

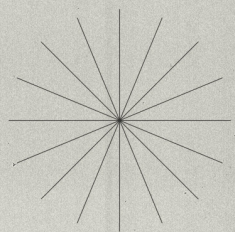
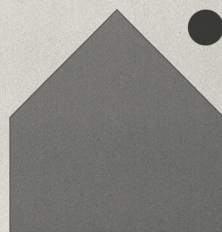
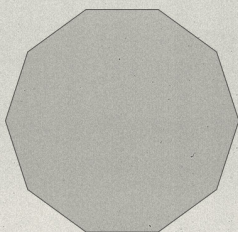
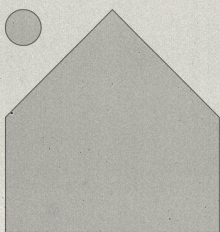
# Because He First Loved Us

A 7-day Devotional



BECAUSE HE FIRST  
LOVED US

©©



# Introduction

---

As we devote this week to pray and fast for Heart for the House, our true goal is to practice abiding in the Lord. This devotional is designed to help you dwell in the Lord's presence, engage with His Word and consider His love.

Chapter 4 of the book of 1 John describes in such beautiful language how extravagant God's love is and how we are defined and transformed by it. When we look to ourselves as the source of animating love, we usually end up disappointed and dissatisfied. Choosing to abide in God's love however, not only leaves us satisfied but filled up to overflow into the world around us.

When the Apostle John penned his series of letters to believers in the early Church, his intent was to bring clarity and reassurance to them as they walked out this following Jesus together.

In doing this devotional, may we too be reassured and encouraged of God's great love for us.

# Day 1

---

## What Do We Base Our Love On? THE PERFECT LOVE OF GOD

*“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.” – 1 John 4:7-8*

The most genuine love we can experience comes from the unconditional, unfailing love of God. That’s because He Himself is love (1 John 4:16). His love is the filter by which humanity sees what love truly means. As author C.S. Lewis wrote, “I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen; not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.”

Jesus taught that when we believe in Him, we are born again of God. So as we mature in the faith, so too does our understanding and experience of God’s love.

When you think of love, there are likely all sorts of things that come to mind. But like John wrote to the early Church, all we know of love comes inherently from God. But though our love for people or things can often be fickle or fleeting, God’s love is entirely perfect.

Over this week, we will consider some of the impacts of this perfect love in our lives.

Now, why not take a moment to pray and thank God for the gift of his love and ask Him to open your heart to understand it more.

*“God, thank you for your love. Thank you for the gift of knowing and experiencing your love. We pray over this next week that you would open the eyes of our hearts to understand, embrace, and abide in your love more than ever before. Amen.”*

### Prayer Points:

1. Pray that we would have eyes to see and ears to hear what the Lord wants to highlight to us this week
2. Pray that He would continue to work in and through His Church.

# Day 2

---

## The Gift And Process Of This Love

*“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. 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. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us, and his love is perfected in us.” – 1 John 4:9-12*

This passage highlights how God has ultimately shown His love for humanity. The God who knows the best and worst of our inner world did not hesitate to love us but generously gave Himself as a sacrificial gift in the person of Jesus. It was not under compulsion or obligation but freely given. As a response, we as believers are invited to return God's love back to him, resisting anything that would compromise our relationship with Him.

Consider the order in which our relationship with God is established. He firstly gives His love freely as a gift, and we have the choice whether or not to accept it. We then are given the privilege to bear His image, carry His name and freely give the love we have received to others. When the love of God overflows from our hearts, it shapes how we love our friends, family, and the world around us.

Take some time today to reflect on this passage of scripture and also read Psalm 139. As you do, consider the fact that you are loved and known by the Lord.

### Prayer Points:

1. Thank the Lord for the gift of His Son, Jesus and pray through the words of Psalm 139.
2. Pray for those people in your life who have yet to accept the love of Jesus.



# Day 3

---

## We Are Confident In His Love

*“By this, we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.” – 1 John 4:13-15*

Part of responding to God's love for us is learning how to truly abide in it; adjusting to allowing Him to be the one Who sustains us daily. In the distractions of every day life or at times when it can feel like God is somehow far away, we need only turn our minds back to the cross as a tangible and confident reminder of His extravagant love for us.

A great encouragement in this passage is that we are also empowered to remain in God's love through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit however doesn't just empower us to abide in God's Presence as an insular activity but indeed as He builds us up, we in turn build up others.

