

Love in a World of Darkness

1 John 4:7-12

^[7] Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ^[8] Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

^[9] In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ^[10] In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ^[11] Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ^[12] No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

Love _____ with _____. vs. 7-8

Love is made _____ in the _____. vs. 9-10

God's love _____ his _____ so they can in turn love as he loves. vs. 7-8, 11-12



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December 19, 2021



Open: How would you describe what it means for you to love someone?

Read: 1 John 4:7-12.

Discuss:

1. What is the difference between claiming that “love is God” and claiming that “God is love,” as John does in verse 8? Why must we distinguish between the two?
2. How should we understand the intent of John’s statement, “Anyone who does not love, does not know God” (v. 8)? Does this mean that unbelievers are incapable of love? What have you found helpful when you struggle to love as God loves?
3. According to verses 9-10, God showed His love for us by sending His Son to be the sacrifice for our sins. What insight does this manifestation of love (v. 9) give us in to how God expects us to show love to others? What are other Scripture verses that echo this truth?
4. Verses 10-11 describe God’s love toward us as a model for us loving others. How should our love be shaped by the truth that “In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us”? How should the love of God as described in this verse transform the way we love others?
5. What happens to our efforts to love each other if those efforts are not connected to Jesus’ love for us? What tends to hinder you from showing Christ-centered love for others? What might help you overcome those obstacles?
6. In this context, what is John’s point in saying that no one has ever seen God (v. 12)? What then, does it mean that God’s love is made complete or perfected when we love one another? How does this intensify our responsibility to love one another?

Apply: What opportunities are there for you to make visible the love of God as we approach Christmas this week?

Pray: Ask God to open our eyes to see his love more clearly. Pray that love becomes a dominating characteristic of our group, as well as the Neighborhood Church family. Pray as well for the many Christmas services that will take place in our community and around the world.

1 John 4:7-21

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. (ESV)