

Laying Down Our Lives for One Another

As a church, our mission is to make disciples of Jesus who love God, one another, and our neighbors. The passage we are looking at today focuses on the second aspect of this mission. John reminds us that we are called to love one another. This command is easy enough to understand, but harder to put in to practice especially when we understand that the model for how we are to love is Jesus Christ himself. Jesus' model of love calls us to lay down our lives for one another.

Read 1 John 3:11-18

1. What sticks out to you from this passage? What questions does it raise for you?
2. John's message for his readers is that they should love one another (v. 11). How does he define the nature of such love in this passage?
3. Why do you think love for one another is the confirming evidence that we have passed from death to life (v. 14)?
4. John presents Jesus as the ultimate model of love (v. 16). How did Jesus love us?
5. It is likely that we will never be in a situation where love requires us to literally lay down our lives for a fellow believer and yet there is still a call in this passage to lay down our lives for our brothers and sister in Christ. What might it look like for us to do this?

6. What kind of person is this passage calling you to be? Where or how do you need to grow?

Brian said:

Begin by taking small steps. To love sacrificially is actually a step of faith. And if it isn't something that you've really lived out, you will need to grow into this. Begin by taking small steps of faith to love in sacrificial ways. And so maybe you've never used your money to meet someone else's needs. Find ways to begin giving something. Develop the habit of giving and let it grow into sacrificial giving that meets needs. Or maybe you rarely offer your time to help meet a need. If so, it might be hard to begin giving large chunks of your time to help meet needs. Take a small step. Offer some of your time to meet needs. I believe that as you do this, you will see that though there is real sacrifice the sacrifice is worth it. And you will find joy as you begin to love others in sacrificial, tangible ways and that will cultivate within you the capacity to love in more and more sacrificial ways.

7. What thoughts come to your mind regarding small steps that you could take to grow your capacity to love others sacrificially?

Brian said:

Learn to truly see. Remember, in verse 17, John is talking about really understanding what the need is. I think part of the problem we have is that while we may have resources that we are willing to share, we are so busy and moving so fast that too often we fail to see the needs around us. One of the best ways to truly see needs is to make sure you are living in close biblical community with at least some others. If your only experience of church is worship on Sunday morning, it can be hard to see other people's needs or even to make your own needs known. We need to be in community. This is part of the reason we do Rooted and Life Groups. As we spend time with others in these contexts, we have time to get to know each other and truly see needs.

8. How are we doing as a group in meeting each other's needs? How can we grow?