

Introduction: Life's most important words are...

- When a child hears them, it means "I'm safe," "I'm valuable," "I really matter to you."
- When you're dating someone and hear them, it means "we're moving to a new level of commitment," "exclusivity of a relationship."
- When a friend hears them, it means "I'm here for you," "I've got your back." It's a statement of loyalty and resolve.
- When a parent hears them, their heart melts, their joy surges as little children, or grown ones, say, "I see what you do for me; I appreciate you."
- When Jesus says them to you, it means "You're wanted, valuable, precious, and I will never leave or forsake you."
- When Jesus hears you say, "I love You," it means...

Question: What does loving God really look like? **Answer:** John 12

The Context:

This chapter chronicles the beginning of the last week of Jesus' life prior to the crucifixion. The resurrection of Lazarus has ignited a movement of Jews believing Him to be the Messiah, while the religious leaders have become desperate to have Lazarus and Him killed.

Jerusalem is simultaneously being flooded with thousands of foreign pilgrims to celebrate the Passover. Three specific events will teach us what it means to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength:

1. A private dinner John 12: 1-8
2. A public parade John 12:9-19
3. A prophetic moment John 12: 20-50

Event #1: Mary expresses her love for Jesus

John 12:1-8

- Her act
- Her reproof
- Jesus' defense

Application: Love gives _____ gifts to God, (even when harshly criticized).

Event #2: The multitudes praise Jesus as Messiah

John 12:9-19

- Group 1 – The pilgrims for Passover
- Group 2 – The witnesses of Lazarus' resurrection
- Jesus worshiped as Israel's promised King
- Zechariah 9:9 fulfilled – "...riding on a colt."
- Illegal response thwarts murder plot

Application: Love gives a _____ profession of Christ, (even when unpopular or illegal).

Event #3: The Greeks seek an interview with Jesus

John 12:20-50

- An indirect request
- A monumental moment – "The hour has come."
- A profound response that:
 - Challenges the disciples
 - Creates a personal crisis for Jesus
 - Is affirmed by God the Father
 - Creates confusion in the multitudes
 - Moves Jesus to temporarily withdraw
- A final plea to receive eternal life

Application: Love gives _____ of oneself, (even to the point of death).

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the most extravagant gift you've ever given to a person? Who was it and why did you give it?
2. How does giving and loving God manifest itself in your life? Why is giving so vital to loving? (see Matthew 6:19-21)
3. In what ways did the multitudes publicly identify with and worship Jesus? What social or personal price were they risking in giving this praise publicly?
4. In what ways do you publicly identify and proclaim Christ as King of your life? Have you already taken the public step of baptism Jesus commanded? If "yes," what significance did that have in your life? If "no," when do you plan on doing it?
5. Read John 12:24 and discuss what this means in your life right now and why.