

DAY 6

This is the message you have heard from the beginning: We should love one another.

1 John 3:11 NLT

In his letters to early believers, John talked a lot about loving one another, no matter what. Why? Because He knew that loving one another would lead to unity. There are lots of things that can cause disunity: hurtful words, misunderstandings, and the list goes on. But love leads to things like peace, forgiveness, and ultimately, unity. Think about your closest friends. Is there more unity or disunity in the group? God doesn't want us to walk through life alone, but He also doesn't want us to walk through life constantly in conflict with the people around us.

As you spend time with your people this week, ask God to help you be someone who loves and brings unity to the group. Your effort could change the entire dynamic of your friend group for the better!

DAY 7

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16 NIV

This is a powerful verse. It helps us start to understand how much God loved us and all God gave for us. Deciding to memorize this verse helps us carry with us a reminder that God isn't far away, just sitting with his arms folded and ignoring us. God is active.

Write down this verse in your own handwriting a couple of times to help you start to memorize it. Then, circle every verb - every action word. What do those words tell you about God? Words like "gave" "believe" and "loved".

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

FOR AN
everyday faith.

BEFORE I GO / WEEK 2

HIGH SCHOOL

DAY 1

Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying."

John 11:25 NLT

Jesus made bold statements. While they may have sounded unbelievable at the time, Jesus always meant what He said. In this verse, Jesus tells His friend Martha that anyone who believes in Him will live—even after dying. In other words, through Jesus, the story is never over. This was a pretty big statement because her brother Lazarus had just died. Game over, right? Well, as it turns out, Jesus backed up what He said and raised Lazarus from the dead. Now, this doesn't mean that Jesus will always fix our problems. But it does mean that He can be trusted.

The truth is, Jesus is always working to do more than we can see or understand. It's not always easy, but over time, as we learn to trust Him with the little things, our faith and trust in Him will grow.

DAY 2

Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters.

Be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude.

1 Peter 3:8 NLT

God created us to be in community with one another. This includes people who aren't like us. Why? Because ultimately He knows that we're all better together. Think of the close circles of people in your life: your family, friends, teammates, or Small Group. Do you feel close to them? Connected with them? Supported and encouraged by them? If so, that's a real community—the kind that Jesus created us to live in on this Earth. And if not, that just means there's some work to do. Which circle could use some work to grow closer and more connected? Your family? Your sports team?

This week, pick a circle and then figure out one thing you can do to apply Peter's words of wisdom with people in that circle this week.

DAY 3

If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Romans 10:9 NLT

God created us with minds of our own. He gave us the ability to make the choices and decisions we want to make. God loves it when we make choices that show our love and faith in Him when those actions come from a genuine place. Whether it's through what we do, the music we listen to, or even the way we talk to friends and family, when we make choices that declare our love for God, He's delighted.

Today, what's one thing you can do at school or at home to declare your love for God?

DAY 4

Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins.

1 Peter 4:8 NLT

Choosing to love people doesn't always feel natural. And Jesus knew this. He knew we'd have to work hard to love other people at times. That's why He offered us His love to help guide us in showing love to others in both big and small ways. The truth is, as we learn to follow the example He set, it helps us replace things like hatred, envy, and gossip with love, acceptance, and grace. Following Jesus' example, loving others can be as simple as saying something kind or as big as changing the way we see someone else. Is there a person in your life who's difficult to love at times?

This week, see if you can find one way to show that person love with your words or actions.

DAY 5

But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

Romans 5:8 NLT

Written by Danielle, age 14

From Burke, Virginia, USA

When someone treats you rudely or unkindly, how do you usually respond? Maybe your first reaction is to hit them back with your own snappy comeback. Or maybe you look at a friend and signal that you're going to talk about this person later. Or maybe you internally start planning how you are going to get back at them. After all, if they don't treat us with kindness, why should we act differently? The simple answer is this: God wants us to live in peace with everyone around us. This means that we should not only react with kindness, but our actions should intentionally create peace.

In the moment, it may seem right to get defensive of ourselves, but only God knows what that person is really going through. Maybe that per-

son who acted mean to us did so because they just had a really bad day, and God put us in their path to show them kindness. So does it really help to be unkind to those who are mean to us, or are we simply escalating the situation into something it doesn't need to be?

My challenge for you today is to memorize this verse, for the next time someone acts unkindly to you. Maybe that person just needs someone to show them the love of God, so instead of responding with your own insults, remember to intentionally pursue peace. Maybe that little act of kindness is what will brighten their day.