Love Does.

Worship Series Study Guide

First Lutheran
discover more : together

Love Does: A Study of the Ten Commandments

Grounded in Luther's Small and Large Catechism
with scripture readings, key verses, and commentary
September 6 – November 15, 2026

INTRODUCTION

Design of Each Week:

Each week will be an invitation to experience the commandments in three ways.

1. Become familiar with Luther's teaching on the commandment.
2. Explore the biblical passages and reflect on their application and meaning or us.
3. Engage in specific ways to do what the commandment invites us to:
   to live out the commandment in love.

How to Use this Devotional:

Each week the sermon will explore the commandment and set the stage for your use of this booklet. This devotional can be used in a number of ways.

1. Use for your own personal devotion at home, daily or weekly.
   Reflect on 1 or 2 questions daily.
2. Use the booklet as the basis for a small group conversation and study
3. Families can use the special questions and activities to invite children to learn about the 10 Commandments and explore their meaning.

Note: Each week we've included thoughts from Dr. Rolf Jacobson because a conversation between our pastors and Dr. Jacobson was instrumental in developing this study. Dr. Rolf Jacobson serves as Dean of the Faculty and Professor of Old Testament at Luther Seminary, where he holds the Alvin N. Rogness Chair of Scripture, Theology, and Ministry. An ordained ELCA pastor, With decades of teaching and pastoral wisdom, Rolf pairs rigorous, faithful biblical scholarship with genuine humor and warmth. He is a longtime voice on the *Sermon Brainwave* podcast, the *Narrative Lectionary* blog, and has authored and co-authored numerous books, including *Invitation to the Psalms* and the forthcoming *Love Your Neighbor: The Ten Commandments and the Focus of a Biblical Ethic*.

Want to Go Deeper?
Connect with a small group for personal connections and enriching conversation.

Drop-in Discussions at FLC:
Sundays: 10:10 a.m.
in the Youth Room

Wednesdays: 7:15 p.m.
in the Chapel
On-Going Groups using this Study:

Sundays:

6:30 p.m. various Homes
Parents w/ Young Children
Pr. Craig Brown
craigb@firstlutherancr.org

6:30 p.m. various Homes
Older Adult Couples
Peg Musil 319-360-2340

Tuesdays:

7 a.m. @ Wilson Hy-Vee
Older Adult Men
Bruce Lindholm 319-333-4422

7:30 a.m. @ First Lutheran
Sisters' Acts 2 50s-60s women
Vicki Hughes 319-471-3733

7:30 a.m. @ Panera NE
Retired Men
Jim Gruettner 319-389-0001

9 a.m. Tuesday @ First Lutheran
Retired Women
Judy Cheney 319-361-0403

Wednesdays:

6:45 a.m. @ First Lutheran
Men's Breakfast
Pr. Steve Knudson
stevek@firstlutherancr.org

9:30 a.m. @ First Lutheran
New Group
Leader TBD 319-365-1494

Thursdays:

10 a.m. @ First Lutheran
Seniors' Bible Study
Becky Cram 319-431-8162

1:30 p.m. @ First Lutheran
Retired Couples/Singles
Paul & Cathy Price 989-574-7211

If you could facilitate our Wed. group or at another day, time, or location, please contact the church office:

Text (319) 423-9383
Email info@firstlutherancr.org
Call (319) 365-01494

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WEEK 1 · SEPTEMBER 6

Introduction to the Ten Commandments

1. DEVOTION

Prof. Rolf Jacobson — *It's all about loving our neighbor! Over the next eleven weeks we will walk through the Ten Commandments not as a checklist to fear, but — as the Psalmist prays — as a path we desire to walk, because it is the shape of love for God and for our neighbor.*

The phrase “Love does” captures a different interpretation of the 10 Commandments. Often we think of the commandments more in terms of what we're not supposed to do than what we can do. We think of them as the list of the 10 “do nots”. Do not steal, do not covet, do not bear false witness. When Martin Luther wrote a simple teaching on the 10 Commandments to be used in homes, he explained each commandment in two parts: 1) what we're not to do; 2) what love calls us to do.

This interpretation comes from Jesus. In Matthew and Luke, Jesus begins “you have heard it said” and recites a commandment. Then Jesus continues, “but I say unto you” and he expands the scope, pointing to the fuller way love would act. Elsewhere, Jesus summarizes the commandments in terms of love: “you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart soul and mind and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Love is the driving force for living into God's commandments, God's way of living.

In Exodus chapter 19, God gives the 10 Commandments to the Israelites. God meets the tribes of Israel at Mount Sinai and gives them a blueprint for how they shall live with one another, the 10 Commandments. Before any commandment is given, God begins by saying “I have brought you out from the land of Egypt and I have made you my people.” The very giving of the commandments begins with an act of redemption, salvation, and deliverance. God begins the commandments not with a statement of law, but with an act of the gospel. God has given the commandments not as a burden, but as a pathway for how Israel and the human community might live in harmony with one another, made possible by God’s deliverance.

Though God has given a blueprint for human life, the commandments also serve as a diagnostic tool, a means for self-reflection. Through the commandments, we become aware of how far we have fallen short of the glory of God. In Luther's explanation of the commandments, we become aware of how we turn away from God, and how we do not truly practice loving regard for our neighbor, be the neighbor one next door or the neighbor who lives far away. In a way, the explanation about what love does results in an understanding of the commandment that is more encompassing, more far reaching, and hence more accusing. The result is a fresh awareness of our need for a savior, and how sweet God's message of forgiveness and life and salvation in Jesus can become.

The commandments drive us to Jesus Christ and God's message of forgiveness and the cross. Set free in God's forgiveness, we are freed to live the inner music of each commandment, the melody and harmony of love. There is no salvation through the 10 Commandments. But through them we can gain a deeper understanding of God's forgiveness for us. And freed by the Gospel, we can explore more deeply how we might use that freedom for the neighbor.

2. COMMANDMENT & SMALL CATECHISM EXPLANATION

What then does God say about all these commandments?
God says the following: "I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments."

What does this mean?
God threatens to punish all who break these commandments. Therefore we are to fear his wrath and not disobey these commandments. However, God promises grace and every good thing to all those who keep these commandments. Therefore we also are to love and trust him, and gladly act according to his commands.

3. LUTHER'S LARGE CATECHISM — WHAT LOVE DOES

WHAT LOVE DOES

"Thus we have the Ten Commandments, a compendium of divine doctrine, as to what we are to do in order that our whole life may be pleasing to God, and the true fountain and channel from and in which everything must arise and flow that is to be a good work; so that outside of the Ten Commandments no work or thing can be good or pleasing to God, however great or precious it be in the eyes of the world."

Large Catechism (LC), Conclusion of the Ten Commandments, ¶311

WHAT LOVE DOES

"For in these three parts [the Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer] everything that we have in the Scriptures is comprehended in short, plain, and simple terms. Therefore it is the duty of every father of a family to question and examine his children and servants at least once a week, and to keep them faithfully at it."

LC, Short Preface

4. KEY VERSE

Psalm 119:35 *"Lead me in the path of your commandments, for that is my desire."*

Romans 13:9 *"The commandments ... are summed up in this word, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"*

5. BIBLE PASSAGE(S)

Psalm 119:33–40

33 Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes, and I shall keep it to the end. 34 Give me
understanding, and I shall keep your teaching; I shall keep it with all my heart. 35 Lead
me in the path of your commandments, for that is my desire. 36 Incline my heart to your
decrees and not to unjust gain. 37 Turn my eyes from beholding falsehood; give me life
in your way. 38 Fulfill your promise to your servant, which is for those who fear you.
39 Turn away the reproach that I dread, because your judgments are good. 40 Behold, I
long for your commandments; by your righteousness enliven me.

