

# SEASON OF ADVENT STUDY GUIDE

## Week 4: “It’s A Love Thing”

### 1. READ

#### **Pastor Watley’s Scriptures: 1 John 4 : 9 – 11 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>9</sup>In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. <sup>10</sup>In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. <sup>11</sup>Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

#### **1 Corinthians 13 : 1 – 13 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup>Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup>And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup>And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

<sup>4</sup>Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; <sup>5</sup>does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; <sup>6</sup>does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; <sup>7</sup>bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

<sup>8</sup>Love never fails. But whether *there are* prophecies, they will fail; whether *there are* tongues, they will cease; whether *there is* knowledge, it will vanish away. <sup>9</sup>For we know in part and we prophesy in part. <sup>10</sup>But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

<sup>11</sup>When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. <sup>12</sup>For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

<sup>13</sup>And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these *is* love.

#### **Romans 8 : 38 – 39 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>38</sup>For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, <sup>39</sup>nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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## 2. REFLECT

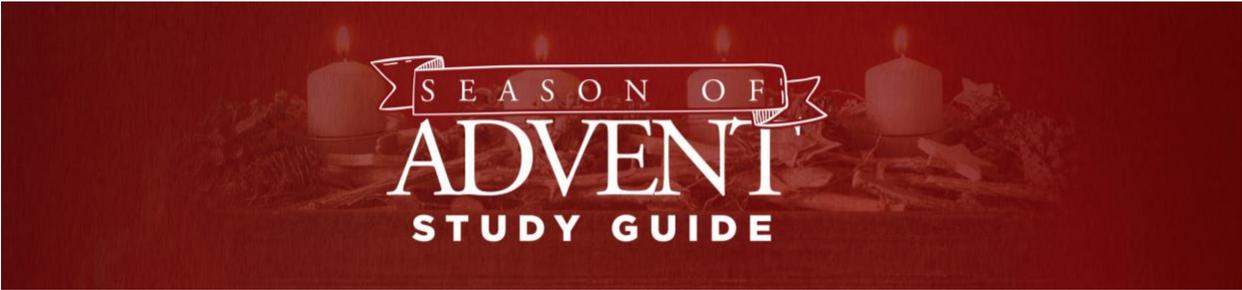
[Click the image to go to our YouTube page for more content!]



Over the past four weeks, our church family has joined Christians around the world that celebrate **Advent**. Each year, the Advent season is our opportunity reflect on the coming of Christ with child-like anticipation, as we remember the significance of His arrival on Earth. Not only are we encouraged to celebrate the savior's birth during this time, but we are also encouraged to eagerly await a season of spiritual rebirth within each of us. As the advent season comes to a close, it is our responsibility to continue to celebrate the magnificence of Jesus' birth all year round!

This week, our Senior Pastor Rev. Matthew L. Watley completed his sermon series that is focused on the Advent season. For the four weeks leading up to Christmas, we've explored a few of the many biblical themes that marked the arrival of Jesus and accompanied his presence on Earth. Through our study, we have been able to reframe our understanding of these themes, while truly challenging ourselves to reflect on how we practice these principles in our daily lives. Up until this point, we have meditated on the following words: **Peace, Hope, and Joy.**

**The final theme we are meditating on for Advent is *Love!***



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In our lesson for week four entitled “It’s A Love Thing,” Pastor Watley encourages us to understand that love is not a feeling. **Love is a choice.** In fact, God specifically calls us to *choose* to love others, even when we know we will not get anything in return. This type of love is drastically different than the idea of love that we are constantly inundated with in popular culture. In our society, love is most commonly conveyed as a transactional feeling that is based on an exchange between parties. This means that love is displayed as a response to how the other person makes us feel. The Greek word for this type of love is **Eros**, and it primarily represents the feeling associated with romantic and physical attraction.

However, there are quite a few more Greek words that describe what it means to love. Interestingly enough, the Greek word *eros* actually describes one of the lowest expressions love that people were encouraged to avoid. Instead, other forms of love were highly regarded. To the ancient Greeks, the highest form of love was embodied by the word **Agape**. This love is selfless, asymmetrical, and does not desire or expect reciprocity. When we reflect on our own lives, many of us are able to recognize that this is the way God has consistently expressed His love for us. Without doing anything to deserve it, we have benefitted from the unconditional nature of God’s love. This is important because God calls us to choose to love one another the way He loves us!

Although we may never be able to match the depth and breadth of God’s love, as Pastor Watley mentions, “we love best when we have no expectation of love in return.” As we release our need to be rewarded or validated when we express love, we graduate from *eros* to *agape* and free ourselves to experience the fullness of God’s love. And yet, this expression of love is not easy. In our scripture for this week (1 John 4:9-11), we witness God expressing His love by making a tremendous sacrifice. Verse 9 says, “In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.” Not only did God’s love for us come at a tremendous cost, but our savior would eventually bear the wounds and scars of crucifixion that were a representation of the depth of His love for us. That being said, God loves us so much that He was willing to endure the ultimate sacrifice. This is an important reminder for us, because in our call to love others the way God loves us, what are we willing to sacrifice? Are we willing to model God’s love no matter the cost?

### 3. RESPOND

- How have you expressed Agape love towards others in your life?
- How have you experienced God’s Agape love towards you?

For additional content on love, enjoy the Bible Project’s video on love [HERE](#).