

## Small Group Outline for week of February 14, 2021

### Love One Another

Main Text: 1 John 4:7-21

#### Happy Valentine's Day!

What expressions of love did you give and or receive during the season focused on love?

**Exercise:** Create ten short sentences by providing ten different words which would fit into the one-word blank. "I love \_\_\_\_\_." What does this exercise reveal about the different kinds/meanings/expressions of the word "love."

The phrase, "love one another" is the most plentiful of the "one another" phrases in Scripture. It is used about fifteen times in the Bible, depending on which translation is used. The Apostle John, who is referred to as the Apostle of Love, is the biblical writer who uses the "love one another" phrase most frequently (eleven of the fifteen uses).

**Specifically: John 13:34,35; 15:12,17; 1 John 3:11,23; 4: 7,11,12; 2 John 5**

#### **Read 1 John 4:7-21**

##### **1. God Is Love** (1 John 4:8,16)

What does it mean to say that "God is love"? What kind of love is John referring to?

Would it be appropriate to say "God is mercy"? Why or why not?

Would it be appropriate to say "God is justice"? Why or why not?

In what way does the diagram help us understand love as God's basic essence?



Soft, Tender Side

Hard, Tough Side

Consider the following statements. Agree? Disagree? Thoughts? Comments?

***When we over-emphasize God's justice, holiness and wrath, we tend to become harsh and judgmental and condemning and legalistic. We tend to dismiss the fact that God is eager to forgive our sins and to give us the gift of salvation freely.***

***When we over-emphasize God's compassion and kindness and mercy, we tend to become tolerant and accepting of everyone and everything. We tend to dismiss God's standards and justice and wrath as unloving.***

How would you describe the love you experienced from your parents while growing up?

As you were growing up, where on the scale was your view of God?

"soft/tender"-----both-----"hard/tough"

Where on the scale would you place your church? your best friend? your spouse? others?

## 2. Love Comes From God

1 John 4:7 – “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God.”

If love comes from God, how do we gain access to it? What is the relationship between “love coming from God” and “having been born of God and knowing God”?

## 3. God Loves Us

What would it take for a stranger to convince you that he/she loves you?

Consider those who love you. How do you know they love you?

Whom do you love? How do these people know that you love them?

What has God done to convince us that he loves us?

1 John 4:9 – “God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

1 John 4:10 – “God loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.”

Say a prayer of thanks to God for His love!

## 4. Loving One Another is a Command

“A new command I give you: Love one another.” John 13:34

How do you feel about the idea that love is a command?

Do you consider loving others to be a duty? a burden? a responsibility? a privilege? a joyful opportunity? both?

## 5. Loving One Another is a Debt

“Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law.” Romans 13:8

How do you deal with financial debt? Enjoy it? Hate it? Pay it off gradually? Pay it off quick?

Do you deal with the debt of to love one another in the same way? Why? Why not?

To whom do you owe a debt of love? Who owes a debt of love to you?

## 6. Loving One Another is a Distinguishing Trait

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” John 13:35

In what contexts have Christians successfully shown that they are disciples of Jesus?

In what contexts have they failed? What have been the results in each case?

### How Do We Love One Another?

Read John 13:1-17

#### Jesus Is The Supreme Example

“Having loved His own who were in the world, Jesus now showed them the full extent of his love.”

“I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.” John 13:15

“As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” John 13:34



### **Jesus Loved Practically**

“He poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet.” John 13:5

What are some practical ways in which you can express love in your family? In your church? In your community?

How have other people loved you practically?

### **Jesus Loved Humbly**

“He poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet.” John 13:5

What are some humble acts of service that you have observed or done?

### **Jesus Loved Honestly**

Jesus said to Peter, “You do not realize now what I am doing.” (John 13:7)

In what situations have you confronted someone who needs to be corrected.

### **Jesus Loved Firmly**

Jesus said to Peter, “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.” (John 13:8)

In what situations have you presented an either/or statement to someone?

### **CONCLUSION**

Like the Thessalonians, we express our love to other believers in a variety of ways, but there’s probably room for an increase. Therefore, Paul’s words are appropriate for us too:

“May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else.” (1 Thessalonians 3:12)