

## **“The Rewards of Fellowship”**

***1 John 3:18-24***

### **Introduction**

We may feel like we are getting nothing in return when we extend love to others. The truth is that we strengthen our relationship with God when we follow His command to love. As a result of the human condition, it can be tempting for Christians to focus solely on our personal walk with God. However, God is calling us for more. There are three specific rewards we have access to when we fellowship with others in love.

First, God rewards us with assurance. He gives us a special sense of His presence, validating our love for others and providing assurance as confirmation that we are moving in the right direction. We will have an inner peace that only God can give when we are doing what He has called us to do. As God’s word takes residence in our hearts, the love of God will begin to flow out from us. As we serve others with love, we will reflect a loving God to the world and have peace knowing that we are in good standing with God.

Second, God rewards us by answering our prayers. When we care about others, God will increase His care about us. We will gain confidence in our prayer lives as we become concerned about God’s people and build hope as our prayer requests are answered. Our experience with God will reach a deeper level as we move past surface-level prayers and get to the heart of the matter. As we walk with others, we will also grow closer to God.

Third, God rewards us with special intimacy. Jesus is made real in our lives when we share His love. The call to love others becomes less challenging when we remain mindful of Jesus’s sacrifice. What greater example of love is there (John 15:13)? We also gain a special intimacy with other believers as we walk with them through the peaks and valleys of life. Lastly, we gain a special intimacy with the Holy Spirit. When we allow the Holy Spirit to work in our hearts and minds, the love of God will be magnified. We should aim to remain right with God by keeping His commandment to love His people.

### **Getting Started**

1. Have you ever rewarded yourself for an accomplishment or for reaching a goal? What did you achieve? How did you reward yourself?
2. How do you feel knowing that God rewards your commitment to loving others?

### **Let’s Get Personal**

1. God rewards His children. What reward from this week’s sermon is most significant to you?
2. Have you ever received a reward from God directly connected to your love and care for others? Share your experience and the connected reward with your group.

3. When has someone exemplified the love of God towards you?

### Take the Next Step

1. Think about the people in your life that you love well. How can you intercede for them, knowing God will answer your prayers?
2. How does your awareness of the rewards of fellowship shift your approach to loving others?
3. Can you see the connection between increasing your intimacy with believers and increasing your intimacy with Jesus? How can you make more time to sit in the presence of God? How will this time allow you to pour out the love of God to those around you?
4. Want to go deeper? Take time to look at the following passages: Luke 24:13-32; Luke 22:31-34; John 21:1-17; John 13:34-35; Psalm 66:18; James 4:1-10; John 15:1-16; John 14:13-15.

### Renew Your Mind

***“And this is His command: to believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. The one who keeps God’s commands lives in Him, and He in them. And this is how we know that He lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.”***

**1 John 3:23-24**

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