Romans 13:8–14

[8]Owe no one anything, except to love one another, for the one who loves another has
fulfilled the law. [9]The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; you shall not
murder; you shall not steal; you shall not covet," and any other commandment, are
summed up in this word, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." [10]Love does no
wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law. [11]Besides this, you
know what time it is, how it is already the moment for you to wake from sleep. For
salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; [12]the night is far gone;
the day is near. Let us then throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of
light; [13]let us walk decently as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in illicit
sex and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. [14]Instead, put on the Lord Jesus
Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Matthew 18:15–20

[Jesus said to the disciples:] [15]"If your brother or sister sins against you, go and point
out the fault when the two of you are alone. If you are listened to, you have regained
that one. [16]But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that
every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. [17]If that
person refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church, and if the offender refuses to
listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a gentile and a tax collector.
[18]Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever
you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. [19]Again, truly I tell you, if two of you
agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.
[20]For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

6. BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

Discovery Questions

1. If this is your first time as a group, introduce yourselves to one another. What occupies your attention during the week? Who are important people for you?
2. When did you first learn the 10 Commandments?
3. Growing up, did you experience the commandments more as a list of 'do nots' or as an invitation to love? Explain.

4. What's a 'rule' from your childhood — at home, school, or elsewhere — that you understand differently now as an adult?

Discover More Questions

5. How did the sermon speak to you? What is one thing you take with you?
6. What does the title of the series, “Love Does” say to you?
7. In Romans, Paul speaks of love as the fulfillment of the law and the commandments. How is that so?
8. The passage from Matthew is about accountability and forgiveness. How do you see that fitting in with the series on the 10 Commandments?

Discover More Together Questions

9. Luther says the commandments function as a diagnostic tool, showing how far we fall short. When has self-examination like that driven you toward Christ rather than despair?

Love Does*—choose one.*

10. Pick one person this week and ask, "What would love do here?"— then actually do it, even if it costs you something.
11. Each night this week, jot one sentence on where you glimpsed love — God's for you, or yours for a neighbor.

WEEK 2 · SEPTEMBER 13

The First Commandment

1. DEVOTION

Prof. Rolf Jacobson — *When we worship false gods, the neighbor always ends up paying. No image of God is permitted other than images of Jesus.*

The commandments begin with a promise. God says, "I am the Lord your God. I brought you out of Egypt." God acts first. God makes the choice, "I am yours, you are mine." God acts out of love. "For God so loved the world, that God gave his only son." God acts in such a way that we might come to trust God's redeeming love above everything else.

Luther understood something essential about human faith. We are inclined to turn our attention away from God and place our trust in things other than the God who made us and loves us. The human heart is infinitely creative to shifting trust away from God—toward money or status. Even good works and religious piety can be a form of idolatry, because the heart turns to its own religious achievements ahead of God's forgiveness and grace.

The story is as old as Adam and Eve. The temptation to disobey God was straight forward: "If you eat, you will gain wisdom, and you will be like God." You won't need to trust God, because you can take care of yourself.

How is the neighbor affected by the first commandment that seems to be only about God and faith? In Genesis, discord between humans began only after the temptation. Adam blamed Eve. Eve blamed the serpent. Both hid from God. Distrust between humans mirrored their distrust of God. Cain killed Abel. The story continues.

Why does it happen this way? When we love and trust God, we believe God is trustworthy, and we are freed to turn to our neighbor as a neighbor. When we place our trust in things, they never fully satisfy, and the neighbor becomes a threat, an obstacle, or even on object to be used for our gain.

2. COMMANDMENT & SMALL CATECHISM EXPLANATION

"You shall have no other gods."

What does this mean?

We are to fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

3. LUTHER'S LARGE CATECHISM

WHAT LOVE DOES

"A god means that from which we are to expect all good and to which we are to take refuge in all distress, so that to have a God is nothing else than to trust and believe Him from the whole heart... That now, I say, upon which you set your heart and put your trust is properly your god." Large Catechism (LC) I, First Commandment, ¶2–3

WHAT LOVE DOES

"Whatever you have heretofore sought of the saints, or for whatever things you have trusted in Mammon or anything else, expect it all of Me, and regard Me as the one who will help you and pour out upon you richly all good things."
LC I, First Commandment, ¶16

HOW WE DO NOT LOVE

"Many a one thinks that he has God and everything in abundance when he has money and possessions; he trusts in them and boasts of them with such firmness and assurance as to care for no one. Lo, such a man also has a god, Mammon by name... which is also the most common idol on earth." LC I, First Commandment, ¶5–6

4. KEY VERSE

Romans 14:11 *"As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God."*

5. BIBLE PASSAGE(S)

Romans 14:7–12

7 For we do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. 8 If we live, we live
to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether
we die, we are the Lord's. 9 For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might
be Lord of both the dead and the living. 10 Why do you pass judgment on your brother

or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. [11]For it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.” [12]So then, each one of us will be held accountable.

Matthew 4:1–11

[1]Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. [2]He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished. [3]The tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” [4]But he answered, “It is written, ‘One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” [5]Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, [6]saying to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, ‘He will command his angels concerning you,’ and ‘On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’” [7]Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” [8]Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, [9]and he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” [10]Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! for it is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.’”

6. BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

Discovery Questions

1. As a kid, what did you think would make you truly happy or secure once you got it? Did you get it? Was the outcome as you imagined?
2. If your life were a treasure map, what's the “X” you find yourself chasing most days — and does it usually deliver?

Discover More Questions

3. How did the sermon speak to you? What is one thing you take with you?

4. In Matthew 4:1–11, the devil tempts Jesus three times in the wilderness. What is each temptation actually asking Jesus to trust instead of God?
5. How does Jesus respond to each temptation (all three answers are drawn from Deuteronomy)? What does Jesus reveal what it means to "have no other gods"?
6. Luther names Mammon — money and possessions — as "the most common idol on earth." Why do you think money is such a convincing substitute god? What does money or wealth promise that only God can actually deliver?
7. Luther also names works-righteousness — trying to "wrestle heaven away from God" through our own religious performance — as the most common and dangerous form of idolatry. Why might a habit that looks devout (praying, church attendance, giving) still function as a false god? Does Luther mean not to do these things? Or is it about the heart and trust behind the actions?
8. The Small Catechism answers "What does this mean?" with: "We are to fear, love, and trust in God above all things." Which of those three words — fear, love, trust — feels hardest for you personally, and why?

Discover More Together Questions

9. Luther says whatever we "flee to in distress" reveals our god. Think of your last real crisis — big or small. What (or who) did you run to first? What would it look like to run to God first instead?
10. The Israelites were rescued from slavery in Egypt before they ever received this commandment — grace came before law. How does knowing you're already rescued through Christ change how you hear "you shall have no other gods," so it feels less like a threat and more like an invitation?
11. Rolf Jacobson notes, "when we worship false gods, the neighbor always ends up paying." Can you think of an example — in your own life or the wider world — where someone's misplaced trust (in money, power, ideology) ended up harming other people?

Love Does—*choose one.*

12. What was your experience of doing the "*Love Does" activity from last week?*
13. Name the idol that competes with your neighbor. Name one thing — status, possessions, image, being right — that you protect at someone else's expense. Take one deliberate, specific action this week that gives away a piece of it rather than defending it.

WEEK 3 · SEPTEMBER 20

The Second Commandment

1. DEVOTION

Prof. Rolf Jacobson — *When we misuse God's name (or image) and our relationship with God, we often put the neighbor at risk.*

Look at the misuse of God's name in the Small Catechism. In each case, the neighbor suffers when God's name is misused. "I swear to God" is a phrase used to justify an action or accusation, in order extract an advantage over someone else, or to protect ourselves without regard for anyone else. In the name of God, much wrong has been done upon the earth.

A name is a "handle." It is the way people get hold of you and speak of you. To have a good name is one of the more precious things to have. We are called on by name. We give our name when we make a contract. We say our name and the name of the beloved in the vows of marriage.

God's name can be called on for truth and for the neighbor's good. A true oath, taken when needed "establishes truth, refutes falsehood, and makes peace." The challenge can be sorting out what is a truthful oath, and a false one, especially when we can deceive ourselves of what is true. Just look back to what happened in the garden.

To take God's name "in vain" is to make it nothing—an empty curse, a crutch to prop up a lie, a magic word for luck, or a badge of religious performance. That name is precious, our very access to God, is emptied of meaning.

