

READ MATTHEW 22:36-39

DAY 4

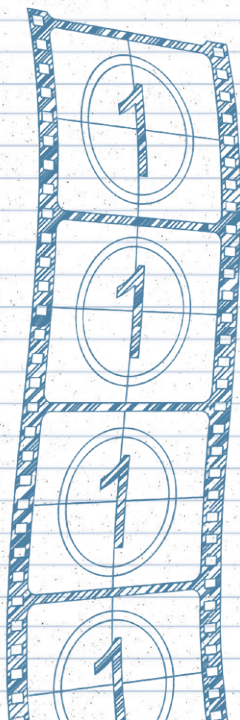
Jesus made it so clear for us. The great, most important thing we can do is to **love God and love others**.

Love isn't just a feeling or an idea. Love is really love when we put it into action. It's a choice we make, every single day. We love because we are created in God's image. In other words, we were created to be like God. And like God, we have the ability to love others.

Maybe we can't see or touch God. But we can show love to Him by loving the people HE loves. That's way more than just your friends and family; it's anyone who you come in contact with.

This week, think of a way to show love to someone who isn't in your regular circle of friends. Make cookies and give a few to the other families in the neighborhood. Write a note to thank your mail carrier for her hard work. Give your teacher your full attention and your best effort in class. Sit next to the guy or girl at lunch who is different from you.

CHALLENGE yourself to show love to ALL the people God has put in your life.



THINK ABOUT IT:

1. Do you know someone who is really good at what Jesus said: loving God, and loving others?
2. What do other people think of that person? How can that person's actions change the way others might think about God?
3. How do you think it looks to others if someone says they follow God, but they don't put His love into action?



Choosing to treat others
the way you want to be treated

READ 1 JOHN 4:10

DAY 1

Did you know that the Bible is actually a love story? It's true! We all know what it means to feel love. We love our mom and dad, our cousins, uncles and aunts, grandparents, and best friends. What our Memory Verse is saying is that the love we feel really started with God.

From the very beginning, God loved the world. He loved the people He made—even when they disobeyed and sinned against him. And He proved it by sending His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for our sins, so we could be forgiven and have a relationship with God that will last forever.

When we love others, we're modeling the love that God has already shown to us. Your life can be a part of God's great LOVE story, because you get to show His love to whomever He puts in your life.

THANK God for loving you and letting you be a part of His big LOVE story for the world.

THINK ABOUT IT:

1. When Jesus died on the cross, how was that the best example of love?
2. Who did Jesus die for? How does that make you feel?
3. How do you think you can be a part of God's love story today?

WEEK ONE
4TH - 5TH

READ MATTHEW 7:12

DAY 2

This is one of Jesus' most famous sayings. It's called the "Golden Rule"—and it explains exactly what love is all about.

Love is choosing to treat others the way you want to be treated. It's acting toward others in a way that we would want others to act toward us.

In the space below, draw a picture of your perfect day. Think of what you would do, who would be there, what you would eat . . . all of it. Get creative and have fun. And think about how you could do some of those same things for someone else!

ASK God to help you treat others the way you want to be treated.

THINK ABOUT IT:

1. What do you want from other people when you're having a bad day?
2. What do you want from other people when you're having a good day?
3. How can you remember to act in those same ways toward the people around you?

READ JOHN 15:12-13

DAY 3

Jesus really wanted His friends to know this simple truth, and He wants the same thing for us today: we should love others just as He has loved us.

Of course, Jesus gave us the ultimate example of love by the way He gave His life to pay the price for our sins. In the same way, we can "give our lives" for our friends by serving them and putting what they need ahead of what we need.

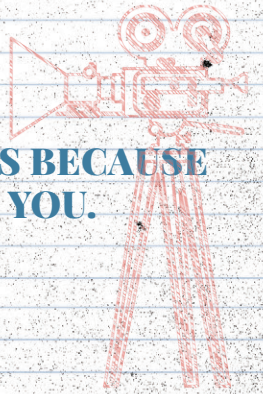
Write the names of three friends below. Now, in the blank next to their names, write one thing you could do this week to show love to them. It could be as simple as letting them be the quarterback when you play football, or telling them why you're thankful for their friendship, or praying for them because you know they're going through something tough.

