

A Word for 2019: Love
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⁴² *Give to those who ask, and don't refuse those who wish to borrow from you.*
Law of love ⁴³ *"You have heard that it was said, You must love your neighbor and hate your enemy.* ⁴⁴ *But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who harass you. - Matthew 5:42-44 Common English Bible (CEB)*

In his book *Mere Christianity*, C. S. Lewis wrote, "Do not waste your time bothering whether you 'love' your neighbor, act as if you did. As soon as we do this, we find one of the great secrets. When you are behaving as if you loved someone, you will presently come to love him. If you injure someone you dislike, you will find yourself disliking him more. If you do him a good turn, you will find yourself disliking him less." - Our Daily Bread, February 14.

The Greek for love gets lost in the English translation. We have reduced it down to this squishy emotional word that gets thrown around too casually. "I love Ice Cream." "I love that show." "I love football." That is until the referee blew that call that cost my Saints a shot at the Super Bowl. I digress. Love in the verse above is a much more robust word. It has way more depth when it flows from the mouth of Jesus. Jesus uses an extreme example in our minds, "love your enemy." Is that love or setting ourselves up for more abuse? Jesus explains to us love transcends hate, love is tough, love puts the needs of others, even our enemies, above our wants and desires. When the word love was chosen as a word for the year, I thought, "What an awesome but impossible goal." Yet what an opportunity to spend a year trying to model Christ at His best - transformational relationships grounded in love.

Prayer

Dear Lord,
The world today often shouts hate. Give us a heart to speak in love. May Your Holy Spirit fall fresh on us when our souls are depleted, filling us with Your power and love. We know Christ dwells richly within our hearts through faith. We pray that you would strengthen our roots and establish our lives firmly in His love. Let us be people who lead with love. In the name of Jesus our loving Savior. Amen.