

September 27 / Sunday

Finding Love & Joy

Read [1 John 4:7-19](#) / [1 Thessalonians 1:4-6](#)



28 / Mon – It's true! | Read [1 John 4:10, 19](#) / [Psalm 139:13-16](#)

Love is the topic in hundreds of thousands of songs, books and movies. It even has its own holiday. Is there a person alive who doesn't want to know they are loved without reservation? John gives a powerful definition of genuine love here. Christians know Jesus' command to love others but you can only give what you have received. Do you understand the incredible love God has had for you since before you were born? Ask the Holy Spirit to plant this truth deep in your soul.

29 / Tue – It looks like this... | Read [1 Corinthians 13:4-7](#)

How do you recognize real love? Paul gives a list of love's characteristics to consider. Do you see yourself falling short in some areas? Don't be discouraged. This is not something you can 'will' to be. It happens gradually as you let the life of Jesus flow through your mind and heart and out to others. This week, pick one characteristic, ask God to help you grow in that way.

30 / Wed – Prove it | Read [Matthew 22:34-40](#) / [John 15:12](#) / [1 John 3:18](#)

The greatest commandments are to love God first and best, and then to love others as He does. It is the action you take that validates the love you declare. Gary Chapman writes about the five love languages: *acts of service*, *words of affirmation*, *quality time*, *receiving gifts*, and *physical affection*. Which of these makes you feel most loved? Which ones are preferred by your family members or friends? Acting on this idea could make a big difference in your relationships.

01 / Thu – Even them?! | Read [Matthew 5:43-48](#)

Jesus was clear. Loving others is not limited to those you like. Anybody can do that. People might know you consider yourself a Christian but they also notice how you treat those who are hurtful in their words or actions toward you. Is there a person in your life who seems impossible for you to love because of this kind of undeserved treatment? Then do what Jesus said in verse 44 - pray for them. You'll be amazed at what God will do in response to those prayers.

02 / Fri – Next on the fruit menu... | Read [John 15:9-11](#)

Joy is the second fruit of the Spirit mentioned in Gal. 5. What brings you joy? What are some of the things that *steal* your joy? Happiness comes and goes but have you ever experienced unexplained joy in the middle of a difficult situation? It is one of the results of knowing you are unconditionally loved by the greatest Person who exists. Are you running low on joy today? Ask for a replenishment from His unlimited supply.

03 / Sat – Think about it | Read [Nehemiah 8:9-10](#)

When your actions make someone happy, especially someone you love, doesn't that energize you, making you want to do more? Nehemiah reminded God's people of this truth in their exhaustion after rebuilding the city walls in just 52 days. They were facing more challenges but God's pleasure at their obedience would give them the strength to continue following His ways. You always have a choice. When you choose Him or choose to do the hard things out of love for Him, you sense His joy and it gives you strength to carry on. How might this impact future decisions?