

Series: Back to Basics
Title: Learning to Give God's Love
1 John 4:7-21

Introduction

John tells us that God wants us to be "perfected in love"—to mature and excel in loving others the same way Jesus loves us.

1. We increase our spiritual lung capacity by _____ God's love into our souls and breathing his love out to the people.
2. Even though we are unworthy, we still need to allow God to _____ us with his love and then continually draw upon his love.
3. We must learn to take in God's love and then _____ God's love to others.
4. God wants us to become _____ at giving His love to others.
5. As we learn to trust God's wisdom and good intentions, we choose to _____ with his training.
6. Through His Word and the work of the Holy Spirit, God _____ us into the unique and expert love givers He designed us to be.

I. Trained By Scripture

7. The Bible is God's letter of _____ to us.
8. The Holy Spirit will teach you the nature of real love and how it differs from worldly _____.
9. God's love is a _____ choice, vs. worldly love, which is self-centered and feelings-based.

10. God teaches us about love through Scripture (like 1Cor.13) and the _____ example of Jesus.
11. As you read the scriptures, God will draw your _____ to those areas of love that He is currently developing in you.
12. The Bible provides the context and _____ for us to hear God's voice and promptings to become more like Him.

II. Trained By Holy Spirit Promptings

13. The Holy Spirit will lead you to take specific steps to show God's love because he knows it is just what the _____ person needs.
14. It's usually a little scary on the front end, but if you obey his _____, you often see why he led you to it!
15. A person usually gets these promptings to _____ a brother or sister in Christ or to *share* God's love in some specific way with someone who doesn't yet know Christ.
16. God's promptings usually come to us more often when we _____ pray and read his Word.
17. The more often we _____ God when he prompts us, the more promptings we get and recognize.

III. Trained By Seasoned Believers

18. God also uses those _____ trained to train us.
19. God sends people into our lives whose _____ convicts and challenges us to be better Christians.

20. These mentors will often _____ an area of love in which we are deficient or may even devalue.

21. A model of sacrificial giving is one of the highest _____ anyone can pay you!

IV. Trained By Experience With Difficult People

22. "Difficult people" are people you probably don't want to be around but can't _____.

23. God can often be at work through these people to _____ us in His love.

24. It's usually by persevering through them, even if it means practicing tough love, that God gives us special _____ in areas of love deficiency.

25. Is your goal to be treated well and be unbothered with conflict, or to be at _____ because you are perfected in love?

Conclusion

26. God trains us how to love others and then _____ us with His joy.

27. God has his own special ways of rewarding us as we make _____ in loving others.

28. Sometimes God lifts us up with experiences of awe and _____ when we follow his prompting to love someone and see how he miraculously works through us.

29. Sometimes the Lord comforts and _____ us in the midst of our pain and weariness to enable us to continue loving people.

30. Sometimes God gives us moments of deep _____ as we see how God's love has worked through us to transform someone in deep and profound ways.

God knows exactly when we need to be rewarded, what kind of reward we need, and how to get it to us. This is a big part of the adventure and challenge of being perfected in love that makes it so rewarding. And yet, all of this is just a foretaste of the ultimate and eternal joy we will experience when we are eternally in his presence.

Answers

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| 1. breathing | 11. attention | 21. compliments |
| 2. indwell | 12. vocabulary | 22. avoid |
| 3. give | 13. other | 23. perfect |
| 4. experts | 14. prompting | 24. training |
| 5. cooperate | 15. encourage | 25. peace |
| 6. develops | 16. consistently | 26. rewards |
| 7. love | 17. obey | 27. progress |
| 8. counterfeits | 18. already | 28. wonder |
| 9. sacrificial | 19. example | 29. strengthens |
| 10. earthly | 20. uncover | 30. satisfaction |

QUESTIONS FOR MEDITATION

1. Are you open to allowing God to use you through promptings to share His love with others? Do you spend quality time with God in prayer and biblical meditation so you will know his voice when he calls to you?
2. Are you close enough to any models of Christian love that you can benefit from God's training through them? How can you get yourself into a place where you can learn more from them?
3. Who are the "difficult people in your life?" What love lessons is God teaching you through them? And how are you responding to that?