



## ADVENT WEEK THREE: PURSUED BY LOVE

December 22, 2019

Pastor Brad Williams

### BIBLICAL TEXT(S)

#### **MAIN TEXT(S):**

*John 13:34-35; Song of Solomon 2:8-13; John 15:13; John 3:16*

### SUMMARY

Love is the final theme we're exploring in this Advent series. Being loved and giving love are universal desires that all people have. However, defining love can be complicated when, "I love my wife" and "I love cheese" are both valid uses of the word. But while definitions are elusive, we all know that love involves risk. When we love someone, we open ourselves up to rejection and heartbreak. There are no guarantees that we will be loved back.

Even God opens himself up to this kind of rejection.

God has always loved humanity, but He has always given them the ability to choose whether or not they would accept His love. Despite continual rejection, God continues to pursue us, compelled by His love for us. He becomes human himself, in the Person of Jesus, so that we can know him intimately. He doesn't just come to be known. Jesus also demonstrates God's great love by giving up His life for us, the ultimate sacrifice of love. God's unfailing and unconditional love inspires us to love others in the same way. Christmas is a celebration of this powerful love.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*These questions are designed to help you lead your group through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage and the speaker's message, helping them understand and apply the teaching.*

#### **LEAN IN**

***These are icebreaker/warm up questions, mostly just to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.***

1. Who was your first crush?
2. What is your favorite part of Christmas Day?
3. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the word "love"?
4. What is one thing that you're looking forward to this week?  
What's one that you are dreading?

#### **LOOK DOWN**

***These are questions on the passage and observations about what's been read. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max***

1. What does Jesus command his disciples to do in John 13:34-35?  
What does Jesus say will happen if they do this?
2. What is the "Beloved" doing in Song of Solomon 2:8-13?  
What could you compare this exchange to in our own time?
3. In John 15:13, what does Jesus say is the greatest expression of love?
4. According to John 3:16, how did God demonstrate his love for humanity?  
What do you find meaningful about this?
5. What do you learn about love from these passages? How do they impact your understanding of love?

**DISCUSSION  
QUESTIONS,  
CONT.****LOOK OUT**

*These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today.*

*Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max*

1. How can the power of love change a life? What examples have you seen (in your life, the lives of people you know, history, movies, the Bible, etc.) of love completely changing someone?
2. Is the Church known for its love? Why or why not? What examples can you think of that support this?
3. What keeps people from "making the first move" when it comes to relationships (whether we're talking romance, family, friends, neighbors, etc.)?
4. How has God shown his great love for humanity? You can use examples from the Bible, history, or life today.
5. How should God's love for us change how we live? Who do you know (or know of) that is a good example of loving others because of what God has done for them?

**LOOK IN**

*These are questions that help you consider personal application.*

*Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max*

1. How has love (either God's love or another person's) changed your life?
2. What are you known for? Are you known for love or something else?
3. God loves people unconditionally, despite the fact that they could reject Him or break His heart. What keeps you from loving people in the same way?
4. How has God demonstrated His love for you? How has this inspired you to love others or how could it?
5. What "first move" do you think God might be asking you to take in a relationship?

**LIVE IT OUT**

*These action steps help apply this week's message to day to day life.*

*Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.*

1. Sometimes, it's hard to accept God's love or to love Him in return.  
How can your group pray for you as you seek to accept God's love and love Him back?
2. What "first move" might you need to take in a relationship this week?  
How can your group support you as you do this?
3. What could you do this week to show someone unconditional love?  
How can your group pray for you or encourage you?