



we love because  
He first  
loved us

1 John 4:19

# Lumin Notes

CUT ALONG THE DOTTED LINES  
PACK IN LUNCHBOXES  
HIDE FOR A STRANGER  
STASH IN A BRIEFCASE  
HAND TO A LOVED ONE  
GIVE TO A FRIEND IN NEED  
SHARE THE LOVE, SPREAD HIS TRUTH  
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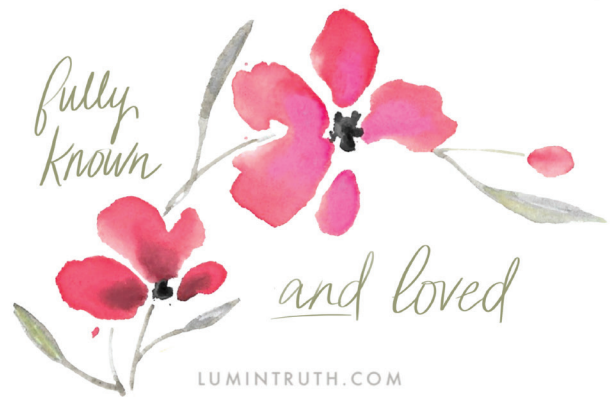
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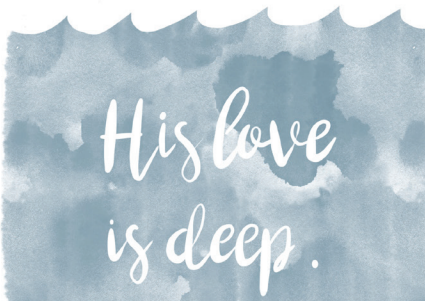
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*"We love because He first loved us."*  
1 John 4:19

One of the themes of 1 John is love; God's love for us, God's very essence being love, and how we can love others because of this love. This verse exists only through divine intervention on our behalf. The only way the connection between our love for God, His love for us, and our love for others is the work of the Holy Spirit. He, the Holy Spirit, connects our self-consumed and sinful hearts to God's gracious heart which is the very source of love. His love becomes our love. He initiates and offers this love, we respond and receive. This month, we challenged Lumin's writers to contemplate how 1 John 4:19 is evident in their lives.



This verse was hard for me to see in my life when I first received His love, forgiveness, and salvation. I had a hard time loving my family and friends in a pure, selfless way that would accurately display God's love through me, yet I believed this promise that the Spirit would love through me. There was a quote I heard that stuck in my mind that began to challenge me: "Our love for others is an indicator of the place God is holding in our hearts." I kept asking and praying for this love, but from there I started asking that my love for Him would increase more and more. I love how this verse completely eliminates the possibility to take credit for the love we have for God or show to others. He first loved us. He first loved us when we hated him. He first loved us when we were sinful. And He still loves me when I mess up loving others well or puff up with pride. Thank you, Jesus for your perfect love!

*(Jessee)*



While I possess minimal, if any, musical talent, music speaks so strongly to me; especially music from Christian artists whose words echo truths from the Bible including truths of God's love. This month's verse, "We love because He first loved us," reminds me of the Tauren Wells song: Known. The phrase "It's hard truth and ridiculous grace ... To be known, fully known, and loved by You..." is my favorite and is reflective of how I am specifically called to love my family because I am, first, loved by God. That unending, unconditional, never-giving-up love I receive freely from God has to flow back out of me. No matter how naughty, disrespectful, or moody my kids have been throughout the day, obviously, as their mom, I love them without hesitation ... without a doubt in the world even amidst the hard, ugly truths and tempers. And, let's be honest, if I take a closer look at my own behaviors, those days when I am naughty, disrespectful, or moody, I am loved by God who knows me and loves me still ... with a whole lot of ridiculous grace. God knew we were going to mess up (again and again), but He chose to love us before we even knew to choose Him. We are called to love others, in easy natural relationships and in ones which require a lot of work and a ton of grace, because we are known and loved by God our Father.

*(Ashley)*



As I think about God's crazy love, the word that comes to mind is "unconditional." I want to love like my Heavenly Father – unconditionally, without keeping score, with no judgment. But, as much as I try, I fail. One of my greatest sins is an inability to apologize easily. I think I'm right most of the time. And in my marriage, not only am I unwilling to budge in my correctness, I am also really quick to help my husband find his wrongness. Now that our kids are old enough to examine and observe our marriage, they have begun to call me out. "Mommy, you are NEVER wrong!" or "Mommy, you think you are perfect." Ouch. When I stop to take in the reality of Jesus' love for me, so much that He died on a cross selflessly when He had done NOTHING wrong, I awaken to the truth that I need to love better, more and differently. I need to be willing to accept my faults quickly, learn from them, acknowledge them, and offer an apology. I need to serve my husband more than he serves me. Unconditional love is my goal, Jesus is my leader, and my husband should be the recipient. Happy Valentine's Day month, friends! Love hard.

*(Rebecca)*



A few years ago, the Lord's kindness and love for me was expressed in a profound way through my husband, Graham. I suppose it had been a hard day, my emotions and temperament being all over the place. Looking back, I probably wasn't very easy to live with and by the time we got to bed, I was burdened with the bad attitude I had carried around all day-- I was lugging it around without considering the effect it must have had on him. Before turning off the light, I turned to Graham and said, "I'm sorry I was such a mess today, and I probably wasn't very kind or fun to be around. I wish I had been different." He turned to me, put his hand on my cheek and said in such a profoundly gentle way, "It's okay, sweetie. I love you anyway." In that moment, I felt like the Lord had looked me in the eyes, taken my face and said, "It's okay. I love you despite your mess. I'll help you get cleaned up." Graham didn't take the opportunity in that moment to drive home just how difficult I had been or agree that I owed him an apology. He received me with kindness, accepted my apology, reminded me of my identity (beloved) and freed me of the burden of shame I felt. Graham acted as a tangible expression of the Lord's love and forgiveness for me. Because Graham knows he is unconditionally loved and forgiven, he was able to extend that same love and grace to me. I often look back on this moment to remember my identity as a beloved daughter-- whose cup is overflowing with a love that is quite foreign to this world. Who is the Lord asking me to receive with gentleness, mercy and unconditional love, unlike anything they may have ever experienced?

As I walk through this day, I am praying for the Lord to show me who needs a tangible form of His love so that they, too, can experience the unconditional, perfect love I've received. Oftentimes I'm hesitant to care for someone because I feel empty, lacking, spent by life's demands. The truth is, the Lord is my sustainer and helps me one task at a time... He provides all that I need, so I have plenty to give without fear of running out. We have this abundance of love from Him-- this fullness and certainty of always being loved no matter what mess we make-- so much so that we can generously and freely love each person we meet with acceptance, grace, kindness and gentleness knowing He is fully capable of strengthening and sustaining us for this task.

*(Leslie)*



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

● ○ ○ FOR MOM

How is 1 John 4:19 evident in your life? How do you feel God's love? What do you do in response to this love?

● ● ○ FOR KIDS

Do you know that God loved you before you were even born? Do you know He loves you even when you make mistakes? How can you show love to your friends and family this month?



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● ○ ○

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FOR MOM

FOR KIDS



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