

Free Samples

Serving Appetizing Examples

August 16, 2026



Today we're learning to **reproduce God's love in our lives**. Cuz, in a world full of *cynics* and *skeptics*, people need to see it to *believe* it! And that means before we *share* the love, we gotta *show* the love, in the *flesh*. Cuz *every heart is hungry for heaven* – but we *won't know* our craving can be satisfied *by Christ*, until we get a *taste* of *His truth*! And like it or not, our example is the free sample for others to try before they buy, so the question is, **how appetizing is your sample?**



Now, last week we returned to the story of Joseph to see how all of the painful pit-stops were beginning to pay off as the necessary *training* that *equipped* Joe to be God's instrument of blessing to everyone *else*. And after moving from prison to *vice-president*, we saw the secret *formula* that blessed *him* so he could bless *others*: **We gotta sow God's Word in our heart, so we can grow it in our lives, so we can stow it for a fulfilling future!** But there's a *reason* God wants all that goodness stored *inside us*:

The good *person* out of the good treasure of his *heart produces good*. – Luke 6:45 NIV

Get it? The *process produces a product*! **If you sow, grow, and stow – you'll have something to show!** And in the same way Joe's faith was *proven* to Egypt by the *piles of grain* – *produced* before the famine – **our faith is proven to others by the goods we produce**. Cuz God doesn't fill us up just so we can walk around *spiritually full of ourselves* – **what God grows in us is supposed to reach out through us**. Cuz, like we said a couple weeks back, explanations **just can't compete with experiences**. Cuz explanations are empty words until we personally *feel* their weight. *That's* why there's *no better* advertisement for a *quality* product than the *taste test*!

Y'know how we say **"The proof is in the pudding,"** well that's the shortened version of the *original*, **"The proof of the pudding is in the eating."** Cuz every *claim* of quality is ultimately *proven* by first-hand *experience*. Think about COSTCO. Nobody stands at the end of an aisle yelling, **"Folks! Allow me to explain this chicken nugget! Notice the delicate breading – and surprisingly tender interior..."** Cuz y'know what works way better? **"Here. Try one."** One toothpick *later* you're pushing a ten-pound box through checkout! *Why?* Cuz **a single experience is worth a thousand-word explanation**. And cuz God knows *us*, He knows *that*. And cuz His *plan* only produces *quality products*,

[We're invited to:] *Taste and see that the LORD is good*. – Psalm 34:8 NIV

God doesn't say, **"Listen and understand that I'm good."** He says **"Taste and see."** Cuz you can *explain* sweetness, but *tasting it is different* – *one bite* tells you *everything you want to know*! And **you can read about God's love, but experiencing it says it all**. So, instead of sending a bigger Bible,

The Word became *flesh* and made His dwelling *among us*. – John 1:14 NIV

Jesus *literally* embodied what God's love *looks like* when it has *eyes* that notice, *ears* that listen, *feet* that follow, *hands* that help, *arms* that hold, and a *mouth* that speaks what others actually need to *hear*. **God turned His explanation into an experience** – to clear up all the questions where *words fall short*. And to make sure *everyone* gets a taste, He *told* those who've *had* the experience:

This is to My Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, [for others to taste] *showing yourselves* to be My disciples. As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you. Now remain in My love. [How?] If you keep My commands, you will remain in My love ... [and] My command is *this*: Love each other as I have loved you. [Cuz, as Paul points out, this *means*] – John 15:8-12

Now you are the body of Christ, and *each one of you* is a part of it. – 1 Corinthians 12:27



Jesus's life was just a *temporary* taste of the *eternal* good God's love *can produce* when it's planted in a *person* – but Jesus Himself reminded us that it can be *re-produced* in *us*. And *that* means we have the *capacity* to share the *same* taste of *Jesus's* life-saving love that we experienced! ... as long as we serve the sample *by the book*!



