



### Love In God's Presence

For the next seven days dedicate five minutes a day to be in the presence of God. The goal is to grow in peace by being with God. Use the guide below to help you structure your time.

- Pick a place: Choose a "sacred space" — a specific chair, on the porch, or even the parked car. The space should be quiet, comfortable and as distraction-free as possible. The physical location helps signal to the brain that it is time to shift gears.
- Set a Timer: Using a timer prevents "clock-watching" and allows for full immersion in the moment.
- Start with Breath: Taking three deep breaths to begin the five minutes helps regulate the nervous system and creates a physical transition into a spiritual state.
- Reject Perfection: Some days will feel "distracted." That doesn't mean the time was wasted; the act of showing up is itself an expression of faith. When your mind wanders, refocus it.
- Silence or turn off your devices
- Have paper and a pen or pencil.

#### **DAY 1:**

Read 1 John 4:7-10 three to five times slowly.

<sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.

<sup>8</sup> Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup> In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (NASB)

Spend time reflecting on the following questions with God as your conversation partner.

- What stands out to you about the way God loves?
- Why is it important that love begins with God and not with humans?
- In what ways have you experienced God's love personally?

Address your answers to God (e.g. God, what stands out to me about the way that You love is that You are willing to risk Your love not being reciprocated.)

#### **DAY 2:**

Read Galatians 5:22-23 three to five times slowly.

<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (NASB)

Think about a healthy peach tree in the middle of summer. It doesn't groan, strain, or labor to manufacture peaches. It bears fruit naturally simply because it is alive and rooted in good soil. In our own strength, trying to love people who test our patience or hurt us feels like a grueling chore. But scripture reminds us of a liberating truth: we do not have to manufacture the fruit of the Spirit. Love is the natural byproduct of a healthy, living connection to God. The Holy Spirit is a living person working within us, planting what God wants to get out of us. When we stop trying to force love and instead focus on staying connected to the Spirit, God's supernatural love naturally overflows from our lives.

- How does it encourage you to know that love is produced by the Spirit?
- What areas of your life reveal resistance to the Spirit's work?
- What practices help you remain connected to God daily?

### **DAY 3:**

Read 1 John 4:7-1 three to five times slowly

<sup>7</sup> Dear friends, let us love one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> The one who does not love does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup> God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his one and only Son into the world so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Dear friends, if God loved us in this way, we also must love one another. (CSB)

John builds the case: (1) God is love. (2) Those who have been born of God and know God are God's children. (3) God's children have God's nature. (4) God's children therefore will love.

Spend time reflecting on how you demonstrate love towards your brothers and sisters in Christ. How does your love for others resemble God's love? How can your love for others better reflect God's love?

### **Day 4:**

Read 1 John 3:11-15 three to five times slowly

<sup>11</sup> For this is the message you have heard from the beginning: We should love one another, <sup>12</sup> unlike Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous. <sup>13</sup> Do not be surprised, brothers and sisters, if the world hates you. <sup>14</sup> We know that we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers and sisters. The one who does not love remains in death. <sup>15</sup> Everyone who hates his brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him. (CSB)

Reflect on your interpersonal relationships. Who are the people in your life that are hard for you to love? Release any hatred that you may have. Spend time processing how you know you have passed from death to life.

### **Day 5:**

Read 1 John 3:16-18 three to five times slowly

<sup>16</sup> By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. <sup>17</sup> But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? <sup>18</sup> Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. (ESV)

How does your level of sacrifice for your brothers and sisters reflect the sacrifice of Christ for you? As you reflect on the love that you show ask yourself: Are there ways your love has become mostly words instead of action? What practical act of love can you show today?

### **Day 6:**

Read 1 John 4:12 three to five times slowly

<sup>12</sup> No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us. (NASB)

As you reflect on this verse: How can Christian love make God visible to others? What kind of picture of God do your actions communicate?

### **Day 7**

Read 1 John 4:6-19 three to five times slowly

<sup>16</sup> We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. <sup>17</sup> By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. <sup>18</sup> There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love. <sup>19</sup> We love, because He first loved us. (NASB)

If you are struggling to love others, the answer is not simply to try harder. Return to the presence of God. Reflect on His love. Receive His grace again. Let the Spirit renew your heart. Fear, bitterness, exhaustion, and pride often shrink our capacity to love. But perfect love casts out fear. God's love heals and transforms us from the inside out.