LOVE others because Jesus loves you.

THINK ABOUT IT:

1. Have you ever been surprised by the way a friend showed love to you?
2. Have you ever done something on purpose to show love, like the things you listed above?
3. Why do you think it's so important that we get in the habit of loving others like Jesus loves us?

**LOVE OTHERS BECAUSE
JESUS LOVES YOU.**



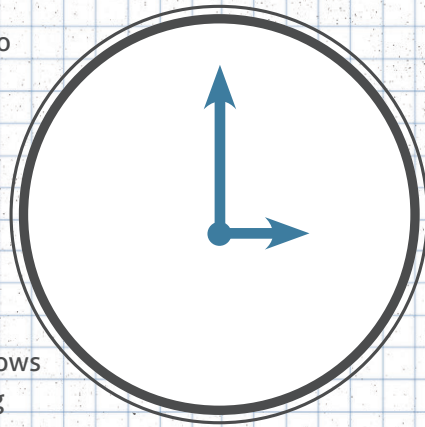
READ EPHESIANS 6:18

DAY 4

There are SO many people around us who need comfort and peace in the midst of life's struggles. And if we're serious about loving them, then we need to be willing to put our love into action. Sometimes that can seem overwhelming because we don't even know where to begin.

The great news is there's something **POWERFUL** that we can do anytime to show love and compassion to our friends. We can pray for them!

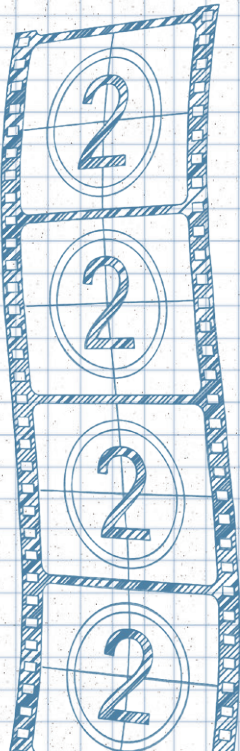
On this clock, fill in the names of people you'd like to pray for. Tomorrow, see if you can remember to pray throughout the day



PRAY to God and trust that He knows exactly what you're friends are going through.

THINK ABOUT IT:

1. How does it feel when you know someone has been praying for you?
2. Why do you think God wants us to be involved in talking to Him about our friends' needs?
3. What does it mean to "be watchful, so that you can pray"?



Choosing to treat others
the way you want to be treated

READ MARK 4:38-39

DAY 1

This week, we looked at the time when Jesus was teaching, and He asked His friends to take their boat to the other side of the lake. It was in the evening and the Bible says a "wild storm came up."

Have you ever been in a wild storm? It doesn't matter how old you are—storms can be terrifying! And aren't they even worse when it's dark out? Now imagine you were on a boat in the middle of a giant lake with waves crashing over the top of you. It wasn't just like the boat was rocking back and forth. It was literally about to sink!

The disciples were afraid for their lives. But then they did the best thing they could have in that situation. They asked Jesus for help! They knew that the storm was about to take them down, but Jesus was in their boat and HE could do something about it.

Of course, Jesus was *sleeping* in the back of the boat. He sure wasn't worried! But when His friends woke Him up and He saw how scared they were, He ordered the wind and waves to stop. He had compassion on His disciples. He knew that He could comfort them when they were afraid. Just like He does with us, He offered them peace in the midst of the raging storm of life.

THINK of a "storm" going on in your life and ask Jesus to help you.

THINK ABOUT IT:

1. How did Jesus show love to His friends with His actions in this story?
2. Do you think He was annoyed when they woke Him up? Why not?
3. Even if Jesus doesn't "fix" our problems the way we have in mind, what are some other ways He shows love to us when we ask?

