



Morningside Church

Sermon Discussion Guide

Title: God's Gift of Love

Date: December 14, 2025

Scripture Text: 1 John 4:7-12

Notes:

The term 'love' is used in a multitude of ways. We love a spouse or family member, but we may also love an activity (I *love* to go to the beach) or an item (I *love* ice cream), but the Bible describes a love greater than all those combined, the love of God. As part of our observance of Advent, which is intended to help keep us focused on Jesus and to prepare our hearts for the celebration of the His birth, we look at the topic of LOVE. The Bible says that "God is love" ([1 John 4:8](#)) and describes how God demonstrated His love for us ([1 John 4:9](#)). Let's take a look at God's gift of love.

I. Love is From God ([1 John 4:7-8](#))

Many times, love is demonstrated by an expression of emotion. From a cultural perspective love is driven by emotion and can come and go. The phrase "fall in love" gives the impression that love is accidental and unpredictable. But the Bible gives a different view of love. The source of love is God, and He is the expression of love. God sets the standard for love, and He has an expectation that we meet that standard as well. We see that love is not accidental, but is an intentional choice, dependent on God and His love that He gives us.

- Godly love is described by the Greek word agapē. It is defined as a selfless, sacrificial, unconditional love that seeks the highest good of others. How would you describe someone who is demonstrating agapē love.
- The term 'agapē' is rarely found in extrabiblical references. This has led some to believe that there wasn't a term that adequately described God's love, so it had to be created. How have you experienced this kind of love from God?
- How can experiencing God's love first-hand equip you to live the Christian life?

II. Jesus is God's Gift of Love ([1 John 4:9-10](#))

Love is a verb, meaning it is an action word. Action is how love is demonstrated. God demonstrated His love for us through Jesus Christ. Jesus lived a sinless life and paid the price of sin so that those who accept these actions will have eternal life. All this is action. It's more than words. These actions are intentional, selfless, and sets the example for us. We are able to love because He first loved us ([1 John 4:19](#)).



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- God's love is *unconditional*: "not that we loved God" ([1 John 4:10b](#)).
 - What does it look like to love unconditionally?
 - What tends to be the motive for those who love conditionally?
 - We cannot earn God's love; it is a free gift through Christ. Are there times you may find yourself trying to earn God's love?
- God's love is *intentional*: "He loved us and sent His Son" ([1 John 4:10c](#)).
 - How did God show He was intentional with His love?
 - Being intentional is showing purpose, being deliberate, a focused action. How have you been intentional with God?
- God's love is *sacrificial*: He sent His Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.
 - How would you describe the sacrificial love of God to someone?
 - How has God's sacrificial love encouraged you to love Him more?

III. We Are to Share God's Gift of Love ([1 John 4:11-12](#))

God set the standard for love and what it looks like. Our love for Him is in response to His love for us. We are to take His example of love and be that expression of love to one another. The love He has for us is made visible and complete as we love one another. We show that we are Jesus' disciples by our love for one another ([John 13:35](#)).

- As mentioned above, God loves us unconditionally, intentionally, and sacrificially.
 - For us to love *unconditionally* is to not see others as a means to an end. We need to love without expecting something in return.
 - If the church loved unconditionally as God does, how would that impact the effectiveness of the church?
 - For us to love *intentionally* requires work. It doesn't naturally happen.
 - Love doesn't start with feeling but is a conscience decision. What are challenges you face to love others intentionally?
 - When it comes to love, why is it important to not be driven by emotion but intentional decision?
 - The emotion may come, but intentional love can't wait for the emotion.
 - For us to love *sacrificially*, we must put the needs of others ahead of ourselves. Sacrificial love is selfless love.
 - People experience God when they experience our sacrificially love. How can the church be affected if its members love each other sacrificially?
 - [Phil. 2:3](#) & [Rom 12:10](#) states we must honor and value others above ourselves. How do you place the needs of others above yourself?

The church should be the closest thing to heaven we experience before we get there. For it to be what God intended, godly (agapē) love must be practiced. How committed are you to being the love of God to others?