

Grounded in Love not Hate

5-Day Devotional

Day 1: Love as Our Foundation

Reading

Matthew 5:43-48 (NIV) "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

Devotional

Jesus challenges us to love not just those who love us back, but even our enemies. This radical teaching forms the bedrock of Christian faith. When we build our spiritual house on anything less than love, we build on shifting sand. God causes the sun to rise on both the evil and the good, demonstrating that divine love extends beyond human boundaries. Today, consider one person you find difficult to love. How might God be calling you to see them differently? Remember, love is not a feeling but an action—agape love that moves us beyond comfort into completeness. This foundation of love transforms us from incomplete to whole.

Reflection Question

How can you actively show love to someone you struggle to connect with today?

Day 2: Breaking the Cycle of Hatred

Reading

Jonah 4:1-11 But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry. 2 He prayed to the Lord, "Isn't this what I said, Lord, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. 3 Now, Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live." 4 But the Lord replied, "Is it right for you to be angry?" 5 Jonah had gone out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. 6 Then the Lord God

provided a leafy plant[a] and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the plant. 7 But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the plant so that it withered. 8 When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "It would be better for me to die than to live." 9 But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?" "It is," he said. "And I'm so angry I wish I were dead." 10 But the Lord said, "You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. 11 And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?" would happen to the city. Then the Lord God provided a leafy plant and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the plant."

Devotional

Jonah's story reveals how easily we can become addicted to anger and revenge. Even after witnessing God's mercy transform an entire city, Jonah clung to his bitterness. God never condemned Jonah for his imperfection but gently challenged his incomplete heart. Hatred is like drinking poison and expecting someone else to die. It corrodes our foundation and keeps us from becoming whole. God asks us the same question He asked Jonah: "Is it right for you to be angry?" Life is too short and too precious to waste on hatred. What anger are you holding that keeps you from completeness? God desires to redirect your heart toward love, not to condemn you but to make you whole.

Reflection Question

What steps can you take to release anger and move towards forgiveness and love?

Day 3: The Perfection of Completeness

Reading

Psalm 30:1-12 (NIV) "I will exalt you, Lord, for you lifted me out of the depths and did not let my enemies gloat over me. Lord my God, I called to you for help, and you healed me. You, Lord, brought me up from the realm of the dead; you spared me from going down to the pit. Sing the praises of the Lord, you his faithful people; praise his holy name. For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning."

Devotional

When Jesus commands us to "be perfect," the Greek word is "telos"—meaning complete or whole. God is not demanding flawless performance but inviting us into completeness as human beings. The psalmist celebrates how God turns mourning into dancing, weeping into joy. This transformation is what God desires for each of us. Completeness means allowing love to reach the core of who we are, not letting bitterness take root in our foundation. You may have made mistakes, but God cares more about your wholeness than your perfection. Where do you feel incomplete today? What would it mean to let God's love fill those empty spaces and turn your mourning into dancing?

Reflection Question

In what areas of your life do you need to experience God's transformative love?

Day 4: Love in Action

Reading

1 Corinthians 13:1-13 If I speak in the tongues^[a] of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast,^[b] but do not have love, I gain nothing.⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.⁸ Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. ¹¹ When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. ¹² For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.¹³ And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Devotional

Love is not passive sentiment but active charity. The word "agape" describes love that moves, serves, and sacrifices. Without love, even our greatest spiritual accomplishments ring hollow. Paul reminds us that love is patient and kind, not keeping record of wrongs. This active love forms the solid rock upon which we build our lives. When we face those who persecute us or those we consider enemies, love calls us to pray for them and see them as God sees them—as human beings with potential for transformation. Today, practice love in action. Choose one concrete way to demonstrate charity to someone, especially someone you find challenging. Let your foundation be strengthened through active love.

Reflection Question

What specific action can you take today to show love to someone who may not expect it from you?

Day 5: Standing on the Solid Rock

Reading

Matthew 7:24-27 “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶ But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

Devotional

Jesus concludes the Sermon on the Mount with a parable about foundations. The wise builder constructs on rock; the foolish on sand. Everything Jesus taught in this sermon—especially about love—forms that solid rock. When storms come, and they will, only a foundation of love will hold. Hatred, revenge, and bitterness are shifting sand that erodes beneath us. Dr. King reminded us that darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can. As you conclude this devotional journey, examine your foundation. What needs to be rebuilt on the rock of Christ's love? Remember, God's grace is amazing, and His love never fails.

Reflection Question

As you reflect on your spiritual foundation, what changes can you make to ensure it's built on the solid rock of love?

Closing Prayer for the Week:

Heavenly Father, as we conclude this devotional journey, we thank You for guiding our hearts towards a foundation of love. Help us to embody your teachings, loving not just those who return our love, but even those who challenge us. Redirect our hearts from anger and bitterness, and fill us with your transforming love that makes us whole and complete in You. As we face life's storms, let us stand firm on the solid rock of Your unwavering love. May our actions reflect Your agape love, and may Your grace lead us in all things. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.