

Establishing a Baseline pt 2: God is Love

1 John 4:7-21

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we have 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 ever seen God; 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 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his 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 So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. ¹⁷ By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for 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. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. ¹⁹ We love because he first loved us. ²⁰ If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he 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: whoever loves God must also love his brother. **1 John 4:7-21 (ESV)**

Digging Deeper

The Bible is filled with references to God's love. Spend some time searching out these passages of Scripture together and see how they help shape our understanding of John's statement, "God is love."

- **Deuteronomy 7:9-10**
- **Psalms 86:15; 103:8-13**
- **Isaiah 38:17**

- **Lamentations 3:22-23**
- **John 3:16**
- **Romans 5:8; 8:35-39**
- **Galatians 2:20**

Digesting the Text

- Pastor Will opened by sharing that humanity is driven by a need for love, so much so that every song we sing and story we tell is about love. What's your favorite story or song? What does it say about love? Is it about romantic love, lost love, love of a way of life, love of life itself? What makes it your favorite? Based on what you've learned about God's love, how does the love displayed in your choice reflect or contradict God's love?
- Take some time and read through this passage slowly taking note of the repeated words and phrases that John uses across the two paragraphs.
 - According to these verses, why did God send his Son into the world?
 - What should be our response to this display of God's love?
 - According to these verses, how do we "abide" in God?
- Read John 3:16 and 1 John 4:9. How are these verses similar? How do they amplify each other's meaning?
- Read through 1 Corinthians 13. How does Paul's description of love compare to John's?
- Pastor Will shared that since "God is love," he is both the source of love and the One who defines real love. Spend time reflecting on these statements from Pastor Will's sermon and how they help us better understand God's love.
 - God's love is visible.
 - God's love is sacrificial.
 - God's love is selfless, is oriented around others.
 - God's love takes the initiative.
- Does your love of your spouse, your children, your church family, your world reflect God's love? If not, how can you love in a better and more Godly manner?
- In pagan religions, worshippers show their love for the god by lavishing gifts upon images of the god (idols). As Christians we are forbidden from making an image of God (Exo. 20:4-6) because he has already made us in his image (Gen. 1:27). Read 1 John 4:12, how does this information shape your understanding of God's command for us to love one another.