

“We love... because God first loved us.” 1 John 4:19

This important passage is about “motivation.” There are many motives or reasons why we humans do what we do. The Genesis story of creation begins with God’s good creation, but ends with Adam and Eve’s choice to put themselves before their creator. Putting one’s self first is “sin.” No wonder that the first commandment is “You shall have no other gods...” (Exodus 20:3). God’s design for creation is to love God first and to love your neighbor as yourself. Notice the order: love God first, Neighbor second, Self third. Unfortunately much of human history (wars, poverty, etc.) is motivated by human selfishness and greed, as we put “self” first. God’s first great act of love was creation. We humans “live, because God gave us life.” His second great act of love was giving to his people a set of rules or laws, the 10 Commandments, Why? “That you might have life.” But sin and selfishness persisted, despite the warnings from prophetic messengers that God sent. So in the “fullness of time” God sent his son, Jesus, to save us from our sin and restore the good creation. In his life, death, and resurrection, God’s love is perfected and made manifest in Jesus. Our salvation is based not on our following the rules or the law, but on God’s grace, which we simply need to accept in faith as a gift. Why do we love? Because God first loved us!

Reflection Questions:

- How do you that God loves you?
- Where do you struggle to show love?

Family Activity:

Cut out hearts the size of a hand and add a ribbon trimming to the bottom to make an “award.” Write in the middle “1st Loved by God.” Take your special heart award and give it to someone.

Teenage Activity:

Write “I am loved...” on a post-it note and place on your mirror to remind you of God’s love. Or write “I love you ...” and leave for someone who needs to hear the good news.

Adult Activity:

Write, draw or photograph where you have witnessed God’s love in the world today and imagine where you can share that love today in one specific way.

Prayer:

Thank you God for your perfect love. Help me/us to be aware of the “unloved” and be mindful, heartfelt, and moved to action to love...