

01 • Love Honors God

Love is ____... It's hard to imagine the number of answers that have been offered to fill in that blank. This month, let's look beyond ourselves, past the mirages of popular culture, and consult the Creator.

First up, **love honors God**. In **Matthew 22**, a Pharisee asked Jesus, "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus' response?

"You shall _____ the Lord your God with all your _____ and with all your _____ and with all your _____. This is the great and _____ commandment." (22:37-38)

Okay, but what does that **mean**? **1 John 4** provides a great starting point:

- _____ is love (4:8)
- Love is _____ God (4:7)
- God's love is shown most clearly in the sending of his _____ so that we might _____ (4:9-10)

Alright, but what will it **look like** for us to love?

Therefore be _____ of God, as beloved children. And _____ in love, as Christ loved us and _____ for us, a fragrant offering and _____ to God. (Eph 5:1-2)

Sadly, a lot of people have the mistaken idea that love means letting me do whatever **I** want to do. That's exactly *backwards*. Love is giving myself up, first to God. Love is a choice to put others—God above all—ahead of myself. I **honor** God by presenting myself as a "_____ sacrifice" (Rom 11:36-12:1). Then, "it is no longer I who live, but _____ who lives in me" (Gal 2:20). **Love** is the **commitment** of an imperfect person **to honor** a perfect God.



For Class & Family Discussion:

- "Love is _____." How have you heard that statement finished by others?
- Why is it critically important that we look beyond ourselves, past the mirages of popular culture, to the way God finishes that statement?
- "God is love" (1 John 4:8). That's a deep and powerful idea. What does it mean?
- If I only treat love as a *feeling*... is that a big deal?
- Let's think through what Jesus meant by the call to "love" God with:
 - All your "heart"
 - All your "soul"
 - All your "mind"
- **Ephesians 3:14-19** describes tremendous blessing for Christians. How does it relate to what we're learning?
- Why is it a **mistaken** idea that love means letting me do whatever **I** want to do?
- In your own words, what will it mean for you to **honor** God?