



## A Guide for Spiritual Formation

Series Theme: Life, Light, Love; A Series on 1 John

Text for the Week: 1 John 4:7-21

Message for the Week: The Love of God;  
The Love for Each Other

Week Eight

Sunday, November 6

### 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?

What family event or experience stands out as an example of your family at their closest?

### 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 4:7-21](#) 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 do you come to know God? How do you develop your knowledge and understanding of God?

How would you define love? How would you define God's love? How do these compare?

In what ways do you go about loving other people / those around you?

Where do you have the greatest trouble loving people: at church? At the office? At home? At school? Why?

If someone came into Covenant Church and observed us, what would they conclude about God's love? What if they observed us outside of the Covenant Church building?

## "Try It!"

To whom is the Holy Spirit prompting you to show Christlike love? Go do it!

## Prayer:

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

*Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi (Prayer for Peace)*

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace: where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. 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.

## 1 John 4:7-21 New International Version

<sup>7</sup> Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup> This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

<sup>13</sup> This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup> And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. <sup>15</sup> If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. <sup>16</sup> And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. <sup>17</sup> This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. <sup>18</sup> There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

<sup>19</sup> We love because he first loved us. <sup>20</sup> Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. <sup>21</sup> And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

## 1 John 4:7-21 The Message

<sup>7-10</sup> My beloved friends, let us continue to love each other since love comes from God. Everyone who loves is born of God and experiences a relationship with God. The person who refuses to love doesn't know the first thing about God, because God *is* love—so you can't know him if you don't love. This is how God showed his love for us: God sent his only Son into the world so we might live through him. This is the kind of love we are talking about—not that we once upon a time loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to clear away our sins and the damage they've done to our relationship with God.

<sup>11-12</sup> My dear, dear friends, if God loved us like this, we certainly ought to love each other. No one has seen God, ever. But if we love one another, God dwells deeply within us, and his love becomes complete in us—perfect love!

<sup>13-16</sup> This is how we know we're living steadily and deeply in him, and he in us: He's given us life from his life, from his very own Spirit. Also, we've seen for ourselves and continue to state openly that the Father sent his Son as Savior of the world. Everyone who confesses that Jesus is God's Son participates continuously in an intimate relationship with God. We know it so well, we've embraced it heart and soul, this love that comes from God.

### To Love, to Be Loved

<sup>17-18</sup> God is love. When we take up permanent residence in a life of love, we live in God and God lives in us. This way, love has the run of the house, becomes at home and mature in us, so that we're free of worry on Judgment Day—our standing in the world is identical with Christ's. There is no room in love for fear. Well-formed love banishes fear. Since fear is crippling, a fearful life—fear of death, fear of judgment—is one not yet fully formed in love.

<sup>19</sup> We, though, are going to love—love and be loved. First we were loved, now we love. He loved us first.

<sup>20-21</sup> If anyone boasts, "I love God," and goes right on hating his brother or sister, thinking nothing of it, he is a liar. If he won't love the person he can see, how can he love the God he can't see? The command we have from Christ is blunt: Loving God includes loving people. You've got to love both.

## Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day #2

### Q & A 4

Q. What does God's law require of us?

A. Christ teaches us this in summary in [Matthew 22:37-40](#): "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."<sup>1</sup> This is the greatest and first commandment.

"And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'<sup>2</sup>

"On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

<sup>1</sup> [Deut. 6:5](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Lev. 19:18](#)