



## PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE

DECEMBER 23, 2018

### TAKEAWAY:

God provides love both now and forever through Jesus Christ.

### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT:

Followers of Christ must define love according to the standard of God.

### GOSPEL CONNECTION:

God has displayed His love most clearly in the coming of Jesus Christ.

### INTRODUCTION

- 1 What is the greatest expression of love that you've ever seen?
- 2 What made it different? What made this act of love stand out above all others?
- 3 Why should Christians, more than all other people, be given to selfless, sacrificial love?

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

> Read Matthew 1:18-25 and 1 John 4:19.

*18 This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. 19 Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.*

*20 But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."*

*22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23 "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"—which means, "God with us."*

*24 When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. 25 But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.*

*19 We love because he first loved us.*

- What does 1 John 4:19 teach us about God's love? How is this different than how people typically view love?
- What does this mean about how we should view and understand our acts of love?
- How has God's love been displayed most fully?
- Why is it difficult to show this kind of love to others?

> Read Ephesians 5:1-2 and 1 John 4:20.

*1 Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children 2 and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

*20 If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.*

- What does Paul urge us to do in Ephesians 5:1-2? How can we pursue this?
- To whom are we called to demonstrate the love of God?
- What is the nature of this love? What should our love toward our neighbor look like?

## **APPLICATION**

- 1 Do you think that the way you love others (spouse, children, friends, church members) is more akin to the world's love or divine love? Why?
- 2 How does imitating God's love change our relationships with others?
- 3 How does loving as God loves bear witness to the truth of the gospel?

## **THIS WEEK**

- Memorize Matthew 1:21.
- Read Luke 3:15-20 on Monday.
- Read Luke 3:21-38 on Tuesday.
- Read John 1:1-9 on Wednesday.
- Read John 1:10-18 on Thursday.
- Read John 1:19-28 on Friday
- Read John 1:29-39 on Saturday.