What then does love do? Love takes hold of God's real name as God's offering of access and relationship. Here the focus is on how God's name is best used: in prayer, praise and thanksgiving, in time of need when we place our trust in God. Notice how the focus shifts back to this primary relationship of trust in God, which becomes the best protection for the neighbor.

2. COMMANDMENT & SMALL CATECHISM EXPLANATION

"You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God."

What does this mean?

We are to fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear falsely, practice magic, lie, or deceive using His name, but call upon it in every time of trouble, to pray, praise, and give thanks.

3. LUTHER'S LARGE CATECHISM — WHAT LOVE DOES & HOW WE FAIL

WHAT LOVE DOES

"We are, on the other hand, commanded to employ [God's name] for truth and for all good, as when one swears truly where there is need and it is demanded. So also when there is right teaching, and when the name is invoked in trouble or praised and thanked in prosperity."

Large Catechism (LC) I, Second Commandment

WHAT LOVE DOES

"For the support of good and the advantage of our neighbor we should swear. For it is a truly good work, by which God is praised, truth and right are established, falsehood is refuted, peace is made among men, obedience is rendered, and quarrels are settled."

LC I, Second Commandment

HOW WE DO NOT LOVE

"It is a common calamity in all the world that there are as few who are not using the name of God for purposes of lying and all wickedness as there are those who with their heart trust alone in God."

LC I, Second Commandment

4. KEY VERSE

Philippians 1:27 *"Live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ."*

Matthew 5:34–35 *"Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King."*

5. BIBLE PASSAGE(S)

Philippians 1:21–30

21 For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. 22 If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me, yet I cannot say which I will choose. 23 I am hard

pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better, [24]but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. [25]Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, [26]so that, by my presence again with you, your boast might abound in Christ Jesus because of me. [27]Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel [28]and in no way frightened by those opposing you. For them, this is evidence of their destruction but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. [29]For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ but of suffering for him as well, [30]since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

Matthew 5:33–37

[33]"Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord.' [34]But I say to you: Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, [35]or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. [36]And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. [37]Let your word be 'Yes, Yes' or 'No, No'; anything more than this comes from the evil one.

6. BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

Discovery Questions

1. What's the story behind your first name — were you named after someone or for some special reason?
2. Did you have a nickname growing up? Who gave it to you, and how did it make you feel?
3. What names or titles do the people closest to you call you (Mom, Coach, Boss, Honey)? What does each one reveal about that relationship?

Discover More Questions

4. How did the sermon speak to you? What is one thing you take with you?

5. What does it mean to "fear and love God" regarding His name? List the specific things we're to avoid and the things we're to do.
    a. What are examples of how God's name is used to curse? Curse others? Curse God?
    b. What is the difference between making an oath in court, "so help me God," and swearing?
    c. How might God's name be used to lie or deceive? How is it possible to deceive one's self, that is to be so convinced to be on God's side, and then to realize you are mistaken?
6. In Matthew 5:33–37, Jesus says, "Let your word be 'Yes, Yes' or 'No, No.'" Why might a simple, honest word matter more to Jesus than an oath sworn in God's name?
7. God's covenant name in Hebrew (YHWH) was considered too holy to pronounce, so it was replaced in reading with "the Lord." What does that level of reverence teach us about our own casual use of God's name today?
8. How is God's name trivialized? Emptied of meaning?

Discover More Together Questions

9. Where do you hear God's name misused most often in your daily life — media, conversation, the workplace? How do you usually respond?

10. Is there a difference between using God's name casually ("Oh my God") and invoking it to justify excluding or condemning someone ("God is on my side; you're going to hell")? Which troubles you more, and why?
11. When we misuse God's name, "the neighbor always ends up paying." Can you think of an example where invoking God's name has harmed rather than helped someone?

Love Does*—choose one.*

12. What was your experience of doing the "*Love Does" activity from last week?*
13. Each time you're tempted to use God's name as a curse or filler word, replace it with a genuine, brief prayer or word of thanks instead.

14. Speak one true, encouraging word "in the name of the Lord" to someone this week — a blessing, an honest word of praise, or a prayer said over them.

WEEK 4 · SEPTEMBER 27

The Third Commandment

1. DEVOTION

Prof. Rolf Jacobson –*The Sabbath is the first labor law in history; it teaches that we are to make provisions so that everyone gets rest.*

Sabbath means rest, which begs the question: rest from what? Rest for the sake of what? After generations of serving Pharaoh when there was no rest, God now says life is more than work, and this is not for the few, but for all, even the beasts of burden. Rest from labor.

A noted Biblical scholar, Walter Brueggemann, pointed out how radical this commandment was. The commandment says who we are as children of God is not to be reduced to what we produce, or even what we consume. We are more than our accomplishments, more than our purchases, more than our standing or value to our neighbors, our company, or friends at school. We are first a child of God, created by God, cherished by God, forgiven by God, of such great value, that God sent Jesus. Not for the sake of anything more, than that we might know we are beloved. Rest connects us to this essential truth of who we are, and in turn it shapes how we see others—not for what they can do for me, but who they are as a beloved child of God.

Luther spoke of using rest for the sake of God's word, because this word of God tells us who we are, a word of grace that announces forgiveness, a word of love that makes us beloved, a word of belonging that grounds us. When we are grounded in God's word, we are freed to look to the neighbor, not as an object for personal gain, nor as someone to be feared, but as a child of God, beloved, full of dignity, and precious in God's sight.

2. COMMANDMENT & SMALL CATECHISM EXPLANATION

"Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy."

What does this mean?

We are to fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and God's Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.

3. LUTHER'S LARGE CATECHISM — WHAT LOVE DOES & HOW WE FAIL

WHAT LOVE DOES

"That on such day of rest ... freedom and time be taken to attend divine service, so that we come together to hear and treat of God's Word, and then to praise God, to sing and pray."

Large Catechism (LC) I, Third Commandment

WHAT LOVE DOES

"Such is the efficacy of the Word, whenever it is seriously contemplated, heard, and used, that it is bound never to be without fruit, but always awakens new understanding, pleasure, and devoutness, and produces a pure heart and pure thoughts."

Large Catechism (LC) I, Third Commandment

HOW WE DO NOT LOVE

"Not only those sin against this commandment who grossly misuse and desecrate the holy day... but also that other crowd who listen to God's Word as to any other trifle, and only from custom come to preaching, and go away again, and at the end of the year know as little of it as at the beginning."

LC I, Third Commandment

4. KEY VERSE

Exodus 20:8 *"Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy."*

5. BIBLE PASSAGE(S)

Exodus 20:8–11

8 "Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all
your work. 10 But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do
any work — you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your
livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. 11 For in six days the Lord made heaven
and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the
Lord blessed the Sabbath day and consecrated it.

Matthew 11:28–30

"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

6. BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

Discovery Questions

1. What does a truly restful day look like for you — and when did you last have one?
2. Did your family have a weekly rest tradition growing up (a Sunday ritual, a no-work day, a standing family meal)? What did it look like?

Discover More Questions

3. How did the sermon speak to you? What is one thing you take with you?
4. Read Exodus 20:8–11. Why do you think God ties our Sabbath rest to His own rest in creation (v. 11)?
5. The Sabbath is called "the first labor law in history." Israel has just come from slavery in Egypt. How does that memory shape who is to rest? What does that inclusivity reveal about God's intent?
6. Luther links keeping the Sabbath holy to not despising "preaching and God's Word." Why might rest and hearing God's Word be bound together in one commandment rather than treated as two separate things? In the disruption of doing, how does rest open a way to God and an awareness of the self before God?
7. In Matthew 11:28–30, Jesus offers rest and calls His yoke "easy" and His burden "light." How does this gospel rest relate to the command to keep the Sabbath?

Discover More Together Questions

8. What do you learn about yourself when rest means you stop doing, stop producing, stop achieving, and stop consuming, so that the measure of who you are is freed from every cultural yardstick of value and purpose?

9. How might resting on a regular basis actually be an act of trust in God, rather than an act of laziness or an indulgence?

Love Does—*choose one.*

10. What was your experience of doing the "*Love Does" activity from last week?*
11. Read or listen to one Scripture passage this week slowly and unhurried, outside of a sermon or study, simply to let God's Word do its quiet work in you.
12. Identify one person whose rest depends partly on you — a coworker, an employee, a family member — and do one concrete thing this week to protect their time off.

