



Discussion Guide - December 28th, 2025

Let Earth Receive Her King

Christ, The King of Love

1 John 4:7-21

How to Prepare

Begin preparing by reading the full passage a few times. Then answer the questions for yourself. Then think about how your Small Group might answer them. Try re-wording the questions to fit you and your Small Group. Don't feel tied down to the discussion guide, just be sure to discuss the main point of the text in your conversations.

Resources-

<https://www.gotquestions.org/definition-of-love.html>

<https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/what-makes-christian-love-different>

<https://learn.ligonier.org/articles/what-is-love>

Sermon Outline:

1 John 4:7-21

1. God Defines Love. Vv. 7-8, 16
2. God Displays Love. Vv. 9-10, 14
3. God Disperses Love. Vv. 7-8, 11-13, 15-21



1 John 4:7-21

God Is Love

7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

9 By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.

10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

12 No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.

13 By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

14 We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

16 We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

17 By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.

18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

19 We love, because He first loved us.

20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

21 And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

Discussion Questions

Ask a volunteer to read 1 John 4:7-21.

INTRODUCTION

Here is a question or two to help introduce the topic and jump-start discussion.

1. What are some things that people do that make you feel loved? What are some ways you try to show others your love for them?

UNDERSTANDING AND APPLICATION

These questions should help your Small Group dig deeper into the text and then apply it to your lives today.

I. God Defines Love. Vv. 7-8, 16

2. What does this text teach us about where love comes from and what love really is? What does the statement, "God defines love" mean in your own words?

3. How is God's definition of love different from the way the world defines and expresses it? What are some ways that the world misunderstands or manipulates the statement that "God is love"?

4. How does the reign of Christ in our hearts safeguard us from having a worldly understanding of love? What are some practical steps we can take to abide in Christ's reign over us?

II. God Displays Love. Vv. 9-10, 14

5. What does this text tell us is the primary way that God displays His love to the world? What does the gospel tell us about the genuine nature of love?



6. How do vv. 9-10 show God's justice and mercy, why are justice and mercy both loving, and how does Jesus bring them both together?

7. How does God's display of love show that love is both a choice and an action based on truth rather than merely emotions based on desire?

III. God Disperses Love. Vv. 7-8, 11-13, 15-21

8. What is the logical argument John is using in these verses to encourage believers to love one another? Is this a suggestion or a command?

9. Why is it necessary to understand that love is initiated by God and comes to us through Jesus? (v. 15) What role does the Holy Spirit play in our love for God? (vv. 12-13)

10. How does our love for one another serve to prove our love for God? (vv. 17-19) What is so dangerous about not loving each other (vv. 20-21), and how can we stir up love for one another?



Commentary (from ESV Study Bible)

1 John 4:7–21 The Assurance of God through the Love of God. John's teaching in these verses bears comparison with the apostle Paul's "love chapter," 1 Corinthians 13.

1 John 4:7–12 The Perfecting of God's Love. The closing words of this section, "his love is perfected in us" (v. 12), capture the direction of John's claims and exhortation.

1 John 4:7 whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. This does not rule out the need for faithful confession of Christ (2:23; 4:2) and ethical integrity (3:16). But love completes the picture of a life in fellowship with God. Love is presented here as a consequence of, not a precondition for, being born of God. Unbelievers can love others to some degree, but not in the way that God's indwelling presence enables Christians to love (cf. 4:8–11).

1 John 4:8 does not know God, because God is love. The person who lacks love shows himself to be unchanged at the core of his being by the gospel message. John is not saying that God is only love (he has numerous other attributes), nor that love is God (a statement for which there is no scriptural support). "God is love" means that God continually gives of himself to others and seeks their benefit. There was eternal love between the persons of the Trinity even before the world was created (John 17:24), and God's love is the ultimate source of any love that Christians are able to display (1 John 4:11, 12, 19).

1 John 4:9 God's love is not an abstract principle or sentiment but was made manifest in the sending of his only Son into the world, so that sinful humanity might live, i.e., receive eternal life.

1 John 4:10 not that we have loved God. God's love sets the standard for the love Christians are called to embody. propitiation. See note on 2:2. Sin brings divine wrath. On the cross, Jesus bore that wrath for our sins (see 2 Cor. 5:21).

1 John 4:11 Here and in v. 7 John uses a strong term of endearment, beloved (Gk. *agapētoi*), evidence that he himself has been mastered by the love he calls for. He uses the same word also at 2:7; 3:2, 21; 4:1. See also note on 2:1, "my little children."

1 John 4:12 No one has ever seen God. See note on John 1:18.

1 John 4:13–21 The Assurance of God's Spirit. God's Spirit (v. 13) gives impetus for and assurance in the high calling of mutual love.

1 John 4:13 The presence and activity of the Holy Spirit within Christians are evidence that they are abiding in God (see notes on John 8:31; 15:4).



Commentary (from ESV Study Bible)

1 John 4:14 we have seen and testify. This was particularly and uniquely true for apostles like John, who were Jesus' hand-picked witnesses. By extension and through faith, all subsequent believers testify to the same truths. Savior occurs in John's writings only here and in John 4:2.

1 John 4:15 Jesus is the Son of God, not in the derived sense that all Christians as God's children are his adopted "sons" and heirs (Rom. 8:14; Gal. 3:26) but in a unique sense (the Son of God) in which Jesus is acknowledged as personally divine and as sharing fully every attribute of God (see note on John 1:14). In 1 John 4:2 it was required that true teachers affirm Christ's full humanity; here it is required that they affirm his full deity.

1 John 4:16 we have come to know and to believe. Assurance of salvation, while never an arrogant presumption, can become a settled state of mind and heart (see notes on 2:3; 5:13).

1 John 4:17 By this refers to the previous verse, where John speaks of believers abiding in God and God abiding in them. confidence for the day of judgment. Either eternal life or eternal punishment awaits all humanity (see John 3:36), and God's love furnishes a sure hope for those who have trusted in him. as he is so also are we in this world. Just as the Son was and is present in the world in a loving fashion that in no way attracted divine displeasure, so are the Son's followers. The love that Christ embodied and lived out among believers is their confidence in the day of judgment.

1 John 4:18 No fear in love does not rule out the presence and constructive effect of "the fear of the Lord" that is "the beginning of knowledge" (Prov. 1:7). Here John speaks of fear of final judgment (cf. 1 John 4:17). God's perfect love for believers casts out the fear of wrath and eternal punishment.

1 John 4:19 We love because. Christian love is a gift from God, demonstrated supremely in the cross (see Rom. 5:8). God's love always takes the initiative, and the love of Christians is a response to that love. Likewise, all morally good human actions are good not because they conform to some arbitrary human standard of good but because they are rooted in imitation of the morally perfect character of God and conform to God's commands.

