

A wide-angle photograph of a misty mountain landscape. In the foreground, a dense forest of tall, dark green coniferous trees is visible. Behind them, two large, rugged mountain peaks rise. The peak on the left is partially obscured by thick, billowing white mist. The peak on the right, known as Half Dome, is more prominent, showing its characteristic semi-circular shape and rocky texture. The sky is overcast with heavy clouds.

# “Defined by Love”

NEW YEAR 2019



# *Daily Affirmations*

“I’m good enough, I’m smart enough,  
and doggone it, people like me.”









Matthew  
22:34-40

Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

Jesus replied: “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment.

Matthew  
22:34-40



And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

John  
13:14,  
34-35



Now that I, your Lord and Teacher,  
have washed your feet, you also  
should wash one another's feet. . . .  
A new commandment I give to  
you, that you love one another: just  
as I have loved you, you also are to  
love one another. By this all people  
will know that you are my disciples,  
if you have love for one another.”

Love is central to our  
identity as Jesus' disciples  
—it is the defining quality  
a Christian.

1 Cor  
13:1-3



If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

John  
3:16



For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Romans  
8:28



And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

To love others is to put  
their good even above  
our own.



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Everything about spiritual formation for Jesus is shaped by his version of the *Shema*. For Jesus, love of God and love of others is the core. Love, a term almost indefinable, is unconditional regard for a person that prompts and shapes behaviors in order to help that person to become what God desires. Love, when



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working properly, is both emotion and will, affection and action. .... This is the *Jesus Creed*, and it is the foundation of everything Jesus teaches about spiritual formation.

We must first receive God's  
love for us, before we can  
truly love others.



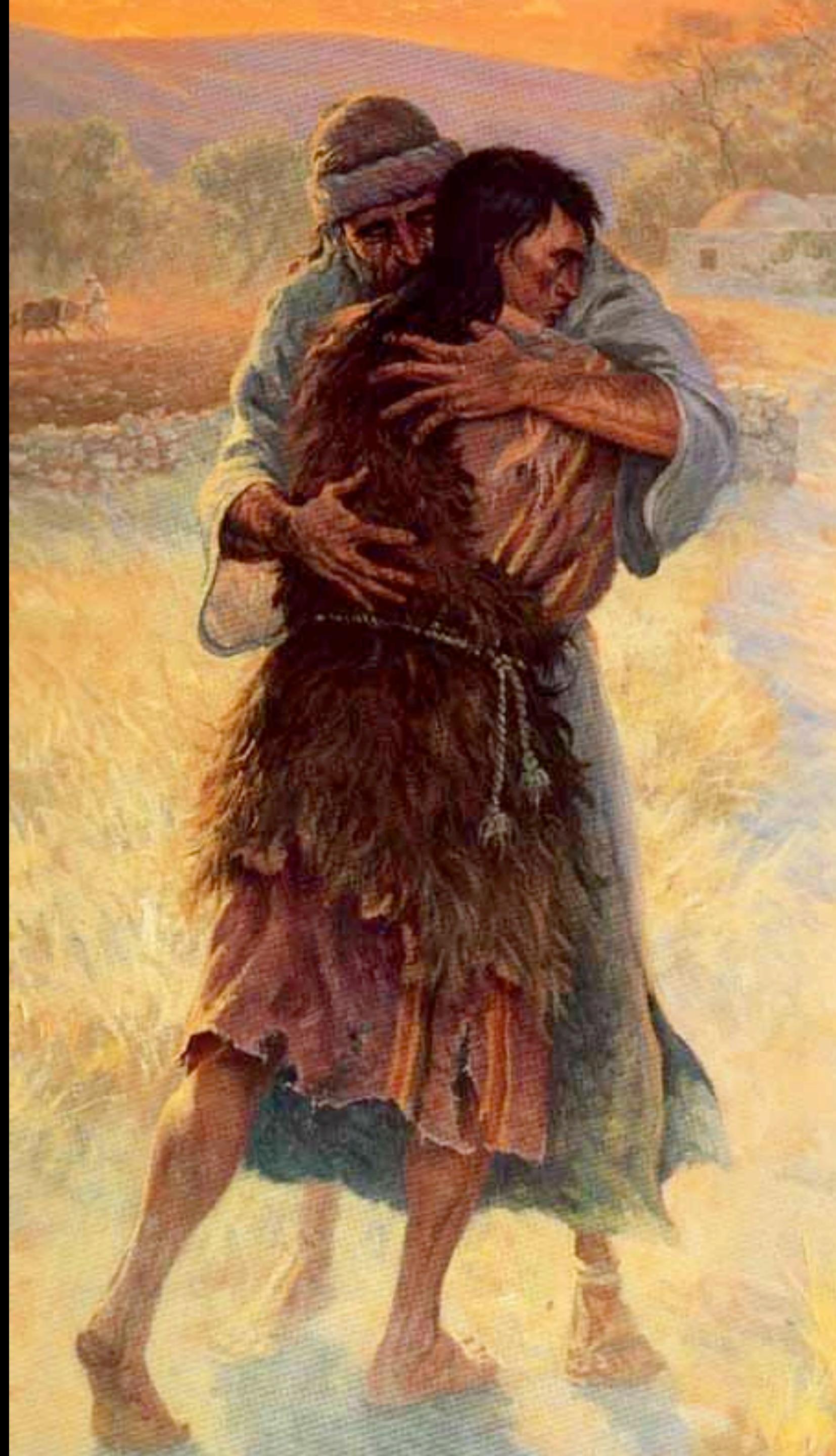
1 John  
4:7-12,  
19-21

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.



1 John  
4:7-12,  
19-21

No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. . . . We love because he first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.



Love is demonstrated  
through action and initiative.



Deut  
10:17-19

For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt.



Matthew  
5:23-24

Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

God's love has the power to  
heal the brokenness of our  
relationships.



Matthew  
5:43-47

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

Matthew  
5:43-47



If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?"



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It is my recommendation that each of us, in an experiment of ordering our lives around the spiritual-formation principle of Jesus, memorize and then repeat the *Jesus Creed* daily—to remind ourselves of what our Lord asks of us. The *Jesus Creed* has become a silent partner in my life: Sometimes when I sit, sometimes when I walk, sometimes when I lie down, but always when I rise in the morning, I simply and quietly recite to myself,



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and before God, the *Jesus Creed*. It punctuates my morning; it sets a rhythm to my day and settles my day into a comfortable spot. It constantly reminds me, not as a command but as a confession, that whatever I do throughout the day is to be shaped by loving God and loving others. I need that reminder.

