



Sept 8, 2019
Courageous Love
Learning to Love Like Jesus
in a “Me-First” World

On Sunday, Gerry kicked off our new sermon series—COURAGEOUS LOVE—with a two part question. Reflect and discuss these questions again...

1. **What evidence do you see of our “me-first” world?**
2. **Where do you find yourself being tempted in this “me-first” world?**

[Sermon Note]

Jesus embodies, models, and teaches a new kind of love (agape). The first “agape” is the very love of God, which was virtually non-existent in the language before Christ. This “agape” is others-oriented, sacrificial, unconditional, uncompromising, and seeks the highest good of others. The second form of agapé is courageous love. This kind of courageous love is not soft, it runs versus our sinful nature, and takes a depth of character to express.

Read **1 John 3:1** “See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!”

The Father chooses to lavish His agapé on us, and out of His grace He gives us what we don’t deserve, adoption. **Was there ever a time you felt the Father’s agapé lavished on your life? Have you ever experienced His sacrificially zealous love?**

[Sermon Note]

On Sunday, Gerry mentioned other authors who wrote about this courageous love.

Brennan Manning described it as “relentless love”

Kevin Youngblood described it as “scandalous love”

Francis Chan described it as “crazy love”

Alex Early (author) and Cory Asbury (songwriter) described it as “reckless love”

Often when we think of these words, we have a tendency to view them from a worldly perspective. The reality is that the Father’s courageous love is relentless, scandalous, crazy and reckless because it will kick down every wall, climb every mountain and tear down every lie to find us. He is a jealous God not out of brokenness or need, but because He is so zealous and longing for our love, that He will act!



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Gerry gave four reasons for why we should live with courageous love:

1. Living out courageous love was God’s design for this world. We were made for community. We were designed to be in relationship. **Have you ever experienced the courageous love of our Father through a relationship (e.g. friend, family, co-worker, mentor, etc.)?**
2. We should live out courageous love because it is Jesus’ command. Jesus has given us the top priority command of loving others in **John 15**: “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” **How can we live out this command? Have you ever been called to courageously love someone?**
3. Living out courageous love is what our world needs. **What are some of the ways that you see this world, our culture, needing to experience courageous love?**
4. We should live out courageous love because it is our purpose as an Intentional follower of Jesus Christ. Read **John 3:1** again: “See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!” **How does receiving and responding in courageous love bring meaning to your life?**

[Sermon Note]

To live a life of responding in agape, we must personally encounter God’s courageous love initially (recognizing in Faith that His love is eternal, adopting, cleansing and can make you anew), ongoingly (daily experiencing this continued love throughout our journey with Christ), and increasingly (understanding that each experience of His love is deeper, newer and consistently expanding—that we never reach the end of His love for us).

CLOSING REFLECTION & PRAYER

To close this study, take a moment to reflect on how God has expressed His courageous love to you? In collective prayer, or in the quietness of your own heart, express gratitude back to God for what He has done to display His courageous love to you, and express why it is meaningful.



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BEYOND STUDY ACTION STEPS

Go beyond the regular study with a few of these action steps to do this week:

- **PRAY** — Read *Ephesians 3:17b-19*: “And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge — that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.” Reflecting on this prayer from God the Holy Spirit, written through the Apostle Paul, think of someone (or multiple people) who needs to experience the Father’s courageous love. Pray this prayer over them, or with them.
- **JOURNAL** — Read and reflect on *Ephesians 3:17b-19* (listed above). Journal on the descriptors of the Father’s courageous love. These include: **wide** (His love is inclusive; it reaches every tribe and nation), **long** (His love stretches from eternity past to eternity future; it never ends), **high** (His love is holy, pure, divine, and different from any human love), and **deep** (His love dives deeper than the depths of all of the sin of this world).
- **STUDY** — Read the following scriptures: **1 John 3:1**, **1 John 4:9**, and **1 John 4:19**. Reflect and study how these three verses describe, give meaning to, and instruct on the topic of courageous love.
- **RESPOND** — repeat the Closing Reflection & Prayer section of this study (above). Add a prayer asking God to show you ways you can respond in courageous love to others.
- **WORSHIP** — Add the following songs to your playlist and reflect on the Father’s courageous love as you listen/worship during your day, driving, reflection, or personal time:
 - Cory Asbury’s “Reckless Love”
 - Hillsong’s “Good Grace”
 - John Mark McMillan’s “How He Loves Us”