. May they find Jesus, who made the ultimate sacrifice for them!



## REFLECTION PRAYER

*Dear Father, I'm thankful that You manifested Your love through Your Son who paid the price for my salvation, that I may have eternal life through Him. Through Him, I have freedom, confidence, and an example of what true love is. I humbly admit and am open to the change that is needed that I may be more like Christ. Help me, Holy Spirit, to perfect Your love in me. I pray that in my deeds and in truth, I can lovingly obey Your commands and love others as You do so that others may see You in my everyday life. Amen.*