

UNLEASHED!

DAY 8— Love Our Family of Faith as Jesus Does

Acts 2:41-47

Time Alone with God

Prayer

Explore the Word

Read Acts 2:41. How would this huge addition to the early church have challenged the love of the early believers?

Insights from Ellen White:

When the grace of Christ is expressed in the words and works of the believers, light will shine forth to those who are in darkness; for while the lips are speaking to the praise of God, the hand will be stretched out in beneficence for the help of the perishing. We read that on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples, no man said that aught that he possessed was his own. All they owned was held for the advance of the wonderful reformation. And thousands were converted in a day. When the same spirit actuates believers today, and they give back to God of His own with the same liberality, a wide and far-reaching work will be accomplished. (Manuscript 95, 1907, par. 17)

The first angel's message of Revelation 14, announcing the hour of God's judgment and calling upon men to fear and worship Him, was designed to separate the professed people of God from the corrupting influences of the world and to arouse them to see their true condition of worldliness and backsliding. In this message, God has sent to the church a warning, which, had it been accepted, would have corrected the evils that were shutting them away from Him. Had they received the message from heaven, humbling their hearts before the Lord and seeking in sincerity a preparation to stand in His presence, the Spirit and power of God would have been manifested among them. The church would again have reached that blessed state of unity, faith, and love which existed in apostolic days, when the believers "were of one heart and of one soul," and "spoke the word of God with boldness," when "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Acts 4:32, 31; 2:47 (*The Great Controversy*, p. 379)

Prayer Focus

Ask God to fill your heart with the love you need to care for people He is calling into this last-day prophetic movement.

Family/Friend Circle

Connect Activity

Take turns thinking of one thing that someone in your family/friend circle has done that showed you in a practical way how much you are loved. Act it out and see if your family/friends can guess what it is.

Prayer for the Holy Spirit

Explore the Word

Read Acts 2:42–44. How did the Holy Spirit transform the way the early church loved one another?

Insights from Ellen White:

The believers were ever to cherish the love that filled the hearts of the apostles after the descent of the Holy Spirit. They were to go forward in willing obedience to the new commandment: “As I have loved you, that ye also love one another.” John 13:34. So closely were they to be united to Christ that they would be enabled to fulfill His requirements. The power of a Saviour who could justify them by His righteousness was to be magnified. (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 241)

Prayer Focus

Pray for the Holy Spirit to help each person in your family/friendship circle to love each other in word and in deed.

Church Family

Welcome

Worship in Prayer

LEADER TO EVERYONE: Sit with your small groups. Our prayer team will invite your small group to pray through the Word of God together. After praying for a few minutes, you will hear the prayer team begin to sing one stanza of a song. When you do, please transition from prayer to song.

Thanks:

1. (SMALL GROUPS) Read 1 John 4:9, 10. Thank God for revealing His love by sending us Jesus so we could find life in Him!
2. (EVERYONE) Sing a song of thanksgiving.

Confess:

1. (SMALL GROUPS) Read 1 John 4:11. Confess that we have not loved each other as God has called us to do.
2. (EVERYONE) Sing a song of confession.

Ask:

1. (SMALL GROUPS) Read 1 John 4:19. Ask God to help you love others in your church by the power of the Holy Spirit.
2. (EVERYONE) Sing a song of the Holy Spirit.

Testify

(SMALL GROUPS)

Form groups of two or three within your small groups. Ask and answer: "What did God help you do with yesterday's 24-Hour Challenge?"

(Yesterday's 24-Hour Challenge: Ask God how to best affirm and encourage the faith journey of your own children or those in your family/friendship circle. Before tomorrow's meeting, act immediately on the idea God gives you for reaching out to one of these children. Read Acts 2:41-47 in preparation for tomorrow.)

Connect Activity

LEADER TO EVERYONE: Team up in twos or threes. Tell your partner about a meaningful time that a church member did something to care for you or someone else in the congregation.

Worship in Word

(SMALL GROUPS)

Read Acts 2:41–45. In what ways did the first-century believers love each other sacrificially?

Insights from Ellen White:

After the descent of the Holy Spirit the disciples went forth to proclaim a risen Saviour, their one desire the salvation of souls. They rejoiced in the sweetness of the communion with saints. They were tender, thoughtful, self-denying, willing to make any sacrifice for the truth's sake. In their daily association with one another they revealed the love that Christ had commanded them to reveal. By unselfish words and deeds they strove to kindle this love in other hearts. (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 547)

Prayer Focus

LEADER TO EVERYONE: With your small group, pray that the Holy Spirit will confront our careless attitudes toward those in our church family who are needy.

Appeal

LEADER TO EVERYONE: Who here tonight is willing to ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart to love your church family as you have never loved them before? To care for your family of faith as you have never cared for them before? If this is your conviction, please come and join me in prayer.

24-Hour Challenge

LEADER TO EVERYONE: Ask God to show you one thing that He would love for you to do to meet a need for someone in your church family. Sacrifice to do that act of love before tomorrow's meeting. Read Acts 3:1–10 in preparation for tomorrow.