

Unwrapping Christmas: Love All

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Scripture: Romans 13

⁸Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. ⁹The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁰Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

¹¹And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. ¹²The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. ¹⁴Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

Group Session

Opening Questions

Is the Christmas season positive, negative or neutral regarding your attitude toward the holiday? What makes it this way?

Discussing the Scripture & Life

1. Life-changing Lesson #1 says, "Genuine love refrains from actions that harm." We learned that our *neighbor* is anyone around us. Who in our life is the most difficult to practice this with? Why is it difficult? What would Christ have us do about our behavior?

John 13:34 tells us to love others as Christ loved us.

John 14:15 Jesus says that if we love him we'll keep his commandments

2. Lesson #2 says, "Genuine love leads to acts of compassion." This is best accomplished if we see people as God sees them. How can we best practice this? Have you had any opportunities to help people during this busy holiday season?
3. We can observe the letter of the law toward others without having love. What difference does that make? Does it really matter? If we don't have love should we not do the act of compassion?
4. Read Galatians 5:22. Is there any significance to the order these characteristics are listed?
5. Read Verse 10 above. How is love a "fulfillment of the law"?

6. Lesson #3 is this: "We have a limited time to show Christ-like compassion to others." Read verses 11 & 12. Why is there a sense of urgency in the Scripture?
7. Lesson #4 is this: "Our model of compassion is the love shown by God through Jesus Christ." In what ways does Christ' life challenge us to exemplify love?

Closing Challenge

Do something extra this week to show Christ's love this week. Try to include both people you do already love, and some you have to love through the eyes of Christ.