

Galatians 5:13-14 NLT - 13 For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love. 14 For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Loving others selflessly, by putting them first, is challenging, but you can take the first small step today. We have prepared a number of suggestions for you to incorporate into your daily life, just by keeping your eyes open to those opportunities God has prepared for you. They include little things like taking in the neighbors' trash bin, posting something encouraging on social media, or letting someone know they are special and appreciated by note or text. You can find a long list on our website at newlifepismo.com/spread-the-love/. We have lists under "As You Go" and church-wide project to be done "with New Life" There is even a fun Spread the Love Bingo game to play "With the Kids".

WRAP-UP

As the people of God we are called to be distinctly different. As John says we will be identified by our LOVE! We want to be people that aren't simply nice people who do nice things occasionally...but we want New Life to be a group of Holy Spirit empowered people who go out of their way to show people the love of Jesus in real, tangible, meaningful ways. People who recognize that this world is not how it should be and stand in the gap for people to bring more of the Kingdom of God here on earth.

MEMORY VERSE

For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." -Galatians 5:13 NLT

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life.

Challenge- Ready to spread the love? Text love to 805 979-2003 and sign up for church-wide projects and receive some reminders to Spread the Love!

"Start Somewhere"

Spread the Love #1

INTRODUCTION

This week we are starting a new sermon series called Spread the Love. The past year has not always brought out the best in us. In fact, there seems to be greater division, anxiety and anger than ever. But as followers of Jesus, we have an opportunity to offer a different narrative. We can take the love God has shown us and spread it to everyone around us. And this week, we are going to start somewhere.

Ice Breaker

What is one memorable act of love you have witnessed recently?

Key Passage

John 13:34-35 NLT - 34 So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. 35 Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples."

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What are you spreading?

Matthew 5:43-45 NLT - 43 "You have heard the law that says, 'Love your neighbor' and hate your enemy. 44 But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! 45 In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike.

1 Peter 3:9 NLT - 9 Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and he will bless you for it.

Unfortunately, it is easy to find justification for a less-than-loving attitude right now. There are so many issues that divide us, we seem to find ourselves constantly choosing sides. And if you aren't on my side, then you certainly don't deserve my love, *or do you?* Jesus addressed this very issue in his Sermon on the Mount. Loving our friends is not the only thing Jesus expects of us. We are to love everyone, even our enemies.

There are plenty of unlovable people around us. How does 1 Peter encourage us to respond to them? According to Galatians 5:22 where would such a response come from? So, if we are not responding with love, where do we look for a change of heart?

Galatians 5:22 NLT - 22 But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

2. What's Holding us Back?

Hebrews 12:1-3 NLT - 1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. 2 We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne. 3 Think of all the hostility he endured from sinful people; then you won't become weary and give up.

In Hebrews chapter 11 we are reminded of many of the faithful followers of God from the Old Testament. Their lives served as an example of what a Spirit-empowered life of faith looks like. And because we have such examples, we are encouraged to get rid of anything that would hold us back from joining them in a life of faith. Hebrews 12:1 calls that "the sin that easily trips us up."

If we are going to faithfully love others like Jesus calls us to, what do we need to get rid of to make room to spread the love? Are there people in your life that will help you to be aware when that those

things creep back in? If so, give them permission to alert you when they see you slipping in those areas.

3. So, what does "spreading love" look like?

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 NLT - 4 Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud 5 or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. 6 It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. 7 Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

When Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, he was admonishing them for their factions, discord and what one commentator refers to as a "scandalous schism". What they were spreading was anything but love. And so, Paul reminds them of what love really looks like.

If you've never done this, try inserting your name in place of the word "love", but be prepared, it can be a pretty convicting exercise. Did you notice in this passage, Paul focuses more on what is not love than what it is? He also focuses on attitudes more than actions? Why do you think he didn't just give the Corinthians a list of loving things to do?

In light of 1 Corinthians 13, we should begin spreading the love, by examining our attitudes before we make a "to do" list of good deeds.

4. How do we spread love?

After we've recognized where our behavior falls short, gotten rid of that sin that trips us up and sought God for a change of heart and attitude, we are ready to begin some intentional acts of love. But where should we begin?

Galatians 6:10 NLT - 10 Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone--especially to those in the family of faith.

Paul told the Galatians to take every opportunity, but where did he say we especially should look to do good?