



## Loving Sacrificially

By Shannon Ford on October 17, 2022

### TODAY'S READING: 1 John 4

Love is one of the most talked about topics in our country. It is also one of the most misunderstood emotions in our culture. We have come to think of love in terms of gifts, cards and romance. In today's text, John talks a great deal about love, but he defines it differently than we do. There are several Greek words for *love*. One word denotes family love, another denotes friends, and a third talks about romance or physical attraction. John is not using any of these words. He uses the word *agape* which means a self-sacrificing love. It is the word used most of the time in the Bible to describe the kind of love that God wants to see in us. *Agape* is the love that "comes from God" and is a fundamental part of God's nature (v. 7). The word points to giving rather than acquiring; it is focused on the benefit of others, even to the detriment of self.

Rather than relying on an explanation of *agape* love, John pointed to the demonstration of this love as seen in Jesus Christ. God showed His love when He sent His one and only son to the world to bring about salvation for sinful humanity (v. 9). Only those who trust or believe in what Jesus did for them actually experience God's love (are "born of God") and are able to "live through him" (vv. 7-9). Those who have experienced God's love will likewise express His love to others. This is the evidence that a person "knows God," and has a relationship with the Father through faith in his son, Jesus Christ,

Experiencing God's love not only shows us how to love others, it also gives us the ability to love them. John emphasized in his letter that believers will naturally reflect their Father's character by showing love to one another. If we refuse to display God's love, especially toward a fellow believer, then our declaration of love for God is simply a lie. God is the perfect expression of genuine love. As believers we should demonstrate this love for others as we yield to the Spirit who lives in us.

Consider your past week. How did you demonstrate *agape* love to others. Do you know someone who is difficult to love? How can you allow God to love through you for the good of that person? In what other ways can you love sacrificially this week?

**PRAYER:** Lord, forgive me for the times when I have loved myself more than others. Help me sacrifice my pride, selfishness and personal time for someone else. Give me a love that comes from You so I can demonstrate Your love by loving others.

### TOMORROW'S READING: 1 John 5

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