

That You May Know — 1 John 4:7-12

John flips the coin from talking about protecting against false teachers and now talks about love. We are called to defend against doctrinal error but this cannot be divorced from love. We have been given an example of love in Christ. A sacrificial and others centered care and concern. John points out in these verses why love is important and the source of where we get it.

Discussion questions — *do not feel the pressure to cover them all

1. How would you describe and characterize the meaning of love to someone? Explain the differences between our cultural, superficial love versus the love of God. How are we as believers oftentimes just superficial in our love? Why is this the case?
2. John points out that God is the source of love. Love originates from God. How are we able to find comfort in this? Even though people who are not Christian may be able to be kind does not mean they are born of God. We are all created in the image of God and through common grace even unregenerate people may be kind. However, our ability to love sacrificially is truly evidence of belonging to God and knowing God. How is love shown by Christians different from non-Christians?
3. We tend to find a level of love that we are comfortable with and that becomes the standard upon which we judge everyone else. How they measure up to our standard determines how we love them. Oftentimes we find ourselves in "camps" of different schools of thought (i.e. education, socioeconomics, theology, etc.). What may start out as a desire for purity can quickly turn to pride. This in turn makes it hard to "love" those that may not believe as we believe. What does this text say to us about this? How do we love the way we have been loved? How has this happened to you in your life? How did you overcome it?
4. God sent Jesus knowing that he would die for us. He would become the propitiation for our sins. His purpose for coming was accomplished. Though we will never die for the sins of the people. How might we follow the example of Christ and give ourselves for others? What would the church display to the world and other believers if we truly followed Christ's example? What would this look like? How do we start? Where do you start?

5. Who today do you know needs to experience the love of Christ? Pray for them. What can you do to show that love today?