WEEK TWO
4TH - 5TH

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-4

DAY 2

Has God ever comforted you when you were in trouble? Maybe you were really bummed out because of something somebody said or maybe you had a disagreement with a friend. In those times, isn't it great to know that God is with you and that He really understands how you feel?

Now, have you ever had a friend stand by you when you were feeling down? Maybe they stood up for you. Maybe they made you laugh to make you feel better. It means everything to have a friend like that!

So what if you were that kind of friend to them when they were going through something tough? What if you decided you were going to treat them the way you wanted to be treated? What if you chose to comfort them the same way God has comforted you?

You probably know somebody who's dealing with trouble right now. One simple way to do that is to write them a note letting them know you've got their back. In fact, you can actually write that on the note: "I've got your back!" Write your message on a blank sheet of paper, make it into a paper airplane, and fly it to your friend sometime tomorrow.

DON'T MISS the chance to tell your friends that you've got their back!

THINK ABOUT IT:

1. Why do you think it's so easy to think about our own problems, but not think about someone else's problems?
2. Do most people usually let you know when they're hurting? Or do they keep it inside?
3. When you comfort somebody, how does that show them God's love?

READ JOHN 13:34-35

DAY 3

Jesus was pretty clear that LOVE should be the number one thing people think of when they think of Christians. The cool thing about love is that it really stands out in a world where people don't always treat each other with love.

When we forgive people who have hurt us, when we're quick to give them a second chance, we show the kind of LOVE that the world is starved for. We're representing Jesus in a world that desperately needs to know the difference His love can make.

When we get this right, others see us as safe, trusted friends. They know they can come to us anytime and we'll always be there for them. They'll know they can count on us like we can count on God.

What do you want YOUR reputation to be? Write down a few words that describe how you want others to see you.

ASK God to help you live up to those words you listed above, so that others know you as someone who LOVES.

THINK ABOUT IT:

1. Would you say Christians are known for loving others?
2. Why is it important for us to have a great reputation for loving one another?
3. When you first got to know some Christians, who were the people who showed love to you? How did they show it?

**COMFORT OTHERS
WHO ARE HURTING.**



READ MATTHEW 25:37-40

DAY 4

Jesus really raised the game when He said these words. He opened His friends' eyes to a very simple, very powerful truth.

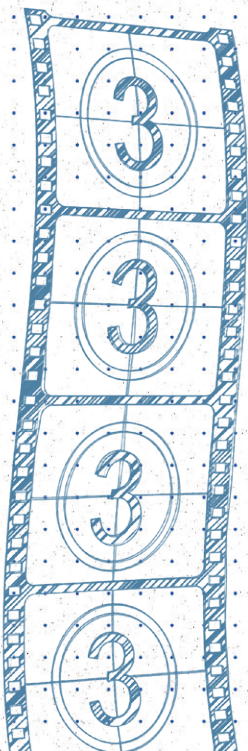
When we come face to face with people, there's always more at stake than we think. We might be tempted to ignore someone who looks sad or lonely, or get super-excited about our awesome lunch when someone at the next table doesn't have enough to eat. But God wants us to be on the lookout for ways to show love. He wants us to be willing to share, to take the time to be a friend, and to be ready to show love.

When we treat people that way, it's like we're doing that directly for Jesus. We can't afford to be selfish or lazy, because His kind of love requires us to take action.

Find a sticky note and write a lightning bolt and "RAISE YOUR GAME." Put it on your bathroom mirror for the next few days, to motivate you to look out for others' needs.

THINK ABOUT IT:

1. How can you "raise your game" this week and put others' needs above your own?
2. What kind of message does it send about following Jesus when we live that way?
3. Why do other people need to see and experience that kind of selfless love from us?



Choosing to treat others
the way you want to be treated

READ MARK 6:34

DAY 1

It's amazing to read how Jesus fed a crowd of thousands of people with just five loaves of bread and two fish. It was a true miracle, and it definitely showed that Jesus could do anything!

But you know what? It's just as amazing to read the events that led up to that miracle because of Jesus' love and compassion for the people.

