

That You May Know — 1 John 4:13-21 (part 2)

In this text John points out several marks as evidence that we abide in God. By this point in the book of 1 John it may seem that the message is getting to be a little repetitive at first glance. Love God, Love others. Abide in Christ and love others the way we have been loved by God. We get it, right? Simple as that. However, it is so much greater than being able to recite back what the text is saying. We as the followers of Jesus will be marked by whether we truly live out this message. In John 13:35, Jesus points out that by this love all people will know that we are his disciples by the way that we love one another. In our text today we once again must drill down to see if we really do love. Let's look at a few questions.

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

1. We looked today at the reality that, much like an iceberg, what people see in our public lives, our reactions, behaviors, and speech are driven and fueled by what is below the waterline. We know that, for us, our heart drives all that we do in public. We tend to curate our public persona and for a period can trick people into believing something about us that may not be there. However, scripture tells us that our speech is a direct result of the overflow of our heart. The way we respond, even when we are tired, is a result of what is going on in our heart. We so often work on things above the waterline and neglect the things below. Why do you think this is so? Where have you seen this in your own life?
2. In this text we are told, “for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.” This commandment comes from God and whoever loves God must also love his brother. We all consider ourselves loving and tend to see ourselves as the standard. But we are reminded in this text that it is God who first loved us, and that love was exemplified in Jesus. How do we apply this text to our lives today? Where do we find this difficult and how are we to continue (i.e. boss, family member, friend, church members, etc.)? How does the example of God's love frame the love that we should have for others?
3. John commented that if we say we love God and hate our brother we are a liar. We probably wouldn't typically admit we hate someone out loud, however, we may treat them with hatred, with disgust. How might we neglect to love someone? How would you see apathy towards someone in relation to loving? How might the church be more loving? How might you be more loving?

4. We talked about the things below the waterline in our heart that drive what we do above the waterline. Our thoughts, beliefs, mindsets, personality, experiences, values, and assumptions. There are an infinite number of combinations in the lives of man. The Holy Spirit is able to lead us into all truth. What role does the Spirit of God and the Word of God play in transforming our heart so that Christians might love one another in unity? How do we tend to grieve the Holy Spirit in this area? How might the differing things below the waterline be used for God's glory and for the church to display to a lost world the love that was shown to them?
5. There will be disagreements and difficulty in the church. What does this text tell us about how to handle those disagreements? (i.e. examine our heart, love as we have been loved, remember the commandment to love)