

No Perfect People Allowed

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

Built on Love

John 13:34-35; 1 John 3:16-18

Discussion Starter

- A. What's your favorite love song? Why?
 - B. When you were child how did your family express love for one another? If you are now a parent what are the differences and similarities between the two families?
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In the Word

Read 1 John 3:11-20

1. How does 1 John 3 begin? What is John's statement? What does this indicate about John's understanding of the believers relationship with God?
2. Who did John identify as a murderer?
 - a. Why did Cain kill Abel?
 - b. How can a person be like Cain?
3. What is the believer's example of love?
 - a. What did John conclude about the believers' actions based on Jesus' action?
 - b. How does John suggest a believer is to "lay down" his life for a brother?
 - c. What is wrong with loving in "words or tongue"?
 - d. How is a believer to love?
 - e. How does this relate to one's heart being "set at rest"?
4. What do believers receive from God?
 - a. How does John describe the actions of a believer?
 - b. What is God's command (it looks suspiciously like two commands)?
 - c. Where do those who obey God's commands live?
 - d. Where does God live in relationship to them?

Application

The Book of 1 John focuses a great deal of attention on love. It looks at the genesis of love and how it is revealed in the life of a believer in relationship to God and to others.

1. How should the knowledge of God's love shape your understanding of your relationship with God? Do you find it hard to believe God loves you? That much?
2. What does the term "a loving church" mean to you? How have your expectations been shaped by your experiences?
3. How could your vision of "a loving church" differ from that of another? If you love your brother or sister, how do you bring those two visions together?
4. How can you be more loving this week? Who do you need to reach out to in the coming days?

Invest and Invite

Each Community Group is being asked to invest time (in prayer, meditation, and preparation) and then to invite their family, friends, neighbors, and other associates to take part in activities and events which are designed to open doors and share with them the truth of salvation in Christ. It is not about our strength. We plant and water, but it is God who does the amazing work of changing us and others so that we might grow up in Christ.