



Growth Group Questions

January 25, 2026

“Love Begins With God”

CONTEXT

John picks up the theme of “love” once again. Love of one another is a defining mark of a true Christian life. Though there have been numerous warnings, John once again reminds the churches he writes to that they are his “dear friends.” This leads to his clarion call that they are to love one another. “Loving one another” is an exhortation, a duty, and ultimately a test case for whether their faith is genuine.

The foundation of this love has nothing to do with human effort but instead has to do with God. The source of our love for one another is ultimately God’s love for us. The kind of love that John is describing here flows from our new life in Christ.

John argues that an absence of love reveals an absence of the knowledge of God. If we know God and give our lives to God, then our words and actions should reflect the love that God has for us. A love that is ultimately revealed at the cross. This love has its origin in the sovereign, personal, living God, and it shows itself in concrete action. Believers don’t just talk about God’s love, but they live it out in community.

God’s ultimate mission was not just to show up in the person of Jesus, but to rescue and redeem people who were broken and separated from God. Jesus serves as the mediator. This happens because God chooses for us. God, as God has always done, initiates the relationship with humankind. Ever since the fall in Genesis 3 God has come looking for us.

In the end, we love because God first loved us. The world comes to know what God’s love looks like, not because they can see God, but because they can see the followers of Jesus. Thus, a great responsibility is placed on all who follow Jesus to love well and behave in a way that is honoring of God.

SCRIPTURE

1 John 4:7-19

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

¹³ This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴ And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵ If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ We love because he first loved us.

John 17:25-26

²⁵ "Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I have made you^[a] known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."

Romans 8:14-17

¹⁴ For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. ¹⁵ The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship.^[a] And by him we cry, "Abba,^[b] Father." ¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. ¹⁷ Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

John 1:17-18

¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and^[a] is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

QUESTIONS

1. In 1 John 4:16, John says "God is love." What does that mean to you?
2. What is the difference between saying "God is loving" and saying "God is love"? Which is more meaningful to you and why?

3. What can we learn about love from reading 1 John 4:7-19?
4. Pastor Paul said that we must be grounded in Jesus if we are to love like God. What does it mean to be “grounded in Jesus”?
5. How does God’s love for us transform the way we see other people and how we love others?
6. What are some practical ways in which we can demonstrate God’s love for us and our love for Him?
7. What does it look like for us to love others the way that God loves us?

PASTOR PAUL’S SERMON QUESTIONS

1. Where in your life do you need to be more loving and understanding?
2. How could you make some time this week to simply “rest” in God’s goodness and grace?