



Love Does Leader Guide – July 12, 2020

¹¹ For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. ¹² Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous. ¹³ Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you. ¹⁴ We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death. ¹⁵ Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him. ¹⁶ 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 and sisters. ¹⁷ If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? ¹⁸ Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth. ¹⁹ This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: ²⁰ If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. ²¹ Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God ²² and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. ²³ And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. ²⁴ The one who keeps God's commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

ICE BREAKER

Have you ever done a renovation on your home? What was your favorite part? What was the most challenging?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1) When Jesus came, He didn't completely change the old command – "love your neighbor" – He renovated it. How did Jesus renovate this command?

- Jesus took the command "love your neighbor" and made it better! He challenged us as His followers to no longer just love others, but to love them as He loved us (see John 13:34-35) – John outlines what this looks like in vs.16 of our passage today.

2) Before John describes what "love does," he first describes what "love does not." What were some of the things John listed? How are these relevant in your life today?

- Murder -> John shared via the story of Cain and Abel that when we murder, we are showing the love of God is not in us. (see vv. 12, 15)
- Hate -> John (and Jesus too in Matthew 5:21-22) showed us that hating a brother/sister is actually equivalent to murder in God's eyes (v.15). He wants us to see that once we become so angry with someone that we wish them harm, we have pushed the love of God out of our life. We

are to look introspectively, and if we continually find ourselves here, the love of God might not be in us.

- Remain in death -> Unless we are born again through the love of Jesus, we are still in death (spiritual death // separation from God). We are all born into sin and are spiritually dead until we are made new in Jesus' love – no matter how hard we try to make ourselves “alive,” we are incapable outside of Jesus.

3) Verse 16-18 are probably some of the most challenging verses in this whole letter. What's your answer to this question – “What does love require of me?” How have you been guilty of “speaking the needs” around you instead of meeting them? How can you reorient your life to be more aware of and available to meet the needs of others?

- Jesus answered and acted upon this question – “what does love require of me?” – when He laid down His life for us on the cross, fully demonstrating what love is.
- Where is God calling you to lay down your life (possibly literally but also metaphorically)? In light of what Jesus did, how can you “not”? What's holding you back?
- Often, we see needs and speak to them, but never actually follow through with action. Leaders, how have you seen this take place in your life? John makes it pretty clear that this is a sign the love of God is not in us – James also addresses this in James 2:14-26.

4) When we know Jesus, we know love – because, Jesus is love personified. Andrew outlined three results of knowing Jesus from verses 19-24. What were they? How have you seen these play true in your life?

- Receive grace and truth -> even when our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts! He pours out His grace and gives us His truth.
- Receive whatever you ask from Him -> it's not that God is a cosmic vending machine, but as we truly know Jesus, our desires become His desires. Which means, when we ask whatever we want, we're actually asking for what He wants.
- Remain in Him and He in you -> This is the crux of the Christian life – we are able to remain in Jesus, but ultimately, He remains in us. Even when we hit the lowest of lows, feel totally alone, make incredible mistakes, etc. He is always there, living inside of us.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

1) How can you start a daily rhythm of asking the question – what does love require of me?

2) How can your group begin to work together to become aware of and meet the needs of those around you?