

1 John 4:7-21 Discussion Questions

Text: 1 John 4:7-21

1. John begins this passage with a command to love one another. John then goes on to explain that loving is proof that one knows God and is born of God. Why is this true?
2. Does this mean that apart from God we cannot really love?
3. What does it mean that "God is love"?
4. How does our culture define *love*? What does our love look like?
5. How does the Bible define *love*? (Verses 9-16 help us to discover the answer.)
 - a. How did God reveal His love to us?
 - b. If this is what love looks like, how might we define love?
 - c. Compare God's love with the world's love. How does the difference between them help us to better answer question 2 above?
6. Pastor Mike talked about how we see the Trinity in action in vv. 9-16: the Father sends the Son; the Son absorbs the Father's wrath towards our sin (propitiation); and the Father sends the Spirit to make us children of God. Through the Scripture we see the Trinity working as three divine persons living as one perfect unity, existing in harmony, working together within their hierarchy and glorifying one another. If God is the perfect example of love in action, what can we learn about what it looks like to love from the way the Trinity operates?
7. What are some specific examples of how we can apply this to the way we love one another in the church? How about in your home?
8. When we love the way God loves two things happen according to John (vv. 17-21). What are they?
9. In light of what John is saying, what kind of fear does love cast out? What kind of fear does it not cast out?

10. What kinds of fears are appropriate and healthy?

11. We don't often think that we hate others. John uses *love* and *hate* in the same way he uses *light* and *darkness*: they are two ends of a continuum, meaning there can be more or less intense versions. But the bottom line is that there are two choices: you are either moving towards one or the other. In other words, either you are for someone or against them, either you are blessing or cursing them. Neutrality—and so indifference—is not an option.

a. When do you find it hard to love?

b. Who do you find hard to love?

c. How can we overcome the challenge to love?