



# THE WAY Sermon Study Guide

## Week 4: The Way of Jesus — Love

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Love is the most important thing. It is a non-negotiable of the Christian life—active, costly and open to all. Jesus shows us what it looks like: “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.” 1 John 3:16

This week we reflect on the heartbeat of God's love, and the invitation to receive this love afresh—letting it fill and overflow from our lives, so that the world might see Christ through us.

### Read 1 John 4:7-21

Love always begins with God. Before anyone had done anything to deserve it, before humanity even asked for it, God loved.

His love does not increase when we behave well or decrease when we fail. It precedes our efforts and doesn't depend on merit. It motivates our obedience and is the source of our love for others.

God is love. Down to His very nature, His very character, His very essence. God is pure love. Everything else flows from that.

1. The reading from 1 John 4 is full of beautiful, profound truths about what love is. Did anything stand out to you as something the Holy Spirit might be wanting to highlight?
2. Are you ever tempted to think of God as angry and removed, looking down with disappointment on our brokenness? How does knowing God loved you before you ever loved Him, impact your thinking?



## Read Genesis 15:1-21

This passage from Genesis 15 is strange to modern ears, yet it reveals something breathtaking about God's character and faithfulness.

A covenant promise has been made between God and Abraham, and here we see the picture of an ancient ceremony formalising the agreement. Animals are cut in half and the pieces are arranged opposite each other, creating an aisle for two parties to walk through. It symbolised a solemn commitment to the agreement and the consequences of breaking it: *"If either of us breaks this covenant, may we become like these slaughtered animals."*

In situations where there was a greater and lesser party—such as two kingdoms of unequal power—the lesser party would walk the pieces alone, accepting the weight of the consequences if the covenant failed. But in Genesis 15, something remarkable happens. God causes Abraham to fall into a deep sleep, and then He alone—symbolised by the smoking pot and flaming torch—moves through the pieces. God takes the responsibility onto Himself, effectively saying, *"If either of us breaks this covenant, may all the consequences be on me."*

Of course, humanity didn't uphold their end of the covenant. Abraham didn't, Israel didn't, and none of us have. Yet, even knowing this, God chose to bear the cost.

1. How does God's willingness to "walk the pieces" alone and take responsibility for both sides of the covenant, show you more about His character and commitment to us?
2. How does this ancient covenant picture help shape the way you understand Jesus' sacrifice?

## Read 1 John 3:16 & John 3:16-17 & Romans 5:6-8

Just as God walked the pieces alone for Abraham, Jesus walked the path of sacrifice for us and laid down His life. This is how we know what love is. And this is how the world will know that we are His followers. Not by our perfect theology, worship style, or church attendance—by the way we love.

Our culture often flattens love into mere acceptance or tolerance. But love is not passive, it is active, costly and open to everyone. To love like Jesus loves means moving toward the broken, not away from them. It draws near to the hurting, shows up when it's hard, and refuses to leave people as it found them.



But the work of loving others begins with being loved and filled by Christ—“*We love because He first loved us.*” It is not a task of willpower but of seeking, receiving and overflowing. God’s love is a well that doesn’t run dry. His invitation is always open: *come and receive My love again.*

1. What makes God’s love distinctive from the way love is often expressed in the world around us?
2. How would you describe the difference between *trying* to love others and loving out of the *overflow* of love that God has given you?
3. If someone were to watch your life this week, would they see Jesus “poking out” everywhere? Is there anything you want to change so that Jesus’ love is more visible through you?

## Optional Closing Reflection

If possible, allow time for prayer in smaller groups or pairs. Encourage people to share where they feel dry, overwhelmed, or longing for more of God’s love. Invite the group to pray that each person would be “rooted and established in love” and filled with the fullness of God.

## Suggested Closing Prayer

You may close with Paul’s prayer from Ephesians 3:16–21.

“I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.”