Through the Holy Spirit working in you, the eyes of many can be opened to understand God's love for them.

### Prayer Points:

1. Pray that the Holy Spirit would teach you to abide in the love of God.
2. Pray for your location of our Church family. Pray for those you serve with and those who lead you.

# Day 4

---

## We Remain In His Love

*“So, we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.” – 1 John 4:16*

John is reminding us here that coming to fully know God's love is a process. As the early Church was growing in a Roman world, the believers needed to be encouraged often that they were not alone and did not need to solve everything immediately. With each season of life, good and bad, we have the opportunity to grow in intimate knowledge of the Lord.

In this passage, John echoes Jesus' words in John 15:9, “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love.”

Outworking our love for God is not a series of separate, regimented moments. We don't just say a prayer and then get back to our lives, in which God is in no way involved. Instead, the love of God is designed to permeate every moment and facet of our existence.

Practicing abiding in God may look like practically setting aside moments of our day to pray, read our Bible or sit in silence and solitude, stilling yourself in His Presence. It also could look like inviting Him into the mundane, every day activities; as you eat a meal with friends and give thanks to God for everything and everyone at the table. Or maybe as you tidy up your child's toys and ask for help just to make it through the bed time routine. He invites us to abide in Him in all and through all.

### Prayer Points:

1. Pray that the Lord would highlight to you, areas of your life in which you may include Him more.
2. Pray for some of the other locations of our Church family, that we would be a unified body bringing the hope and good news of Jesus to the nation.

# Day 5

---

## His Love Continues To Perfect Us

*“By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world.” – 1 John 4:17*

By abiding in the love of God, love is made perfect in us. The original Greek word that has been translated as ‘perfected’ here, speaks of completion and fulfilment over the course of a process. A visual example perhaps would be the unfolding of a telescope; extending out, one bit at a time to reach the end stage of full function. By abiding in God’s love, we give ourselves over to this process as He accomplishes His purpose in us; shaping, moulding and unfolding each one of us.

As disciples of Jesus, the more time we spend growing in our intimacy with the Lord, the more we find ourselves maturing and developing in this process. With Jesus as our model and shepherd, we lift our eyes to him and have confidence that He who began a good work in us will be faithful to complete it (Philippians 1:6).

### Prayer Points:

1. Pray that God would continue to strengthen you to walk in line with His word, as a response to His love
2. Pray for our cities and our neighbours — that God would open doors for us to love on those in our immediate vicinity.

# Day 6

---

## His Love Casts Out Fear

*“There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.” – 1 John 4:18*

Therefore, as we reflect upon these verses, let us pray with confidence that in every season, we will be a Church family that reflects His perfect love.

Today we see how John continues to encourage the early Church that there is no fear in love. For many of these people who were facing serious trials and persecution, this reminder was to encourage and instil confidence that the Lord was with them.

### Prayer Points:

1. Pray that your heart may be filled with peace no matter what circumstances you face.
2. Pray for our Greenlight and Love Your Neighbour ministries and that God would continue to open doors for us to serve the poor and the vulnerable.

By abiding in the love of God as we have considered, it is perfected in us through the things we face daily and through this ongoing process, we learn to walk in greater levels of confidence and boldness, no matter how hard life can get.

Even through trials, we learn to displace feelings of fear with more of the freedom and security His love offers; knowing that He is above all circumstances. It also enables us to live differently to the cultures of this world, free from the grip of the worries and anxieties that can so easily weigh people down.



# Day 7

---

## All Action Of Love Comes As A Response

*“We love because he first loved us.” - 1 John 4:19*

As we draw our devotion to a close, we look back to where we began. In all of our thoughts, words and deeds — we live as a people of love because God, Who is love, is our source. With this profound and succinct statement, John firmly reminds us that everything we are and do as followers of Jesus is wrapped up in the great love that was first extended to us.

This love gives us identity, confidence and compels us to further extend it to our neighbour.

Because of the love God lavishes on us, we are able to experience life in its fullest and best. The sacrificial example of Jesus also informs how we live that life; marked by a radical love that invites whosoever would come into its eternal embrace.

### Prayer Points:

1. Finish by just thanking the Lord for his love and the many ways this is shown to you in your life. Also that He would give you the boldness to share it with those who have yet to encounter it.
2. Finally, pray into this for this Heart for the House season. How is the Lord stirring your heart to follow the example of Jesus and sacrificially give in this moment?