

Monday, June 4 - Read Psalm 42. When we start reading this Psalm, it starts out great. For the hunter – it even talks about deer. (And someone reading this already knows the first day of the season this fall). The writer seems to sound spiritual and stable. And then there is a sudden change. It's like he is yelling in frustration. Right in the middle (verses 5 & 11) he asks the same question: “Why, my soul are you downcast?” It's possible this surprised him. The roller coaster of emotions might have confused him. As disciples of Christ, we aren't immune from the ups and downs of life. In fact, the Bible seems to add credibility to the fact this is normal. We are human. We are real. And our soul, at times, will struggle. But let's not give in. Look how this Psalm ends. Verse 11 is a great reminder for us all.

Tuesday, June 5 – Read Psalm 43. Here we see the Psalmist frustrated by those he sees all around him that don't have the same hope he does. He knows the world is full of people who don't care about God, who don't care there is a Creator, who don't care there is a Father who desires for all of his kids to look to Him. The soul of the writer is struggling because life is a battle. Just simply living among those who don't believe in God is sapping energy from his life. He knows God is a “stronghold” but at the same time is grieving and discouraged. This Psalm also ends with a great reminder.

Wednesday, June 6 – Read 1 John 4:7-9. God is love, and God designed our souls to thrive within the context of authentic love. Just like our need for hope and our need for stability, love is a fundamental desire of our souls. We naturally seek to be loved and to love. Our souls find security and happiness and identity in this concept called love. And while that looks different for different people, ultimately our souls cannot be at home without love. God is the original lover. He is the perfect, consistent, all-encompassing personification of love. He defines love and He is the source of love. He is the one who created the concept of love and the one who introduced us to love. Love and God are meant to go together.

Thursday, June 7 – Read 1 John 4:7-9. Love and God go together but the problem is that people who claim to know God have not always been the greatest representation of God's love to humanity. Some people who say they represent God or act in the name of Jesus have done horrible, deplorable things. This is not in the past – it's happening now – in our country, in our state and even in our community. We also see people who claim that God is love are outspoken in their judgment and criticism toward those who don't agree with them or who don't live up to their standards. They may have some “truth” to base their judgment on, but their approach comes across as hateful and often hypocritical. How does your “love” look?

Friday, June 8 – Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. Paul is writing to the church at Corinth. This was like Amsterdam, Las Vegas, and Hollywood all rolled into one city – just crazier! It was a highly sexualized city. A city where love was God and sensuality was almost deified. There was a group of Jesus followers in the middle of this love crisis in Corinth. Paul wrote to these believers to tell them that love is not some undefined, abstract quality. Love is not a feeling. Love is not sexual anarchy. Paul reminded them that love has been put on display by the life, death, burial and resurrection of their Lord and Savior, Jesus. Love is a lifestyle. Love is practical. Love is something you live and walk and talk. Love does not just make for a good sermon at a royal wedding. Love makes for good living. Paul says that all the time and in every situation, love does these four things: bears, believes, hopes, and endures.

