

Once Again: Love One Another

As we have seen in our study of 1 John so far, the topic of love is a big deal. It is one of John's main themes. Love is essential to the life and character of anyone who claims to believe in the one true God and follow His Son, Jesus Christ. John declares this and specifically commands us to love one another in our passage for today. The love that we are called to display is rooted in who God is and in the model of how God loved us. As we return to the topic of love today, may God continue to form us into people who truly love one another.

Read 1 John 4:7-12

1. What sticks out to you from this passage?
2. John has said that God is light (v. 1:5), now he gives a second great affirmation about God: God is love (v. 8)? What do you think it means to say God is love?
3. What was God's supreme expression of love towards us (v. 9)? How does this help shape our understanding of the nature of biblical love to which we are called?
4. Verse 10 indicates that God initiated love first. He did it before we had done anything to deserve it. Why does this matter as we think about how we are to love others?

Sam said:

Do you have a healthy understanding and appreciation for the truth that God loves you? Do you really believe that He does? Because remember, our love for others begins with God's love for us. If you don't really connect with the idea that God loves you, then this is where your work begins. Ask other believers about their experience with God's love. Pick a Gospel to read and pay close attention to the way Jesus (who is God) loves the people he encounters. Maybe start working on a list of ways you recognize God's love in your life. Trust me, it is worth the time and effort to seek out a beautiful and brilliant understanding of God's love.

5. Do you have a healthy appreciation for the truth that God loves you? Are there steps you need to take to grow in understanding and appreciating God's love for you? Explain.

6. How can we practically allow God's love for us to be the motivating factor in how we love others (v. 11)?

Sam said:

Who is it that you struggle to love? If you have relationships that are broken, I think it's important to know that it's not God's will for them to stay that way. If you are at odds with a brother or sister in Christ in such a way where your love for each other is hindered, then it needs to be a priority for you to work on that relationship -- HUMBLY, and with a willingness to listen, compromise, share your pain, and confess your own wrongdoing. If you struggle to love people of a particular race, ethnicity, political affiliation, social status, gender, intelligence, or any other sort of qualifier...remember that God chose to love you without qualification. You have got to do the hard work of seeing and valuing people the way God sees and values people. That doesn't mean you pretend things like differences or even sins don't matter...but it does mean your commitment to love is stronger than your commitment to disdain or disregard. This morning, if you know there is someone in your life you struggle to love, then I beg you to please commit to praying for yourself and for that person, and to seek God for guidance in how to repair the damage in your heart and relationship.

7. Is there someone who comes to mind that you struggle to love (don't name them out loud)? If so, what is the work that you need to commit to doing to love them?
8. As you consider how God has loved (vv. 9-10), how might that help you love this person? Is there a specific step that you can take this week to love this person?