

FWG - Template

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Song: Oh the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1vUhwyjdk8A>

Prayer: Oh the deep, deep love of Jesus. Lord as we sing these words, we are reminded that Your love is vast, unmeasured, boundless, and free. We pray that You would wash over us with this great love as we prepare our hearts to worship You. We ask that You would remove any distractions that would hinder us and that You would open our eyes to the wonderful truths in Your instruction. Convict us of any sin that stands between us and You, tear down the idols we have built up in vain, and bring to mind any unforgiveness or bitterness we are choosing to harbor. We lay these things at Your feet, trusting that Your yoke is easy and Your burden is light. We love You, Lord. In Jesus name, Amen.

Text: "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." – John 13:35

Explanation: After washing the disciples feet, and telling them that one of the twelve sitting there would soon betray Him, Jesus gave them a new commandment and that was to love one another, just as He had loved them. Although this command is an echo of what we read in Leviticus 19 and Deuteronomy 6, one the disciples would have been very familiar with, they are now able to heed this command by the example shown them by Christ throughout His ministry on Earth. And in true Jesus fashion, He took it a step further. It wasn't enough to just love your neighbor as yourself, but Jesus had shown and taught them to love their enemies as well.

The Point: Our love for ALL PEOPLE will be the convicting evidence to the world that we belong to Jesus.

Application: Jesus loved people. He loved His disciples, His followers, and children. But He also loved thieves, those with sicknesses and diseases, tax collectors, and murderers. He loved those who were easy to love, those who loved Him back, but He also loved people who were dangerous and people who were different than Him. He told His disciples that the way they loved people, those who were easy to love and those who were difficult to love, would be the proof that they belonged to Him, that the difference between His followers and the world would be the way they loved. How does this text apply to each member of your family?

Pre-K & Elementary Age: Ask your child to start naming people that they love. This should be easy, as they will probably shout out "Mommy! Daddy! Grandma! Grandpa!" and so on. Now, explain to them that Jesus tells us that He wants us to love our next door neighbor, just like we love our Mommy, or to love the kid that isn't very nice to us in our class just like we love Grandpa. And that when we respond in love to people that we don't know, people that aren't like us, or people that aren't nice to us, we are showing them that we are different from others. We are able to love them because the love of Jesus is within us if we believe in Him. And when we love them, they will notice a difference. This may even be an opportunity to tell them why we can love them and then share the love of Jesus with them, too!

Middle & High School Students: Ask your teenager to list some ways Jesus wants us to love others. Now reiterate the fact that loving people that love us or people that are nice to us is usually easy to do. But what about those that don't love us or those that are not kind to us, those that bully us or even those that have hurt us. Throughout the week, encourage your teenager to remember that list of ways Jesus wants us to love others and to practice putting that into action. It can be as simple as helping their sibling clean the table or offering to take the trash out for mom. But also, let them know that there will be a lot of times throughout the week that they don't feel like loving certain people. As this happens, encourage them to pray "I don't feel like loving [insert persons name] today. Help me to love [name] like You do, Jesus, and that when I respond in love, they will see You in me."

Young Adult: By now, we know that the world is full of people that don't seem deserving of our love. However, we understand that by the way Jesus lived His life, we are called to love the loveable and the unloveable. How can you love those in your circle better this week? But not only that, how can you show love and kindness to someone who has wronged you? A roommate or family member that you may be holding resentment towards. An unkind or unfair boss. A professor that you just can't get

along with. A friend that has broken your trust. Maybe the first step in showing them love is by getting on your knees in prayer, asking God to help because there is no way you can show love to this person because you don't love them. Ask Him to remind you that He loved you while you were still a sinner. Ask Him to carry this burden for you, to help you forgive, and to help you take the next step, while asking Him what that next step might be.

Adult: Are you harboring unforgiveness and bitterness towards someone because of the way they've treated you, your spouse, your children, a friend or relative in the past? Based on today's verse, if this resentment has caused you to treat this person (a boss, a coworker, your spouse, your own parents, a church member, etc) unkindly, it is time to bring this to the Lord so that you can instead, show this person Jesus and His great love for you and them. Spend some time in prayer this week, asking God to "search you and know your heart, to try you and know your thoughts and see if there is any offensive way in you." If He reveals a person or people, ask Him to help you take the next step in loving them and if you don't know what that next step is, ask Him to show you.

Empty Nesters: You now have a way of looking at life with much wisdom from previous experiences, or you may be feeling like you've yet to figure any of it out. As we read about Jesus teaching us that our love for others will show the world that we love Him, ask Him to renew the love you have for Him if it seems to have grown faint. And if you are more in love with Him now than you have ever been, praise Him for allowing you to still be on fire for Him. Ask the Lord this week to point out people in your life that you could love better, people that you do your best to avoid, people that are different than you, people that have wronged you or a family member. Just simply ask Him, "Lord, I do not love [name] but I know you call me to love others in response to Your love for me. Help me to love [name] this week and show me how to do this, I don't even know where to start." He will give you much grace as He begins to reveal to you all the ways He has loved you when you were unlovable, when you are unlovable, and He will gently, or not so gently, instruct you in the next step to take in loving others.

Song: They Will Know We are Christians By Our Love

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Cl4qefRAi4&feature=youtu.be>

Prayer: Lord, we come before you today in awe of Your great love for us. You loved us so much that You delighted in sending Your only Son to die in our place. While we were dead in our trespasses, Jesus died for us and because of this great love, we are now made alive through His death. Lord, we pray that You would help us to show our gratitude for this display of love and mercy by loving one another. We ask for Your help to do this because we know that apart from You, we can do nothing. We cannot love as we should, we cannot forgive as we should, we cannot show grace and mercy and long suffering as we should without your help. We ask that You forgive us when we fail in this area of loving others because we know from Your Word that it is our love that will show all people that we are Your disciples, Your followers, sinners turned saints who are madly in love with You. And we ask that You give us grace when we fail and pick us back up, nudging us along to try again reminding us that there is no shame in Your presence, no condemnation. Lord we understand that we did nothing to deserve this love, but that it is only by grace through faith in Your Son Jesus. And it is in His name that we pray and ask all things. Amen