WEEK 5 · OCTOBER 4

The Fourth Commandment

1. DEVOTION

Prof. Rolf Jacobson — *We should see value in our elders as contributing members of society. They are not to be discarded when they cease to contribute economically or physically to society. They are to be cared for.*

Family life is both a source of deep joy, love, security, and mutual devotion, and it can become an arena of failed expectation, disappointment, and wounds. Honoring parents can be an act of delight for some, and most difficult for others. For days devoted to mothers and fathers, worship will include prayers of thanksgiving, as well as petitions for healing and restoring broken relationships. Relationships at home can be the source of nurture and the occasion of great dysfunction.

Luther thought of the role of parent as an office, for God uses parents to protect, care, nurture, and provide for children. A child could not survive without a parent or appointed adult carrying out this role. The honor due a parent was more than a cursory respect, it recognized the family as a basic unit of society and personal well-being.

One way of navigating the role of parent and child is to ask the question: who is the more vulnerable? Who is the one in authority or power? Luther uses authority and power for the sake of serving the weaker. So when children are young, parents have a responsibility of care, protection, nurture. As children grow and assume greater autonomy and ability, there is a shift in role and responsibility regarding care, protection and nurture as parents age.

In a contemporary culture that lifts up the individual, autonomy, and a freedom from the constraints of others, this commandment offers a different vision, where the most important relationships are marked by respect, deference, love and service.

2. COMMANDMENT & SMALL CATECHISM EXPLANATION

"Honor your father and your mother."

What does this mean?

We are to fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and those in authority over us, but honor, serve, obey, love, and esteem them.

3. LUTHER'S LARGE CATECHISM — WHAT LOVE DOES & HOW WE FAIL

WHAT LOVE DOES

"That we show them such honor also by works, that is, with our body and possessions, that we serve them, help them, and provide for them when they are old, sick, infirm, or poor, and all that not only gladly, but with humility and reverence, as doing it before God."

Large Catechism (LC) I, Fourth Commandment

WHAT LOVE DOES

For God does not wish to have in this office of parents knaves and tyrants; nor does He assign to them this honor; but they should consider that they are under obligations of obedience to God; and that, first of all, they should earnestly and faithfully discharge their office, not only to support and provide for the bodily necessities of their children, but, most of all, to train them to the honor and praise of God.

LC I, Fourth Commandment

HOW WE DO NOT LOVE

"The children forget their parents, as we all forget God, and no one considers how God nourishes, protects, and defends us, and bestows so much good on body and soul... all the good which we have received throughout our life is wiped out from our memory."

LC I, Fourth Commandment

4. KEY VERSE

1 Timothy 5:8 *"Whoever does not provide for relatives, and especially for family members, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."*

5. BIBLE PASSAGE(S)

1 Timothy 5:1–8

[1]Do not speak harshly to an older man, but speak to him as to a father, to younger men as brothers, [2]to older women as mothers, to younger women as sisters — with absolute purity. [3]Honor widows who are really widows. [4]If a widow has children or grandchildren, they should first learn their religious duty to their own family and make some repayment to their parents, for this is pleasing in God's sight. [5]The real widow, left alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day, [6]but the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives. [7]Give these commands as well, so that they may be above reproach. [8]And whoever does not provide for relatives, and especially for family members, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Matthew 21:33–46

[Jesus said:] [33]"Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a winepress in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went away. [34]When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. [35]But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. [36]Again he sent other slaves, more than the first, and they treated them in the same way. [37]Then he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' [38]But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.' [39]So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. [40]Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" [41]They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time." [42]Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures: 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is amazing in our eyes'? [43]Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces its fruits. [44]The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, and it

will crush anyone on whom it falls.” [45]When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. [46]They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

6. BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

Discovery Questions

1. Who has been the most important "life-giver" in your life — a parent or someone else — and what did they give you?
2. What's one quality in one of your parents, or a parent figure, that you deeply admire?
3. How do you honor the memory of a parent or family member who has died?

Discover More Questions

4. How did the sermon speak to you? What is one thing you take with you?
5. Read the Fourth Commandment and Luther's Small Catechism explanation. Luther lists five actions: honor, serve, obey, love, esteem. Which comes easiest to you, and which is hardest?
6. This commandment means elders "are not to be discarded when they cease to contribute economically." How does Paul's concern for widows in 1 Timothy 5 reflect that same principle?
7. Luther's explanation covers what children owe parents, not what parents owe children — yet honor can flow both ways in a healthy family. What might parents owe their children in return?
8. Luther extends this commandment beyond biological parents to "masters and mistresses" — anyone in authority over us. Who else might this commandment call us to honor today?

Discover More Together Question

9. What would it look like to honor a parent's memory well — through story, through changed behavior, through forgiveness?

10. Where do you see "the pain of disconnection in family" in your own life or in someone close to you? What might one step toward reconnection look like?

Love Does—*choose one.*

11. What was your experience of doing the "*Love Does" activity from last week?*

12. Reach out this week to a parent, grandparent, or parent-figure — living or in memory — with a specific word of honor or gratitude, by call, letter, or a story shared with others.

13. Identify one older person in your church or neighborhood who may feel overlooked, and do one concrete act of care or honor for them this week.

14. If a family relationship carries unresolved pain, take one small step toward healing — a prayer, a conversation, or simply naming the wound honestly before God.

WEEK 6 · OCTOBER 11

The Fifth Commandment

1. DEVOTION

Prof. Rolf Jacobson — *We are to care for our neighbor's life and daily needs.*

This seems the easiest commandment to keep. Except for war, who has killed? We might feel virtuous with this commandment. But Jesus own explanation gives a fuller meaning: for the commandment forbids anger and hostility, not just physically, but also "neither with hand, heart, mouth, signs, gestures, help, nor counsel." There is more than one way to do harm.

The confession of sin in worship speaks both the things we have done, and what we have left undone. It's the undone part that is embraced so fully in this commandment. In Matthew 25, people ask Jesus, when did we not give you drink, or clothe, or provide shelter, or compassion? And he says, "When you did not do it to the least of these, you did not do it unto me." Guilt by omission is far reaching.

God gives life the way a lover gives a gift. Life is not a product with an expiration date. Life is a gift to be cherished for ourselves and for others, not just our friends or family, but also those different, even and especially our enemies. Jesus said, "Love your enemies," which means protect life even for them.

What does love do? It is found in acts of gentleness, patience, kindness, and love, not just to friends and families, but also outside our circles of concern: to the stranger, the vulnerable, even to enemies. Love asks not so much what I should not do, as what can I do, here and now, in the face of human need, for the sake of life?

2. COMMANDMENT & SMALL CATECHISM EXPLANATION

"You shall not murder."

What does this mean?

We are to fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and support him in every physical need.

3. LUTHER'S LARGE CATECHISM — WHAT LOVE DOES & HOW WE FAIL

WHAT LOVE DOES

"It is God's ultimate purpose that we suffer harm to befall no man, but show him all good and love; and... it is specially directed toward those who are our enemies. For to do good to our friends is but an ordinary heathen virtue."

LC I, Fifth Commandment, ¶193–195

WHAT LOVE DOES

"It is just as if I saw some one navigating and laboring in deep water, or one fallen into fire, and could extend to him the hand to pull him out and save him, and yet refused to do it. What else would I appear... than as a murderer and a criminal?"

LC I, Fifth Commandment, ¶192

HOW WE DO NOT LOVE

"Not only he is guilty who does evil to his neighbor, but he also who can do him good, prevent, resist evil, defend and save him, so that no bodily harm or hurt happen to him, and yet does not do it."

