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A MONTH OF UNSELFISH LOVE

GUIDE & JOURNAL



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A CASE FOR LOVE

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE & JOURNAL

A Case for Love asks what unselfish love looks like in today's world, at a time when division, estrangement, and hatred seem to be as strong as ever.

The 13 stories in the movie invite us on a personal journey, reflecting on ways in which we may experience sacrificial love, and then embody it for others in our lives, communities, and the world.

This workbook is meant to be a guide, prompting each of us to consider various aspects of unselfish love shown in the movie. Then combine this with the "Month of Unselfish Love" challenge, taking 30 days to journal your experiences of unselfish love, and how they can impact your life for the future.

This discussion guide can be used personally, or in a gathering setting. For groups it is intended to help shape conversations in faith communities and other groups who might want to explore these questions.

We encourage you to discuss in groups of approximately five people or smaller so everyone has plenty of time to share. If you have a large group, you can gather together after the small group discussion to harvest learnings, wonderings, or insights.

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A CASE FOR LOVE

IN THE

JANUARY

ACASEFORLOVEMOVIE



FROM DIRECTOR
BRIAN IDE

As your month of reflection begins, I want to share a bit of my journey with you; and to offer a further challenge on which to consider.

Recently, I had grown more and more troubled by the increasing divisive state of our culture, and found myself contemplating, "what can I do to help?"

While that led to many considerations, at the end of the day, all I really knew how to do well is make movies. Combining this glaring need with my skills, I went about the task of making this documentary—to give voice to my own thoughts as well as many others around the country.

Bishop Michael Curry, the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, inspired the film's focus as he offered a solution to what ails us: "Love." Specifically, "Unselfish Love."

As Bishop Curry wrote in his latest book, "When love is the way, the earth will be a sanctuary. When love is the way, we will lay our swords and shields down by the riverside to study war no more. When love is the way, there's plenty of room for all of God's children. When love is the way, we actually treat each other, well, like we are actually family."

Could the answer to society's problems really be that simple and actually within the grasp of each of us?

This film presents what I observed and encountered while criss-crossing back and forth across the U.S., in search of the answer. Viewers must decide for themselves, and if their answer is "yes," they will hopefully be inspired to live—intentionally—more selflessly and become part of the solution, making their own case for love.



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A CASE FOR LOVE CHAPTER LIST & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. BEING DEALT A BAD HAND

STORY 1 | Kindness transforms a sex trafficking victim's life; she pays it forward.

STORY 2 | Former NFL Player suffers from late-stage ALS but continues to help others.

QUESTION 1 | What caught your attention most in the film? What did you find most moving or provocative?

QUESTION 2 | When has your life's circumstances made it difficult for you to live life selflessly?

QUESTION 3 | When have you received unconditional love from others that has helped you overcome this?

2. LOVE & LOSS

STORY 3 | U.S. Marine overcomes PTSD with the help of his spouse.

STORY 4 | White parents adopt older Korean child and become more societally-aware before losing child to cancer.

QUESTION 4 | Describe when you have helped someone through a challenging situation or when someone has helped you.

QUESTION 5 | Because we are human, grief and hardship enter into all of our lives. Did you respond well? Poorly? If poorly, what choices could have made a difference?

QUESTION 6 | Why do you think we struggle so much to practice unselfish love?

3. MAKING IT LOOK EASY

STORY 5 | U.S. Naval Officer makes a difference in the lives of sailors, simply by listening.

"Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance." *1 Corinthians 13:4-7*

A MONTH OF UNSELFISH LOVE DAY 30

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: *What moment in life would you repeat; but differently?*

STORY 6 | Cooking enthusiast creates a community by cooking and sharing food.

QUESTION 7 | What difference do you think Jesus makes for experiencing and sharing unselfish love?"

QUESTION 8 | Like Rosa and Krystina, do you have skills/talents that come naturally to you that could make a difference in people's lives.

4. EXCLUSION

STORY 7 | Affluent African American couple moves to difficult neighborhood to make a positive difference in the community.

STORY 8 | A man who was formerly incarcerated becomes an educator and a restorative justice professional.

STORY 9 | LGBTQIA+ man is spurned his entire lifetime by various religious institutions; he finally finds acceptance and now welcomes others.

QUESTION 9 | What are some ways you have experienced being excluded in your life? How has that impacted your sense of unselfish love?

QUESTION 10 | How have you experienced God's love through someone different from you?

5. ANSWERING THE CALL

STORY 10 | Family welcomes a refugee family into their home during an intense time of need; both families are positively changed.

STORY 11 | Couple fosters three hard-to-place siblings and find both struggle and hope.

QUESTION 11 | In what ways, large or small, have you "answered the call" for someone, or had them answer your call?

QUESTION 12 | It's rarely convenient to "answer the call". How can you be ready when the moment arrives?

