

# **One Body Initiative: Week One – God’s Beloved**

**February 12, 2021**

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**Scripture:** [Matthew 3: 13-17](#)

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. John tried to prevent him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?”

Jesus said to him in reply, “Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed him.

After Jesus was baptized, he came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened [for him], and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove [and] coming upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, saying, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

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**Commentary:**

*From “Life of the Beloved” by Henri Nouwen:*

Aren’t you, like me, hoping that some person, thing, or event will come along to give you that final feeling of inner well being you desire? Don’t you often hope: “Maybe this book, idea, course, trip, job, country, or relationship will fulfill my deepest desire.” But as long as you are waiting for that mysterious moment you will go on running helter skelter, always anxious and restless, always lustful and angry, never fully satisfied. You know that this is the compulsiveness that keeps us going and busy, but at the same time makes us wonder whether we are getting anywhere in the long run. This is the way to spiritual exhaustion and burnout. This is the way to spiritual death.

Well, you and I don’t have to kill ourselves. We are the Beloved. We are intimately loved long before our parents, teachers, spouses, children, and friends loved or wounded us. That’s the truth of our lives. That’s the truth I want you to claim for yourself. That’s the truth spoken by the voice that says, “You are my Beloved.”

Listening to that voice with great inner attentiveness, I hear at my center words that say: “I have called you by name, from the very beginning. You are mine and I am yours. You are my Beloved, on you my favor rests. I have molded you in the depths on the earth and knit you together in your mother’s womb. I have carved you in the palms of my hands and hidden you in the shadow of my embrace. I look at you with infinite tenderness and care for you with care more intimate than that of a mother for her child. I have counted every hair on your head and guided you at every step. Wherever you go, I go with you, and wherever you rest, I keep watch. I will give you food that will satisfy all your hunger and drink that

will quench all your thirst. I will not hide my face from you. You know me as your own as I know you as my own. You belong to me. I am your father, your mother, your brother, your sister, your lover, and your spouse...yes, even your child...wherever you are I will be. Nothing will ever separate us. We are one.”

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### **Questions for Reflection:**

- When you consider God’s love, what are some of the ideas, words, images or stories that come to mind?
- What are some of your notions of God that run counter to this idea that God is love?
- What are some of the ideas, words, images or stories that come to mind when you think about the depth of love that humans can have for one another?
- What are some examples from your life of experiencing being loved by another?
- Have you had experiences that have helped to open up God’s love for you?
- What are some of the things that get in the way of you understanding and accepting your identity as God’s beloved one?
- What are some of your thoughts on what intimacy with God might be like?

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### **Material for Further Consideration:**

Scripture: consider these passages as speaking to God’s relationship with you

- Song of Songs 2:8-17
- John 3:16-21
- John 15:9-14
- 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a

Videos:

- [The God Who is Love](#) – Bishop Robert Barron - Sermon
- [God is Love](#) – Rich Tidwell - Sermon
- [Fighting For Me](#) - Riley Clemmons – Music Video

Articles:

- [How to See Yourself as God’s Beautiful Creation](#) – Megan Nguyen
- [Who I am is more than what I do](#) – Molly Cruitt
- [A father’s reflection on his son’s baptism](#) – Caleb Congrove