LC I, Fifth Commandment, ¶189–190

4. KEY VERSE

Isaiah 25:7 *"And [God] will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the covering that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death forever."*

Matthew 5:21–22 *"You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not murder,' and 'whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment."*

5. BIBLE PASSAGE(S)

Isaiah 25:1–9

[1]O Lord, you are my God; I will exalt you; I will praise your name, for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure. [2]For you have made the city a heap, the fortified city a ruin; the palace of foreigners is a city no more; it will never be rebuilt. [3]Therefore strong peoples will glorify you; cities of ruthless nations will fear you. [4]For you have been a refuge to the poor, a refuge to the needy in their distress, a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat. When the blast of the

ruthless was like a winter rainstorm, [5]the noise of foreigners like heat in a dry place, you subdued the heat with the shade of clouds; the song of the ruthless was stilled. [6]On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear. [7]And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the covering that is spread over all nations; [8]he will swallow up death forever. Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken. [9]It will be said on that day, "See, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the Lord for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

Matthew 5:21–26

[21]"You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not murder,' and 'whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.' [22]But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment, and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council, and if you say, 'You fool,' you will be liable to the hell of fire. [23]So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, [24]leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. [25]Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. [26]Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

6. BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

Discovery Questions

1. Think of a time someone's kind words or actions clearly gave you life when you needed it. What did they do?
2. On the flip side, describe a time when cutting words from someone left a mark on you, even without any physical harm.
3. Describe a person in your life who has a gift for de-escalating conflict or calming tension. What do they do?

Discover More Questions

4. How did the sermon speak to you? What is one thing you take with you?
5. Read Matthew 5:21–22. Jesus expands "you shall not murder" to include anger, insult, and contempt ("you fool"). Why might Jesus treat inner attitudes as seriously as outward acts?
6. In Matthew 5:23–24, Jesus interrupts worship itself — "leave your gift at the altar" — to insist on reconciliation first. What does this say about the relationship between our peace with God and our peace with each other?
7. Old Testament scholar Terence Fretheim describes murder as any act of violence against someone out of hatred, anger, malice, deceit, or personal gain — even if unintentional. How does this broaden your understanding of the commandment beyond literal killing?
8. Luther's Small Catechism turns the prohibition into something positive: we are to "help and support" our neighbor "in every physical need." How does this move the commandment from restraint to active care?

Discover More Together Questions

9. Children in conflict zones can become numb to constant danger — a form of PTSD sometimes called "rattle fatigue." Where do you see numbness to violence or suffering showing up in your own life or community?
10. What are small, easy-to-miss ways we "kill" others mindlessly — through indifference, silence, or careless words?
11. Social media often brings out a kind of toxic rage — comments people would never say face-to-face. What guardrails help you avoid this?

Love Does*—choose one.*

12. What was your experience of doing the *"Love Does" activity from last week?*
13. Identify one relationship where anger, insult, or distance has crept in, and take one concrete step toward reconciliation this week — a call, a note, or an honest conversation.
14. Before posting or commenting online this week, pause and ask whether you'd say the same words to the person's face; delete or soften anything you wouldn't.
15. Notice one place this week where you're tempted toward numbness in the face of suffering or violence in the news, and take one small action instead — donate, advocate, or simply stay present rather than looking away.

WEEK 7 · OCTOBER 18

The Sixth Commandment

1. DEVOTION

Prof. Rolf Jacobson — *Do justice and preserve and protect the building block of society. The adultery commandment is not about sex but about justice — preserving and protecting the family which is the building block of society.*

"You shall not commit adultery" can sound like little more than a restriction, a rule handed down to limit human desire. But its real purpose runs the other direction. This commandment exists to protect what is nearest and dearest to life itself: friendship, love, marriage, family, and the whole web of relationships we depend on simply to be human. Its "no" is in service of a deeper "yes."

That "yes" begins in creation itself. God did not intend for us to be alone. Long before romance enters the picture, there is friendship — the patient work of building trust, of confiding in another person, of needing and being needed in return. Marriage builds on that foundation and adds to it a bodily union, so that two people become, in Scripture's language, one flesh. It is a private bond shared by two people, and at the same time a public good that serves families and the wider community. Those who never marry are not without purpose in this picture; they too bring the community gifts that only they can offer.

What threatens this bond is adultery — the arrival of a third party into what was meant to remain exclusive. Behind it is often a restless dissatisfaction, a willingness to trade a trust already given for something new. Jesus presses the commandment even deeper: that same threat can take shape in the heart, in a lingering desire, long before any outward act occurs. And once acted upon, it does real damage —to companionship built over years, to mutual trust, to the children caught between broken loyalties, and to everyone whose life was bound up with that marriage.

This is also why Jesus speaks so firmly about divorce. His words aren't simply condemnation; they are protective. God's resistance to careless divorce is God's commitment to the safety and security of every person bound to another in marriage. And even where fidelity fails, God's grace remains available.

Luther placed this commandment immediately after the prohibition of murder, reasoning that after life itself, nothing is dearer to a person than a spouse. He described marriage as a divine and blessed calling — not a lesser path in life, but a genuine gift worthy of honor. Understood this way, love does more than avoid wrongdoing. It steps in to protect a neighbor's marriage when it's threatened, offers help where it can, and commits to complete fidelity — actively guarding, honoring, and caring for the relationships God has placed in our lives.

2. COMMANDMENT & SMALL CATECHISM EXPLANATION

"You shall not commit adultery."

What does this mean?

We are to fear and love God so that we lead a sexually pure and decent life in what we say and do, and husband and wife love and honor each other.

3. LUTHER'S LARGE CATECHISM — WHAT LOVE DOES

WHAT LOVE DOES

"We also make resistance, afford protection and rescue wherever there is danger and need; and again, that we give help and counsel, so as to maintain our neighbor's honor." Large Catechism (LC) I, Sixth Commandment

WHAT LOVE DOES

"Man and wife must by all means live together in love and harmony, that one may cherish the other from the heart and with entire fidelity."

LC I, Sixth Commandment

HOW WE DO NOT LOVE

"Whenever you omit this when you could make resistance, or connive at it as if it did not concern you, you are as truly guilty as the one perpetrating the deed."

LC I, Sixth Commandment

4. KEY VERSE

Matthew 5:27–28 *"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart."*

5. BIBLE PASSAGE(S)

1 Thessalonians 1:1–10

[1]Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace. [2]We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly [3]remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. [4]For we know, brothers and sisters beloved by God, that he has chosen you, [5]because our message of the gospel came to you not in word only but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of persons we proved to be among you for your sake. [6]And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy from the Holy Spirit, [7]so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. [8]For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia but in every place your faith in God has become known, so that we have no need to speak about it. [9]For they report about us what kind of welcome we had among you and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God [10]and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead — Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

Matthew 5:27–30

[27]"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' [28]But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. [29]If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. [30]And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell.

6. BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

Discovery Questions

1. How did the sermon speak to you? What is one thing you take with you?
2. Who taught you the most about what a lifelong, faithful commitment looks like?
3. Growing up, what messages did you receive — from family, church, or culture — about sex, marriage, or fidelity?

Discover More Questions

4. In Matthew 5:27–28, how does Jesus expand the definition of adultery beyond the physical act?
5. How does 1 Thessalonians 1:1–10's description of a 'labor of love' shape how we might care for our closest relationships?
6. Luther describes marriage as a divine and blessed estate. How does that view differ from seeing marriage as merely a private choice or contract?
7. Read the Small Catechism's explanation of the Sixth Commandment. What does it call husband and wife to do for each other? How does that change/deepen for a couple over a lifetime?
8. The purpose of this commandment is protection. Whom, and what, is it meant to protect?

Discover More Together Questions

9. What guardrails, practical or spiritual, do healthy marriages and friendships build to keep a 'triangle' from ever forming?
10. Unmarried people also bring special gifts to the community. How does this commandment's call to purity and honor apply beyond marriage?
11. How have you protected your marriage or closest relationship over the years?

Love Does*—choose one.*

12. What was your experience of doing the *"Love Does" activity from last week?*
13. This week, tell your spouse — or, if single, a close friend or family member — one specific thing you cherish about your loyalty to them.

WEEK 8 · OCTOBER 25

The Seventh Commandment

1. DEVOTION

Prof. Rolf Jacobson — *We are to care for our neighbor's property, helping them maintain and improve it.*

Property matters to God because life in this world requires food, shelter, tools, and income. In Luther's view, theft runs the whole range from obvious stealing to a much longer line of dishonest exchange. Theft happens when a fair exchange is thwarted: overcharging merchants, workers who do not give a fair day 's work for a fair wage, shoddy workmanship, dishonest trading. Institutional corruption masks its theft through power and the ability to protect itself from accountability.