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: *Who is best at making you feel less alone?*

"And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love." *Romans 8:38*

6. HOPE

STORY 12 | Bishop Michael Curry recounts his childhood, remembering his first role-model of unselfish love, the caregiver that arrived after his mom's long-term illness and untimely death.

QUESTION 13 | How can God's love free us to love others unselfishly?

QUESTION 14 | Share a story of someone other than your immediate family who has demonstrated unselfish love to you?

7. LOVE IS...

STORY 13 | Bishop Michael Curry and others define unselfish love; discussing its power to impact our world.

QUESTION 15 | Which of these speaks to you the most and why?

Love is patient, **Love** is kind, **Love** does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud, **Love** does not dishonor others, **Love** is not self-seeking, **Love** is not easily angered, **Love** keeps no record of wrongs, **Love** does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth, **Love** always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres, **Love** never fails!

1 Corinthians 13

FINAL THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER

THOUGHT 1 | What is the opposite of unselfish love? Why?

THOUGHT 2 | What difference does God's unconditional love make in your life?

THOUGHT 3 | What choices can we make to help the church be the hands and feet of Christ, demonstrating Unselfish Love to a world in need?

THOUGHT 4 | What are some concrete steps you can take this week to embody unselfish love to the people in your life?



This study guide was prepared by Luther Seminary's Faith+Lead in collaboration with Grace-Based Films.

Visit faithlead.org for resources, learning opportunities, and connection to grow in faith and leadership

A MONTH OF UNSELFISH LOVE DAY 28

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: *How do you respond to hate?*

**A MONTH OF UNSELFISH LOVE
DAY 27**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: *Is there a call that you didn't answer and you wish you had?*

For each day of the next month, commit an intentional act of unselfish love.

Record each act in this journal.

Describe the act.

Describe how it impacted the recipient.

Describe how it impacted you.

Did you experience God's presence in any way, and if so, how?

At the end of the month, if this practice speaks to you, consider continuing it.

Describe the practice to someone else and gift them a journal so that they can begin this practice as well.

BE A VOICE FOR LOVE

"Dr. King was right: we must discover love—the redemptive power of love. And when we do that, we will make of this old world, a new world."

The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry, Presiding Bishop and Primate of the Episcopal Church, from his sermon at the Royal Wedding



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THE JOURNAL

Each day, describe your act of unselfish love in detail. Think about how it impacted the recipient, and how it impacted you.

A MONTH OF UNSELFISH LOVE DAY 1

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: *Where did you see sacrifice today?*

A MONTH OF UNSELFISH LOVE DAY 26

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: *How can I be a better listener?*

**A MONTH OF UNSELFISH LOVE
DAY 25**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: *Is there a small act you've done that led to an bigger act?*

**A MONTH OF UNSELFISH LOVE
DAY 2**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: *What is an unexpected blessing that came your way?*

**A MONTH OF UNSELFISH LOVE
DAY 3**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: *Did fear get in the way today?*

**A MONTH OF UNSELFISH LOVE
DAY 24**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: *What do you hope for the next generation?*

**A MONTH OF UNSELFISH LOVE
DAY 23**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: *What is something people assume about you and are wrong?*

**A MONTH OF UNSELFISH LOVE
DAY 4**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: *Who inspired you today?*

**A MONTH OF UNSELFISH LOVE
DAY 5**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: *How can you give back today?*

**A MONTH OF UNSELFISH LOVE
DAY 22**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: *Where do you find community?*

**A MONTH OF UNSELFISH LOVE
DAY 21**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: *What does faith mean to you?*

**A MONTH OF UNSELFISH LOVE
DAY 6**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: *How does fear keep us from blessing others?*

**A MONTH OF UNSELFISH LOVE
DAY 7**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: *How can we use love to overcome loss?*

**A MONTH OF UNSELFISH LOVE
DAY 20**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: *Who is the "other" in your life?*

A MONTH OF UNSELFISH LOVE
DAY 19

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: *What is one habit you would like to create?*

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: *When have you felt excluded?*

**A MONTH OF UNSELFISH LOVE
DAY 9**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: *How can you reach out to someone who is feeling excluded?*

**A MONTH OF UNSELFISH LOVE
DAY 18**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: *What habits do you need to break?*

**A MONTH OF UNSELFISH LOVE
DAY 17**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: *How can you overcome inherited challenges?*

**A MONTH OF UNSELFISH LOVE
DAY 10**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: *Can you recognize your own prejudices?*

**A MONTH OF UNSELFISH LOVE
DAY 11**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: *How can you overcome your own prejudices?*

**A MONTH OF UNSELFISH LOVE
DAY 16**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: *What is something that unites us all?*

**A MONTH OF UNSELFISH LOVE
DAY 15**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: *Where do you find hope?*

**A MONTH OF UNSELFISH LOVE
DAY 12**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: *What bridge did you build today?*

**A MONTH OF UNSELFISH LOVE
DAY 13**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: *What surprised you today?*

**A MONTH OF UNSELFISH LOVE
DAY 14**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: *What does sacrificial love mean to you?*