

**INTRO**

- According to the 5 love languages we express and receive love in different ways: 1) words of affirmation 2) quality time 3) receiving gifts 4) acts of service 5) physical touch. What's your way of expressing and receiving love?

**READ**

1 John 4:7-21

**REFLECT & RESPOND**

The need to be loved and to love is universal. However, love is not as straightforward as we think. In this text, John invites us to rethink, re-experience love from the Source of all love.

**GOD IS LOVE (v8,16)**

3 beautiful words. More than just one of many attributes of God, love is arguably the most comprehensive affirmation about God's essence. It means love is expressed in all He is and does.

*Qu: Personally, is it easy for you to receive all God is and does as loving? Why or why not?*

**1. GOD'S LOVE FOR YOU (v9-11)**

God's love is not some mystical, abstract or sentimental thing. It is most clearly seen in Jesus. John says that out of love, God the Father sent the Son to us (incarnation) so that we might live through him (atonement).

*Qu: Have you ever doubted God's love for you? How should Jesus' life, death & resurrection encourage you during times of doubt?*

But it's not enough to just believe God's love for you. Authentic Christianity rests on both objective truth and personal experience of that truth.

**2. GOD'S LOVE IN YOU (v15-17)**

God's love originates in himself, manifests in his Son, and abides in us through his Spirit as we

confess Jesus. As we abide in God, God's love is perfected in us.

*Qu: Give an example of how you have personally experienced God's love for you.*

Believing and experiencing God's love personally is critical, and the test of its authenticity in your life is seen in your love for others.

**3. GOD'S LOVE THROUGH YOU (v19-20)**

John is absolutely clear in linking our genuine experience of God's love for us with our love for others. If God is love and God has shown his love for us primarily through Jesus, then love for God and others ought to be the defining characteristic of God's people (Great Commandment—Mt 22).

-----  
 "Since you cannot do good to all, you are to pay special attention to those who, by the accidents of time, or place, or circumstances, are brought into closer connection with you." – Augustine  
 -----

*Exercise: Prayerfully choose 2 people—1 within our church and one not—and consider how God is leading you to show them his love this week. Share practical ideas as a group to encourage one another.*

Remember, there is nobody who will love you more truly, deeply, consistently, and passionately than God (Romans 8:38-39).

**PRAY**

- Pray Romans 8:38-39 together as a group.
- Pray each one would increase in both the knowledge and experience of God's love.
- Pray for those who God is leading you to show his love to this week.