Stealing forgets something essential. We come into the world with nothing. We leave with nothing. All that there is comes as a gift from God. We are but stewards of what we have, and God calls us to be good stewards by helping our neighbor.

In a positive way, how does love fulfill the commandment? It is not enough to avoid harming a neighbor's ability to make a living. Love actively works to preserve the neighbor's property, to secure it and promote the neighbor's advantage and well-being.

Love offers a vision for life shared with others that in turn raises the questions about how the neighbor's well-being is supported or undermined. Fears of scarcity led to hoarding in the COVID years. In a world of fixed resources, what does it mean for the average American to consume 35 times the natural resources of the average person in India?

We steal years from our life by habits and diets. We steal vitality from ourselves, and others by focusing on negative messages and undermining. We steal joy in relationships by keeping score and holding grudges.

The opposite of stealing is giving. Giving dignity and respect. A spirit of generosity is the opposite of stealing. Generosity trusts in the giving hand of God, trusts there is

enough for daily life, and seeks to help the neighbor to live a life of dignity and well-being.

2. COMMANDMENT & SMALL CATECHISM EXPLANATION

"You shall not steal."

What does this mean?

We are to fear and love God so that we do not take our neighbor's money or possessions, or get them in any dishonest way, but help him to improve and protect his possessions and income.

3. LUTHER'S LARGE CATECHISM — WHAT LOVE DOES

WHAT LOVE DOES

"It is commanded that we advance and improve his possessions, and in case he suffers want, that we help, communicate, and lend both to friends and foes."

Large Catechism (LC) I, Seventh Commandment, ¶251

WHAT LOVE DOES

"It is his duty, at the risk of God's displeasure, not only to do no injury to his neighbor... but faithfully to preserve his property for him, to secure and promote his advantage."

LC I, Seventh Commandment, ¶233

HOW WE DO NOT LOVE

"To steal is to signify not only to empty our neighbor's coffer and pockets, but to be grasping in the market, in all stores, booths, wine- and beer-cellars, workshops, and, in short, wherever there is trading."

LC I, Seventh Commandment, ¶224–226

4. KEY VERSE

Leviticus 19:15, 18 *"You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great: with justice you shall judge your neighbor ... you shall love your neighbor as yourself."*

1 Thessalonians 2:8 *"We share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves."*

Matthew 22:37–39 *"You shall love the Lord your God ... and ... you shall love your neighbor as yourself."*

5. BIBLE PASSAGE(S)

Leviticus 19:1–2, 15–18

[1]The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: [2]"Speak to all the congregation of the Israelites and say to them: You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy. ... [15]You shall not render an unjust judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great: with justice you shall judge your neighbor. [16]You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand idly by when the blood of your neighbor is at stake: I am the Lord. [17]You shall not hate in your heart anyone of your kin; you shall reprove your neighbor, or you will incur guilt yourself. [18]You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 2:1–8

[1]You yourselves know, brothers and sisters, that our coming to you was not in vain, [2]but though we had already suffered and been shamefully mistreated at Philippi, as you know, we had courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in spite of great opposition. [3]For our appeal does not spring from deceit or impure motives or trickery, [4]but, just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel, even so we speak, not to please mortals but to please God, who tests our hearts. [5]As you know and as God is our witness, we never came with words of flattery or with a pretext for greed, [6]nor did we seek praise from mortals, whether from you or from others, [7]though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children. [8]So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us.

Matthew 22:34–46

[34]When the Pharisees heard that [Jesus] had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, [35]and one of them, an expert in the law, asked him a question to test him. [36]"Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" [37]He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' [38]This is the greatest and first commandment. [39]And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' [40]On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." [41]Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus

asked them this question: [42]“What do you think of the Messiah? Whose son is he?”
They said to him, “The son of David.” [43]He said to them, “How is it then that David
by the Spirit calls him Lord, saying, [44]‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right
hand, until I put your enemies under your feet”’? [45]If David thus calls him Lord, how
can he be his son?” [46]No one was able to give him an answer, nor from that day did
anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

6. BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

Discovery Questions

1. Who is the most generous person you know personally, and what have you learned from watching them?
2. When you think about your own habits, is there one that quietly steals time, energy, or health from you?
3. Describe a "steward" role you've had — caring for something that wasn't ultimately yours, like a rental, a borrowed item, or someone else's trust.

Discover More Questions

4. How did the sermon speak to you? What is one thing you take with you?
5. Jesus summarizes the law as loving God and loving your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:37–39). How does the Seventh Commandment specifically embody "love your neighbor as yourself"
6. Read Leviticus 19:15–18. Why do you think impartial justice, refusing to slander, and not "standing idly by" are grouped together with property-related commands in this passage?
7. In 1 Thessalonians 2:1–8, Paul describes sharing "not only the gospel… but also our own selves." How does this model a generosity that goes beyond material possessions?
8. Luther's Small Catechism moves from "do not take" to actively helping our neighbor "improve and protect" their possessions and income. How does this shift the commandment from restraint to actively doing something?

9. According to Luther, failing to help someone in need is itself a violation of this commandment. Where do you see this principle echoed or challenged in our current cultural conversations about wealth and poverty?

Discover More Together Questions

10. What societal norms or systems — economic, cultural, historical — quietly steal from certain groups of people?

11. How does generosity function as an antidote to a stealing mindset — in your own life or in a community you are part of?

Love Does—*choose one.*

12. What was your experience of doing the "*Love Does" activity from last week?*
13. Practice a daily gratitude count this week, naming specific ways God has provided for you, as an antidote to a scarcity mindset.
14. Look for one place this week where you can be generous with your time — arriving early, staying present, or simply not keeping someone waiting.
15. Examine one area of your consumption or spending this week, and take one concrete step to reduce excess or share more freely with someone in need.

WEEK 9 · NOVEMBER 1

The Eighth Commandment

1. DEVOTION

Prof. Rolf Jacobson — *Use our words to defend and speak well of our neighbors, so that they would be unharmed.*

A good name and reputation are important. Lose your good name or your reputation, and real harm follows — harm that can outlast almost any other injury, because it lives on in the minds of others.

Bearing false witness is more than lying on the witness stand. It also is saying things about others on the basis of hearsay, or interpreting their actions in the least favorable light. Teasing and belittling is bearing false witness. Jumping to conclusions or placing the worst motives on others through social media is bearing false witness.

Gossip, whether whispered at work or shared as "concern" over coffee, spreads what may not even be true. Exaggerating a story to make ourselves look better, or someone else look worse, is bearing false witness. So is staying silent when we could correct a rumor or defend someone's name — silence that allows a lie to stand is its own kind of falsehood. Assuming we know why someone acted as they did, rather than asking, is bearing false witness. Online, sharing an unverified claim because it confirms what we already think of someone, or piling onto a pile-on, is bearing false witness at a large scale.

Love does not stay neutral when a neighbor's name is at stake — it acts. Love defends a person's reputation by refusing to nod along when others tear it down, and by saying, "that doesn't match what I know of them" or "let's hear their side before we decide." Love speaks well of others, meaning it looks for what to praise rather than what to criticize, and it says that praise directly to the person rather than saving compliments for a eulogy. Love goes out of its way to mention someone's

kindness or hard work to a third party, especially when that person isn't in the room to hear it.

Love interprets everything in the best possible light. When a friend cancels plans, love assumes something came up rather than that they don't care. When a coworker's email comes across as short, love assumes they're busy or having a hard day, not that they're being rude. When someone's motives are unclear, love fills in the gap with grace rather than suspicion — not naively ignoring real wrongdoing, but refusing to invent wrongdoing where none has been shown. This is the quiet, daily labor of love: choosing the kinder explanation, giving the benefit of the doubt, and treating a neighbor's good name as something worth guarding as carefully as our own.

Notice how the commandments address different spheres of human life: our relationship to God, relationships at home, our physical well-being, our ability to make a living, and now our standing, and place in community. Each commandment addresses a different aspect of life together, our ability to live fully with others. The commandments protect one another, and they protect the vitality of life together.