Jesus' friends, the disciples, had been out teaching in the towns, healing people, and asking them to turn away from their sins. And they were tired! The Bible says they hadn't even had a chance to eat yet. Jesus took them in a boat to a quiet place where they could rest, but the people recognized them and got there ahead of them.

How would you feel in that situation? Wouldn't you be a little frustrated? The disciples had been doing so much hard work; didn't they deserve a little downtime?

But that's not how Jesus felt. Instead, He saw that the people in the crowd were trying to follow Him because they really *needed* Him. He had compassion on them. He stopped what He was doing and began to teach them.

CHALLENGE yourself to be like Jesus. Look around and see how you can help someone who needs you..

THINK ABOUT IT:

1. Do you get annoyed when people interrupt you because they need something?
2. Has there ever been a time that you chose to stop what you were doing and show love to them?
3. What do you think our good (or bad) attitude says to the person who needs our help?

WEEK THREE

4TH - 5TH

READ 1 JOHN 3:17

DAY 2

Have you ever seen someone in need and you weren't sure what to do about it? Maybe a friend told you they're having a really tough time at home. Maybe you're riding in the car and you see someone holding up a sign asking for food or money, or a job.

It can be tough to know exactly what to do in those situations. But this verse makes it clear: if the love of God is in us, then we should CARE about what those people are going through. And if we're able to, we should DO something to help them.

There are lots of ways to do that. You can tell your parent or teacher if someone you know is going through something really difficult. If someone's upset, you can ask them if there's anything you can do or just give them a hug and let them know you're praying for them. If you see someone in need out on the street, you can talk to your parents about how they might give money to your church or other organizations that can help people who are facing hard times. You could even talk about serving somewhere with your family to help people who need to feel love and compassion.

TALK to your parents about what you could do (or what you already do) to help people in need

THINK ABOUT IT:

1. Do you think there's always an easy solution to people's needs?
2. Do you think you can solve every need around you?
3. So why is it important that we do *something* to help when we see a need?

READ GALATIANS 6:2

DAY 3

Find your school backpack and look inside it. Is it full of books? If not, go ahead and put a few in there. Now, put it on your back.

Find your brother or sister's backpack and put that one on too facing front. (Or if you don't have a sibling, put on your parent's work bag or something else that's heavy.) Walk around a little bit. Getting tired?

OK, you can take off those backpacks. Isn't it true that your own "heavy load" seems like enough for you to have to deal with? And we're not just talking about backpacks here. Think about all the things you have to do and keep straight for yourself. You've got plenty of homework to do, plenty of chores, plenty of friendships, and everything else that takes up your time.

But this verse says that God doesn't want us to only think about ourselves. He has a higher standard for us. He wants us to be willing to carry each other's heavy loads and to care about what *other* people have to deal with. He wants us to be willing to lend a hand and help them with whatever's going on in their lives.

THINK of a way you can carry a heavy load for your brother or sister or friend this week.

THINK ABOUT IT:

1. Does it come naturally to want to carry each other's heavy loads?
2. Has someone ever carried your heavy load when you were stressed out or facing something tough?
3. When we help others in that way, how are we acting more like Jesus?

**GIVE TO OTHERS
WHO ARE IN NEED.**



READ 1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-7

DAY 4

This verse is a great illustration of what love is . . . and what love isn't. When we put love into action, we show others that they're important and that they matter. We put others first instead of focusing on our own needs. We treat others the way we would hope to be treated.

Read the verses again. This time, substituting your name every time it says "love" or "it."

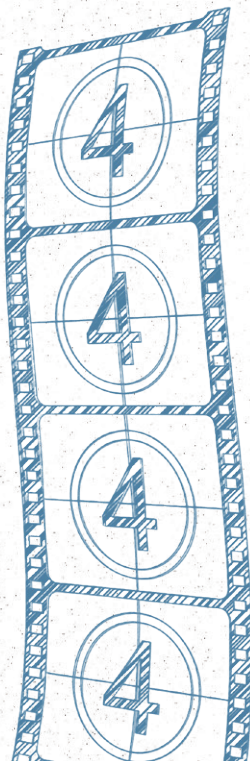
How did that feel? Did you feel like some of the sentences were true of you? Did you feel like there were some that you need to work on? Wouldn't it be great to say that the whole passage perfectly described you?

