

Message.

Genuine love for God transcends emotional experiences and is defined by covenant loyalty and total allegiance to His Lordship. Rather than being a series of isolated religious events, spiritual formation occurs through the daily rhythms of life where the Gospel serves as the catalyst for reordering one's priorities, habits, and relationships. Because God first demonstrated His love through Christ, the believer's submission is a response to grace rather than an attempt to earn it. When God occupies the rightful center of a person's life, this primary commitment correctly aligns all other aspects of human existence, leading to true contentment and peace.

Prayer.

Father God,

You are Love. May I reflect on Your love and respond with all my being. Guide me to reflect on who I am because of You.

Amen.

Engage.

Matthew 22:34-40

- Compare and contrast "love" as a feeling versus a covenant loyalty.
- What are the implications of each definition as one pursues a life with God?
- Reflect on your own walk with God and determine where you may rely on feelings more than act on covenant loyalty.

2 Corinthians 5:21

- How does the fact that Christ "became sin for us" change the motivation behind our obedience to His Lordship?
- Why is it dangerous to claim Jesus as "Savior" without submitting to Him as "Lord"?
- In what ways do we sometimes try to "earn" God's love or simply "live our faith" through our church attendance rather than responding to the love He already gave?

Deuteronomy 6:6-9

- What specific physical actions and daily moments does this text command the people of Israel to use to keep God's word present?
- What does this suggest about the "location" of our spiritual growth?
- Parenting Focus: Verse 7 commands parents to talk about these truths when you "sit in your house," "walk by the way," "lie down," and "rise up." For those raising children, how can you shift from viewing spiritual growth as a "Sunday event" to a "daily conversation"? What is one practical way to integrate God's Word into your family's morning or bedtime routine this week?

Matthew 6:33.

- What is the specific promise given to those who "seek first the kingdom of God"?
- When God is in His rightful place in your heart and mind, everything else (forgiveness, peace, contentment) orders itself correctly. Which of those "secondary" things—peace, contentment, or a spirit of forgiveness—do you feel is currently most out of order in your life?
- How might re-centering on God's Lordship resolve that chaos?

Day 1: The "Greatest" Thing

Scripture: Matthew 22:34-40

- **The Big Idea:** Love isn't just a "heart" feeling; it's a "whole life" choice.
- **The Activity:** Ask your kids, "What is the most important rule in our house? What is the most important rule in sports?" Read the passage and explain that Jesus says the most important "rule" is actually a relationship of love.
- **Discussion:** Ask, "If you love a sport or a hobby, how do people know? (You practice it, talk about it, give it your time). How can people see that we love God with our 'strength' and 'mind' and not just our feelings?"

Day 2: The Great Exchange

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:21

- **The Big Idea:** We obey God because He loved us first.
- **The Activity:** Use a "White Shirt/Dirty Shirt" illustration. Put a dirty rag over one child's shoulder (representing our sin) and a clean white shirt over yours (representing Jesus). Swap them.
- **Discussion:** Explain that Jesus took our "dirty" mistakes so we could have His "clean" righteousness. Ask, "Do we follow Jesus' rules so that He will love us, or because He already loved us enough to swap places with us?"

Day 3: God in the "Everyday" (Part 1)

Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:4-7

- **The Big Idea:** Loving God happens in the "boring" moments of the day.
- **The Activity:** Read verse 7. Have the kids count how many places it mentions (sitting, walking/driving, lying down, waking up).
- **Discussion:** "If we only think about God at church on Sunday, we are missing most of the week! What is one time during our normal day (like breakfast or the drive to practice) where we can talk about how good God is?"

Day 4: Reminders Everywhere (Part 2)

Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:8-9

- **The Big Idea:** We need "clues" to help us remember God.
- **The Activity:** The Israelites literally put scripture on their doors and foreheads. Give your kids sticky notes and have them write a short phrase (like "God is with us") and stick them on the bathroom mirror, the fridge, or the back of the car seat.
- **Discussion:** "Why do you think God told them to write His words on their houses? Is it because we forget easily? How do these notes help us keep our 'allegiance' to Him today?"

Day 5: First Things First

Scripture: Matthew 6:33

- **The Big Idea:** When God is first, the other pieces of life fit together.
- **The Activity:** Use a "Jar and Rocks" visual. If you fill a jar with sand (video games, toys, chores) first, the big rocks (God, family, kindness) won't fit. But if you put the big rocks in first, the sand fills in around them.
- **Discussion:** "When we start our day or our week putting God first, how does that help us with things like being worried or being mean to our siblings? Let's pray and ask God to be our 'Big Rock' today."