DEVOTIONAL

WHEN LOVE *Isn't Easy*

LOVING OTHERS FROM THE LOVE WE HAVE RECEIVED



> *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength … Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these."*
>
> MARK 12:30 – 31

Some people are easy to love. They are kind to us, understand us, encourage us and treat us well.

But Jesus did not say, "Love your neighbour when they are easy to love." He simply said:

Love your neighbour.

And that is where love becomes more than a feeling.

Biblical love is not merely affection for people we naturally enjoy. It is a response to the love we ourselves have first received from God.

> *"We love because He first loved us."*
>
> 1 JOHN 4:19

God's love becomes both the source and the pattern of ours. That matters when the person in front of us is difficult. When someone irritates us. When personalities clash. When we have been disappointed. When kindness is not returned. When loving someone costs us something.

In those moments, our own emotional reserves are often not enough. We need the Holy Spirit to form in us what we cannot manufacture by ourselves. Galatians 5:22 tells us that love is fruit of the Spirit.

LOVE DOES NOT MEAN PRETENDING

Loving someone does not mean calling wrong things right. It does not mean allowing harmful behaviour, removing necessary boundaries or pretending that hurt does not matter.

Jesus held grace and truth together.

Sometimes love looks like compassion. Sometimes it looks like patience. Sometimes it means forgiveness. Sometimes it requires an honest conversation. And sometimes love requires a wise boundary.

But whatever form it takes, Christlike love refuses to let bitterness have the final word.

Love is not something we manufacture. It is fruit the Spirit produces in us.

PAUSE & REFLECT

1. Is it easier for you to think of love as a feeling or as a way of responding to others?

2. Where might you need the Holy Spirit to produce Christlike love in you rather than trying to manufacture it yourself?

A DIFFERENT QUESTION

When someone is difficult to love, instead of asking:
"What do they deserve from me?"
pause and ask:
"What would it look like to reflect Jesus here?"
The answer may be kindness. It may be patience. It may be truth. It may even be a boundary. But let your response be shaped by Christ rather than bitterness.

TODAY

Think of one relationship in which love does not come easily.
You do not have to fix the relationship today. Simply begin here:

- Pray for that person.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to examine your heart and form the character of Jesus in you.

PRAYER

Father, thank You that You loved me first. Teach me to love others from the love I have received from You. Holy Spirit, produce in me what I cannot manufacture for myself. Give me wisdom to love with both grace and truth, and let the way I treat others increasingly reflect the character of Jesus.

Amen.