But the truth is, it's *hard* to share *God's* love through *our flesh*! Just look at yourself! **Does your life offer an untainted taste of Jesus**, or do you serve it a little *salty, spicy, or soggy*? Of course *you do*! Cuz, we're imperfect *parts* of the body *at best*! So, *what do we do*? Well, the same way food servers use *guidelines, gloves, thermometers, and sneeze-guards* to *reproduce* their product *properly* – we have *God's Word* to keep *our sample* up to *God's standards*. So grab your *spiritual* hairnet, cuz we're gonna run through the *six step training* to keep *our sample* of the Savior *sanitary and scrumptious*! And *step one* couldn't be *simpler*:



1. SHOW UP – Love enters the experience. I mean, the *first* rule of serving samples is: *you gotta be where the hungry people are*! So, just like *Jesus*, *our love* can't come from the *comfort* of our couch!

Listen, whatever *you* got going on *right now* – **Jesus was busier than you** and He *stayed* close enough to *everyone* to be *interrupted, exhausted, misunderstood, hugged, and hurt*. Which means some of the most *Christlike* love we ever *serve* might *seem* bland – but *sometimes* just making *time* for *waiting rooms, funeral services, front porches, phone calls, cups of coffee, or sitting* – can *say* more about *love* than any *sermon*. Cuz **your presence proves your priorities**. And in a *world of pain and confusion*, it's profoundly *moving* when someone *shows up* to share your burden like *Jesus did*.



And *after* you *show up*, **2. SHUT UP – Love listens before it speaks.** This is a *hard* one for those of *us* who think we have answers for others! But remember, Jesus had *all the answers* to *all our problems* – and yet He *still sat* and *sympathized* with *all our pain*. Cuz **sometimes an answer isn't the solution – endurance is.**

But letting someone *let it all out* is *often more helpful* than all the *advice* you *want* to give. That's why we pay *therapists* so much money just to make *us* talk about *ourselves*!

[Cuz] To answer *before* listening—that is folly and shame. — Proverbs 18:13 NIV

So, *before* you try to *fix* anything, **hear them out to help them out.** Jesus *could've* gone to the cross to *pay* the price for our sin *without* hearing us *complain* about the mess we *made* – but **God's love wants every heart fully expressed so they can be completely fulfilled.** And when our *sample* lets *others* experience a love that *listens*, even the *hardest* hearts begin to *soften*.



And *then* we can **3. STEP UP – Love takes action.** Cuz Jesus *is* Lord, but since He *split*, you're His body! And that means if we want *others* to *experience* the care of Christ, it's in *our hands*! And yet this world *wants* to *focus* on words cuz **we can fake intentions but we can't fake actions!** But while Pharisees and fakers *describe* love, Jesus *delivers* love to your door.

Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says ... "Keep warm and well fed," but does nothing ... what good is it? – James 2:15–16 NIV

[So,] Let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth. – 1 John 3:18 NIV

Cuz to give a taste of the *love* that went to *battle* with *sin* and *death* on *our behalf* – we gotta show others *we're* willing to join *their fight* as an *active* ally against the pain and problems in *their life*!



But *our* actions *shouldn't* just be *reactive*, cuz *God's* love is *proactive*! So, **4. SIGN UP – Love takes initiative** We can be *doers* of the Word and still be *missers* of the *opportunity*! So, while it's great to *join* someone's fight, *God's* love *goes looking* for a fight! Cuz taking action is *moot* if we *wait* to be *told* to take it. Instead, like Esther, we should *proactively* ask:

[Perhaps] you have come to your royal position for such a time as this? – Esther 4:14 NIV

Cuz your faith made *you* a *kid* of the *King*, and loving *others* like *Jesus* means *flexing* that faith by *bringing* the power of love into situations where *you* see the need *before* others *ask*. *Run* to that *neighbor* who's hands are full of groceries, *text* that *coworker* who's having a rough week, and offer to *pray* with *everyone* who you see *hurting*, *helpless*, or *hopeless*! Cuz **serving samples means treating all interruptions as invitations!** Even when someone's just looking for the *bathroom*, give *them* a sample snack for the road! Say, **"Happy to help and God bless!"**



And while love gives you a chance to *get in the game* once you sign up; our *intervention* won't be *welcome* unless we **5. OPEN UP – Love shares.** Being *proactive* to have a persistent presence *is key* – but once you're where the sample needs *serving*, it's time to **connect to the customer to be a bridge to the experience.** And *that* means making it *personal*.

