

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres... Love never fails."
I Corinthians 13:4-8a

"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."
I John 4:7-11

"Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments."
Deuteronomy 7:9

At the beginning of the year, we thought a bit on our theme of "Love, Law, and Loving the Law" by examining how rightly ordered and practiced love might look (and not look). In this age (and in this week) where ideas surrounding love are tossed around with great expectation (and some measure of carelessness), it seems worthwhile to return again to think about love, and how our study of God's law thus far can deepen our understanding and practice of "Godly love."

Questions for reflection:

1. Deuteronomy 7:9 calls God's covenant law his "covenant of love." We know as grand as this covenant was, we were unable to keep it and so God provided a new and deeper covenant through Christ (I John 4:7-11 and Hebrews 8). Even so, God's love for his people is woven into the law as given in the Ten Commandments.

How is God's love evident in his law?

Particularly for the first four commandments that focus on loving God, how would you engage one cultural argument that God is simply a narcissistic deity who commands our love to satisfy his own desires? (Consider I Corinthians 13 in light of the truth that "God is love" from I John 4.)

2. Are there ways you can see God at work in your own heart or the hearts of your children as you seek to love well? What role has the law played in that work (or how might it play a role moving forward)?

3. How does the Biblical definition of love (I Corinthians 13) contrast with cultural romanticized expectations of love – especially around this week? Are you able to rejoice in the freedom that Biblical love brings, or are you feeling that tension? Ask God to direct the desires of your heart.

4. How have you experienced love from others? Are there relationships in your life (God, husband, children, friends...) where you are expecting to receive Biblical love but are not practicing Biblical love in return? Take time to commit these to the Lord and rest in his perfect and sufficient love.

Remember, we have been given the greatest gift of love in the life and sacrificial death of Christ, our Lord! If you find yourself in moments of struggle this week, remember that truth, and rejoice in the righteousness we have from Christ (alone) as we seek to love others as He loves us.