

# 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 **love** the Lord your God with all your **heart** and with all your **soul** and with all your **mind**. This is the great and **first** commandment." (**22:37-38**)

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

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

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

Therefore be **imitators** of God, as beloved children. And **walk** in love, as Christ loved us and **gave himself up** for us, a fragrant offering and **sacrifice** 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 "**living** sacrifice" (**Rom 11:36-12:1**). Then, "it is no longer I who live, but **Christ** 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?