[Listen to how Paul says God's love pulled *him* through some pain:] We were harassed at *every turn*—*conflicts* on the *outside*, fears *within*. But *God*, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus. – 2 Corinthians 7:5–6 NIV

So, let's be very clear: *Who* comforted Paul? *God*. And *how* did *God* comfort Paul? *Titus*.

Cuz believers don't just *follow* God's orders, **Christians serve God's purpose – as His person.** And I really want you to *get* this, cuz it's key to overcoming a common *complaint* in the Christian walk. Y'see, at some point, the big *building*, new *people*, corporate *worship*, and initial *optimism* of following Jesus *feels* like it *fades* as your new life *normalizes* – and *that's* when we start *saying* things like, **"I just don't really feel the love of Jesus the way we talk about it."** And *this* happens cuz we *envision* God's love as the *supernatural* sensation of His *omnipotent* presence that gives us *clear guidance*, *confidence*, and *reassurance* through a booming *voice*, divine *intervention*, and miraculous *protection*. But, **the problem is, we're His body.**

And though He certainly can move mountains with miracles, the heaven *we're* supposed to call *home* requires *each resident* to care for *each other* by *cooperating* with the Head's commands. So, if we pray for God to give us *guidance*, *confidence*, or *reassurance* – **we should expect His loving response to come from one of us!** His *hugs* use *our arms*, His *help* extends *our hands*, and His *encouragement* is spoken by *our mouths*. And that means **His love is never distant, but His body might be delinquent!** So foster *fellowship* to facilitate God's *feelings* – like John says:

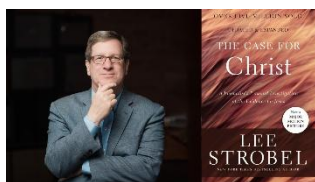
God is love ... No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us ... In this world we are like Jesus. – 1 John 4:8, 12, 17 NIV

Get it? Like *love*, God is something we *can't see* but *can experience* through *others*. Cuz when we open our *lives* to one another, we open the *way* for *others* to *experience* God – cuz **the invisible God becomes a tangible God through our body.** So, hear *His voice* when I say, **"I love every one of you!"**



And as we learn to *recognize* and *reproduce* that love, we'll all naturally **6. GROW UP – Love looks like Jesus.** Cuz spiritual *maturity* doesn't mean *giving* better *explanations* of Jesus – it's *being* better *examples* of Jesus! So, as His love *grows*, our *sample* shows: a *body* that *shows up*, *ears* that *listen up*, *feet* that *step up*, *hands* that *sign up*, and a *heart* that *opens up*.

[Cuz you are what you serve; so if we're] Speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of Him who is the Head, that is, Christ. – Ephesians 4:15 NIV



Cuz *nobody's* gonna be hungry for God's love until *you've* grown a *quality example* of the *experience* for others to *sample*. And that's what Lee Strobel learned the *hard* way. Cuz he made a *career* giving people great *explanations* of Jesus. And since *most* skeptics asked, **"If God's real, why does He allow suffering?"** Strobel was ready to *argue* the answers!

But *eventually* he saw how *arguing* didn't convince the *starving* Jesus was worth *trying*. So, he asked, **"Why did you choose that question?"** and heard: **"My wife has cancer." "We lost our child." "Where was God when my life fell apart?"** And suddenly, he realized the *tangible pain* of *life* had a better case than the *invisible love* of God. Cuz **hungry hearts don't need to argue Jesus, they need to taste Jesus.** They need His *tangible* body to *sit* with them, *hear* them out, *share* their *tears*, *acknowledge* the *pain*, *encourage* their *heart*, and *hold* them in *their arms*. And *that's* what all of *us* here at His Place are *for*. We *ain't* anybody's *Savior* but we *are* the body *He uses* and the example *others sample* to *taste* and *see* if the Lord's produce *is good*. So *show up*, *shut up*, *step up*, *sign up*, *open up*, and *grow up*. Cuz *everybody's* starving for Jesus, and **it's up to you to give 'em a taste!**

Father God, thank You for loving me in spite of my sin; forgive me and cleanse me by the sacrifice of Your Son, my Savior; and free me and lead me by Your Spirit and Word, as I seek to trust and follow Jesus Christ, as the Lord of my life. Amen.