



A Guide for Spiritual Formation

Series Theme: Life, Light, Love; A Series on 1 John
Text for the Week: John 3:11-3:24
Message for the Week: Children of God

Week Six
Sunday, October 16

Opening:

What is one low (a bad thing) and one high (a good thing) that happened to you this past week? Write them down and take turns sharing them with the others in your group.

Where have you seen the work of the Holy Spirit in your life this past week?

Who was your first true love?

Or

Who best taught you what love is truly about?

Preparation:

Spend 1-2 minutes in silence with God to center and prepare yourself for your time with God today.

Read:

Read / Have two people in your group read [1 John 3:11-3:24](#) out loud.

(Clicking this link will bring you to multiple translations.)

As you read and/or listen to the text being read, circle, take note of, highlight, or underline what words, phrases, or ideas grabbed your attention and heart in these verses?

Write them down below and/or share them with those who are with you.

Respond / Reflect:

How is your prayer life? How is your love life? The two are directly related.

What is love? How would you define it? How does John use the word love in these verses? How does John define love?

How does John say we know what love is? How do you/we know what love is?

What does it mean to love someone with actions and in truth?

Has someone ever loved you with their actions? Share some stories/experiences.

How can you tell if people really love you?

What types of things happen when we decide not to love another as Jesus commanded us? What types of things happen when we decide to love one another as Jesus commanded us?

Reflect together on this quote by Linus Van Pelt from the comic strip "Peanuts": "I love mankind. It's people I can't stand."

"Try It!"

Are there people in your life that you cannot get along with? What can you do about it? What will you do about it?

Prayer:

Spend time in prayer with/for the other people who are with you. Pray this prayer together:

Father, our world is a mess. It persecutes those who would live godly lives; it hates those who love Jesus. We thank you for your amazing love which reminds us we belong to you, that protects us from the evil of this world, and that provides us with the assurance we have passed from death to life. Most of all, we thank you for Jesus Christ, who does not condemn us but gives us confidence before You that whatever we need and ask for in his name, we will receive. Father, give us the strength to love, not only with our words, but also with our actions; give us the courage to be obedient and live in him as he lives in us. In Jesus' name – our life, light, and love – we pray. Amen.

Missional/Spiritual Practice for the Month: Practicing The 10 Second Rule

During the month of October, as we continue to explore 1 John and the call "...to live as Jesus lived" (1 John 2:6), you are encouraged to practice the 10 Second Rule as you go about your day. What is the 10 Second Rule? Clare De Graaf in his book entitled [The 10 Second Rule](#) defines The 10 Second Rule this way: "Just do the next thing you're reasonably certain Jesus wants you to do...and commit to doing it immediately—in the next 10 seconds—before you change your mind!" When you feel the prompting of the Holy Spirit to do something...do it. Pay attention to and keep a record of what happens on account of your obedience. Review this record at the end of the month.

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,^[a] 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.

1 John 3:11-3:24 The Message

¹¹ For this is the original message we heard: We should love each other.

¹²⁻¹³ We must not be like Cain, who joined the Evil One and then killed his brother. And why did he kill him? Because he was deep in the practice of evil, while the acts of his brother were righteous. So don't be surprised, friends, when the world hates you. This has been going on a long time.

¹⁴⁻¹⁵ The way we know we've been transferred from death to life is that we love our brothers and sisters. Anyone who doesn't love is as good as dead. Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know very well that eternal life and murder don't go together.

¹⁶⁻¹⁷ This is how we've come to understand and experience love: Christ sacrificed his life for us. This is why we ought to live sacrificially for our fellow believers, and not just be out for ourselves. If you see some brother or sister in need and have the means to do something about it but turn a cold shoulder and do nothing, what happens to God's love? It disappears. And you made it disappear.

When We Practice Real Love

¹⁸⁻²⁰ My dear children, let's not just talk about love; let's practice real love. This is the only way we'll know we're living truly, living in God's reality. It's also the way to shut down debilitating self-criticism, even when there is something to it. For God is greater than our worried hearts and knows more about us than we do ourselves.

²¹⁻²⁴ And friends, once that's taken care of and we're no longer accusing or condemning ourselves, we're bold and free before God! We're able to stretch our hands out and receive what we asked for because we're doing what he said, doing what pleases him. Again, this is God's command: to believe in his personally named Son, Jesus Christ. He told us to love each other, in line with the original command. As we keep his commands, we live deeply and surely in him, and he lives in us. And this is how we experience his deep and abiding presence in us: by the Spirit he gave us.