2. COMMANDMENT & SMALL CATECHISM EXPLANATION

"You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor."

What does this mean?

We are to fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, or ruin his reputation, but defend him, speak well of him, and interpret everything he does in the best possible light.

3. LUTHER'S LARGE CATECHISM — WHAT LOVE DOES

WHAT LOVE DOES

"It is especially an excellent and noble virtue for one always to explain advantageously and put the best construction upon all he may hear of his neighbor... or at any rate to condone it, over and against the poisonous tongues that are busy wherever they can pry out and discover something to blame."

Large Catechism (LC) I, Eighth Commandment, ¶289

WHAT LOVE DOES

"Thus also among ourselves should we adorn whatever blemishes and infirmities we find in our neighbor, and serve and help him to promote his honor to the best of our ability."

LC I, Eighth Commandment, ¶288

HOW WE DO NOT LOVE

"There is a great difference between these two things, judging sin and knowing sin. You may indeed know it, but you are not to judge it... if I rush in, judging and passing sentence, I fall into a sin which is greater than his."

LC I, Eighth Commandment, ¶265–266

4. KEY VERSE

1 John 3:2–3 *"When he is revealed, we will be like him. And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure."*

Matthew 5:11 *"Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account."*

5. BIBLE PASSAGE(S)

1 John 3:1–3

[1]See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God, and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. [2]Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. [3]And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

Matthew 5:1–12

[1]When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. [2]And he began to speak and taught them, saying: [3]"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. [4]Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. [5]Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. [6]Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. [7]Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. [8]Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. [9]Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children

of God. [10]Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. [11]Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. [12]Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

6. BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

Discovery Questions

1. When you hear the phrase "false witness," what's the first image or memory that comes to mind — a courtroom, a rumor, gossip at work, something else?
2. Can you recall a time someone spoke well of you when they didn't have to? What did that do for you?
3. Growing up, what did your family teach you about gossip — was it named as a sin, or just "what people do"?

Discover More Questions

4. How did the sermon speak to you? What is one thing you take with you?
5. Read Luther's Small Catechism explanation aloud. Which verb stands out most to you — tell a lie, betray, ruin, defend, speak well, interpret? Why?
6. Luther says love "always explains advantageously and puts the best construction" on what we hear (LC I, ¶289). What does "best construction" mean in your own words?
7. In 1 John 3:2–3, John says "what we will be has not yet been revealed," yet "we will be like him, for we will see him as he is." How does this unfinished, future identity change the way we're allowed to define a neighbor's identity right now — before all the facts, or the outcome of a life, are even in?

Discover More Together Questions

8. Without breaking the commandment in your comments, how does this commandment speak of how social media is used?

9. We can bear false witness to ourselves by the lies we tell ourselves" — exaggerating both our failings and our successes. How is self-deception a form of false witness?

10. Systems of oppression rest on lies that are "underground, unstated, or sugarcoated." Where might you be repeating an unspoken assumption about a group of people that you've never actually examined.

11. The ancient writes noted that some lies are told "to save a life, make peace, avoid injury, maintain modesty." Do you agree there's a category like that? Where would you draw the line, and why?

12. Once spoken, words can't be put back, like toothpaste back in the tube. What's a practice — pausing, asking a question, praying first — that could help you hold your tongue before you speak?

Love Does—*choose one.*

13. What was your experience of doing the "*Love Does" activity from last week?*
14. Speak well of someone who isn't in the room**.** Choose one person this week and say something genuinely good about them to a third party — not to their face, where it's easy, but behind their back, where it actually protects their name.
15. Interpret in the best light. Pick one person whose recent words or actions irritated or puzzled you, and deliberately reframe their behavior in the most charitable way the facts allow before you say anything about it to anyone else.
16. Guard your own tongue before you speak**.** Before posting, texting, or repeating something about another person this week, pause and ask: Is this true? Is it mine to share? Does it serve them or only entertain me? Let the answer decide whether the words get said.

The Ninth Commandment

1. DEVOTION

Prof. Rolf Jacobson *We are to assist our neighbor in housing and assure fair business deals.*

The last two commandments speak of coveting. The one is about things. The other is about trusted relationships. Coveting is different from out and out stealing or taking. Coveting is more about what is in the human heart, a sense of lack and wanting. The result can be a resentment or jealousy of what someone else has, which affects the relationship.

Coveting can also lead to efforts to gain by deceit or manipulation what someone else has. Greed is at the root of coveting, but coveting will dress it up as "shrewdness," to stretch the law or a contract for gain. Luther speaks of quarreling over an inheritance, using the law as a gimmick for gain, or using legal or financial maneuvers that have no concern for the neighbor.

Coveting takes us back to the first commandment. Rather than trusting God in all things, our heart is set on some thing our neighbor has. At root, coveting is chasing a counterfeit hope, that if only you had what you do not have, all will be well. How often does a commercial appeal to this urge? A car is no longer just a car, but a means to be more attractive, more interesting, more "you."

God forbids coveting in part to protect the neighbor and the neighbor's house and possessions. In part the command is to protect us from ourselves, because we can be our own worst enemy for chasing hopes that cannot deliver.

If coveting is the disease, contentment and gratitude are the antidotes — and this is what love does. Where coveting fixes its eyes on the neighbor's house and sees only what is missing from our own, gratitude fixes its eyes on our own life and sees gift. A grateful heart does not need to scheme for what the neighbor has, because it has already received its life as a gift from God's hand. To live in gratitude is to actively

rejoice when a neighbor is blessed, rather than to quietly begrudge it — and that rejoicing is itself a form of loving our neighbor, since envy corrodes relationships while gratitude sets us free to celebrate someone else's good without loss to our own.

This is precisely where Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount speak so directly to this commandment. In Matthew 6:25–34, Jesus moves from "do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink" to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." Worry and coveting are close cousins: worry is the anxious fear that God's provision will not be enough, and coveting is the grasping response to that fear, reaching for what belongs to someone else to fill the gap.

Jesus points instead to the birds of the air and the lilies of the field — creatures who neither hoard nor covet yet are fed and clothed by God who knows what they need. Contentment is not a personality trait for the naturally satisfied; it is the fruit of trusting God. When we believe we are held and provided for, worry loses its grip, coveting loses its logic, and gratitude becomes the natural language of a heart at rest in God.

2. COMMANDMENT & SMALL CATECHISM EXPLANATION

"You shall not covet your neighbor's house."

What does this mean?

We are to fear and love God so that we do not scheme to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, or get it in a way which only appears right, but help and be of service to him in keeping it.

3. LUTHER'S LARGE CATECHISM — WHAT LOVE DOES

WHAT LOVE DOES

"It is commanded, first, that we do not desire our neighbor's damage, nor even assist, nor give occasion for it, but gladly wish and leave him what he has, and, besides, advance and preserve for him what may be for his profit and service, as we should wish to be treated."

LC I, Ninth & Tenth Commandments

WHAT LOVE DOES

"God would especially have the heart pure... wishing to remove all causes and sources whence arises everything by which we do injury to our neighbor."

LC I, Ninth & Tenth Commandments

HOW WE DO NOT LOVE

"Although you go your way as if you had done no one any wrong, you have nevertheless injured your neighbor; and if it is not called stealing and cheating, yet it is called coveting your neighbor's property... and being unwilling to see him enjoy what God has granted him."

LC I, Ninth & Tenth Commandments

4. KEY VERSE

Luke 12:15 *"Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions."*

5. BIBLE PASSAGE(S)

Acts 4:32–35

32 Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one
claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in
common. 33 With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of
the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. 34 There was not a needy person
among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the
proceeds of what was sold. 35 They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to
each as any had need.

Luke 12:13–21

13 Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family
inheritance with me." 14 But he said to him, "Friend, who set me to be a judge or
arbitrator over you?" 15 And he said to them, "Take care! Be on your guard against all
kinds of greed, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." 16 Then
he told them a parable: "The land of a rich man produced abundantly. 17 And he thought
to himself, 'What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?' 18 Then he said, 'I
will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all
my grain and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid

up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' [20]But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' [21]So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God."

6. BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

Discovery Questions

1. When you were a child, what was something you really wanted simply because a friend or sibling had one?
2. Have you ever watched a family disagreement over an inheritance or estate? What did it teach you?

Discover More Questions

3. How did the sermon speak to you? What is one thing you take with you?
4. What warning does Jesus give in Luke 12:15 about greed and the true measure of a life?
5. In the parable (Luke 12:16–21), what is the rich man's plan once his barns overflow with grain?
6. What does God call the rich man in verse 20, and what does that word reveal about his priorities?
7. How does Jesus define the difference between 'storing up treasures for yourself' and being 'rich toward God' (v. 21)?

Discover More Together Questions

8. Luther calls coveting 'a counterfeit hope, that if only you had what you do not have, all will be well.' Where do you see that counterfeit hope at work in your own life or in the wider culture?
9. Envy 'corrodes relationships,' while gratitude 'sets us free to celebrate someone else's good.' This week, whose blessing could you choose to celebrate rather than resent?
10. How can practicing gratitude push back against a culture that constantly insists 'you need more' in order to be happy or valued?

11. What's one worry you are carrying that, if surrendered to God's care, might loosen your grip on something you've been coveting?

Love Does—*choose one.*

12. What was your experience of doing the "*Love Does" activity from last week?*
13. Each night this week, name three specific things you're grateful for — training your eyes to see gift rather than lack.
14. Identify one recurring worry and consciously hand it to God in prayer, using Matthew 6:33 ('seek first the kingdom') as your anchor phrase.
15. Choose one relationship marked by envy or resentment, and take a concrete step to genuinely celebrate that person's blessing — a note, a text, a kind word.

The Tenth Commandment

1. DEVOTION

Prof. Rolf Jacobson — *Do what we can to keep our neighbor's loved ones united to each other. Since our desires for the neighbor's spouse and house are the beginning of sin, we are to actively desire that which is best for the neighbor.*

Where the ninth commandment concerns a neighbor's property, the tenth commandment turns the people and relationships closest to them. Coveting acts by working to undermine relationships, to create estrangement and discontent, to lure away with flattering words. The commandment goes beyond acts of deceit, to the desires of the human heart to fill a need by scheming.

The commandment about relationships applies to friendships, marriage, workers, employees, and family. The language of the commandment may seem outdated, but the actions and desires are not. The commandment puts a fence around drawing away friends from friends, spouse from spouse, an employee from their contract or commitment. Luther noted that coveting hides behind what seems legal but still is marked by underhanded actions and scheming. The commandment names how chasing a counterfeit hope doesn't just risk the neighbor, it can make a slave of you, organizing your whole life around getting and guarding whatever you have set your heart upon.

What does love do? Love takes delight in the neighbor. Love gladly wishes the best for those relationships for the neighbor. Love turns away from envy. Love seeks fulfillment in the relationships already given, with God, at home, in community. Love sees that the alternative to coveting is real hope: God's own promise to be our God. A hope sturdy enough we don't have to grab at anyone else's life to feel secure in our own.

2. COMMANDMENT & SMALL CATECHISM EXPLANATION

"You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, workers, animals, or anything that belongs to him."

What does this mean?

We are to fear and love God so that we do not entice, force, or coax away our neighbor's spouse, workers, or animals, but urge them to stay and fulfill their responsibilities to him.

3. LUTHER'S LARGE CATECHISM — WHAT LOVE DOES

WHAT LOVE DOES

"It is commanded... that we gladly wish and leave [our neighbor] what he has, and advance and preserve for him what may be for his profit and service, as we should wish to be treated." Large Catechism (LC) I, Ninth & Tenth Commandments

WHAT LOVE DOES

"Thus these commandments are especially directed against envy and miserable avarice, God wishing to remove all causes and sources whence arises everything by which we do injury to our neighbor."

LC I, Ninth & Tenth Commandments

HOW WE DO NOT LOVE

"It is not a rare thing with us that one estranges or alienates another's man-servant or maid-servant, or entices them away by flattering words."

LC I, Ninth & Tenth Commandments

4. KEY VERSE

1 Thessalonians 5:11 *"Encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing."*

5. BIBLE PASSAGE(S)

1 Thessalonians 5:1–11

[1]Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. [2]For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. [3]When they say, "There is peace and

security," then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! [4]But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; [5]for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. [6]So, then, let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober, [7]for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. [8]But since we belong to the day, let us be sober and put on the breastplate of faith and love and for a helmet the hope of salvation. [9]For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, [10]who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. [11]Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

Matthew 25:14–30

[14]"For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; [15]to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. At once [16]the one who had received the five talents went off and traded with them and made five more talents. [17]In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. [18]But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. [19]After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. [20]Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.' [21]His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things; I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' [22]And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.' [23]His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things; I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' [24]Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you did not scatter, [25]so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' [26]But his master replied, 'You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I did not scatter? [27]Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. [28]So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. [29]For to all those

who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance, but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. [30]As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”

6. BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

Discovery Questions

1. Think of a friendship or relationship you treasure. What first drew you to that person?
2. Describe a team, workplace, or volunteer commitment where loyalty mattered more than convenience.
3. Have you ever felt threatened by someone else's closeness with a person you care about? What did that feel like?

Discover More Questions

4. How did the sermon speak to you? What is one thing you take with you?
5. In Matthew 25:14–30, why does the master entrust a different number of talents to each servant?
6. What is the real problem with the servant who buried his one talent, according to the master's response (vv. 24–27)?
7. How might 'burying' what's been entrusted to you relate to coveting what's been entrusted to someone else instead?
8. Read the Small Catechism's explanation of the Tenth Commandment. What are we told to do instead of enticing away a neighbor's spouse or workers?

Discover More Together Questions

9. Coveting, per the devotion, 'can make a slave of you, organizing your whole life around getting and guarding whatever you have set your heart upon.' Where do you see that dynamic at work in your own life?

10. The parable of the talents rewards faithfulness with what's entrusted, not envy of what someone else received. How does that reframe contentment with your own calling and relationships?
11. How does 'encouraging one another and building each other up' function as a direct, practical alternative to coveting a neighbor's relationships?
12. What has been your favorite commandment to study? Least favorite?
13. What is your big takeaway from the series on the 10 Commandments?

Love Does—*choose one.*

14. What was your experience of doing the "*Love Does" activity from last week?*
15. Practice 1 Thessalonians 5:11 directly: encourage and build up one specific person this week, naming something true and good about them.
16. Reflect on one place you've been "organizing your life around getting or guarding" something — and take one concrete step toward releasing that grip and trusting God's promise instead.

First Lutheran Ministry Partners

If you are inspired by this focus on what Love Does, you can put love into action with our hunger, housing, hope, or global outreach ministry teams, or volunteer directly with our local ministry partners below.

Ministry Teams Chair Katie Chism: kchism72@gmail.com
Lead Pastor for Outreach, Pr. Craig Brown: craigb@firstlutherancr.org

Cedar Valley Habitat for Humanity
350 6th Ave SE CR, IA 52401
319-366-4485
https://www.cvhabitat.org/

Community Health Free Clinic
947 14th Ave SE, CR, IA 52401
319-363-0416
www.communityhfc.org

HACAP (Corporate Office)
1515 Hawkeye Dr Hiawatha, IA 52233
319-393-7811
www.hacap.org

Helping Hands Ministry
601 2nd Ave SE #2 CR, IA 52401
319-366-2651
www.ecc-cr.net/hhm.php

His Hands Free Medical Clinic
1245 2nd Ave SE CR, IA 52403
319-862-2636
hishandsclinic.org

Linn Community Food Bank
310 5th St SE CR, IA 52401
319-364-3543
linncommunityfoodbank.org

Matthew 25
201 3rd Ave SW, CR, IA 52404
(319) 362-2214
www.matthew-25.org

Mission of Hope
1700 B Ave NE CR, IA 52402
319-365-1782
missionofhopecr.org

Wellington Heights Community Church
1600 4th Ave SE, CR, IA 52403
319-830-9720
wellingtonheightscommunitychurch.org

Willis Dady Homeless Services
1247 4th Ave SE CR, IA
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