Now look back at the verses and write in the names of people you know when they come to mind. For example, if you know that your mom is always kind, you can write her name there.

THANK God for all of the loving people He has surrounded you with.

THINK ABOUT IT:

1. How is this description of love different from the way a lot of movies or songs talk about love?
2. As you look at the list, what part do you think is the hardest for you?
3. How do you think God can help you develop that quality in yourself?



Choosing to treat others
the way you want to be treated

READ LUKE 10:29

DAY 1

Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan after a teacher of the law asked him: "Who is my neighbor?" The teacher knew what he was supposed to do, to love God and love his neighbor, but he asked Jesus that extra question to try to see if he really had to treat everyone that way.

Jesus' answer was to tell him a story. The story was about a guy who got beaten up and left on the side of the road. Two church leaders saw him, but they were too busy to care, and so they passed by on the other side of the road. The Samaritan was different. He felt sorry for the man and he took the time to bandage him up, take him to an inn to rest, and pay for his room!

Jesus knew the teacher was only trying to do just enough for God to be satisfied with him. But that wasn't the point at all. The point was that the teacher should actually *care* about the man who had a need—not try to make excuses for his own actions.

THINK about what motivates you to show love.

THINK ABOUT IT:

1. If you're honest, have you ever looked at showing love like it's an assignment—something you're supposed to do?
2. How does Jesus want us to look differently at showing love?
3. How does this story show us that each person really matters to God?

WEEK FOUR

4TH - 5TH

READ PSALM 139:17-18

DAY 2

Have you ever laid in bed and couldn't go to sleep? Have you ever tried counting sheep? This verse is a pretty cool take on that idea. David is saying that God cares about you so much that if you counted all His thoughts about you as you fell asleep, you'd still be counting when you woke up.

You know what that means? You really matter to God. Everyone does. And not in a big, gigantic, God-created-you-from-a-distance kind of way. He actually LOVES you, personally. He knows everything about you and He's crazy about you!

The truth is people need to hear that they matter to God. And a great way to show them they matter is by treating them with love and compassion; treating them the way you'd want to be treated.

Make a custom license plate here. Find a cool way to abbreviate "You matter to God." (Don't forget to put your state at the top.)

TALK to your parents about different ways you can show people that they matter to you.

THINK ABOUT IT:

1. Can you think of a time when someone made you feel like you really mattered to them?
2. What stood out about the way they treated you?
3. Why is it so easy for people to forget that they really matter to God?

READ MATTHEW 5:43-44

DAY 3

Jesus really challenged our idea of love with this idea: that we should love our enemies. It's easy to say that, but really difficult to actually do it. Loving others isn't always easy, especially when God calls us to love people who are different from us.

So why should we love our enemies, anyway? I mean, they sure don't deserve it! But here's the thing, *none* of us deserve God's extravagant love. All of us mess up. All of us sin. But God loves us anyway. He gives us grace and cares for us even though we can't do anything to earn His love.

You see, everyone is worthy of our love. Everyone matters to God. Jesus came to show love to *all* of us. So in response, we can take our cue from His bold, courageous love and treat everyone around us with the love He's already shown to us.

Write down two or three people who are challenging for you. Now write "Show love to" and draw an arrow to their names. Now write one idea of a way you can show love to each of them.

ASK God to help you love your enemies

THINK ABOUT IT:

1. Think of a time that you messed up and had to ask God for forgiveness.
2. Think of a time you messed up with a friendship and had to say you were sorry.
3. How did you hope they would respond to you in that moment? Do you think you can extend that same kind of grace to others?

**LOVE OTHERS BECAUSE
THEY MATTER TO GOD.**

