



ADVENT 2021 WEEK 2- LOVE

Community Group Study Guide 1 John 4:7-12 - Week of December 12, 2021

This week, we continued our Advent series with the topic of Love. Christmas is many things to many people, but Scripture tells us Christmas is about God making His love known to us. God's love is manifested at Christmas, meaning, God's love has always been there and opens our eyes to it when He sends Jesus into the world.

The type of love God reveals at Christmas is specifically agape love. Agape love is different from all other loves because it is part of the nature of God. The difference between God and us is known as "Transcendence". This means that God is greater than anything in all of existence, and greater than anything we could ever imagine. Therefore, so is His agape love.

In God's outpouring of love, He calls His elect "Beloved". We are not beloved because of anything in us, but simply because God chose to love us. Once we have our eyes opened to God's love, the only natural response is to love Him back. God is worthy of our love.

Once we start loving God, He promises to "perfect" our love. The reason for this is we all have a warped view of love. Everyone can tell you what they think love is, but because of sin in our lives, sin in the world around us, and sin in the love we've experienced, our view of love is inherently faulty. We need to think critically of the way we view love and the way we show love. As we love others, it shows the world who God is. If we have faulty love, we portray a faulty God.

Let's be praying, like Ephesians 3, that the Holy Spirit can transform us, and empower us to know the fullness of the Love of God.

DISCUSSION GOALS

Head

To know Agape love.

Heart

To love God above all else.

Hands

To practically love our brothers and sisters in Christ. To practically love friends and family who do not know Christ.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

12/26, 1/2: Family Friendly Services
Mini Mo childcare for 0-18 months, 9:15 service only.

Christmas Eve Service, Friday,
December 24 at 4pm

The next **Baptism Seminar** will be at 1pm on January 16 in the Temple basement.

Sign up to join a service team here:
<https://brookline.mosaicboston.com/serve>.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Read 1 John 4:7-12. Refer to and explore the whole of 1 John chapter 4, Ephesians 3:14-19, Hosea 1-2, throughout the discussion and/or in personal meditation throughout the week.

1. What do most people think the meaning of Christmas is?
2. What changes when we know the meaning of Christmas as the manifestation of God's love?
3. What does it mean to have "Beloved" as your identity? Why do we sometimes doubt the truth of this identity?
4. Why is it important that God is described as "Agape", and not any of the other types of love?
5. This text makes it clear, how we love others directly communicates to others who God is. What does the way you love others communicate to them about God? How would you like to see that change in your life?
6. Discuss the ways we warp love. Which do you see in your own life?
 - Ways love is warped:
 - Sexualized- love is about pleasure
 - Emotionalized- love is just a feeling
 - Self centered- "this is how i feel loved"
 - Self realized- "I know what love is because I love myself"
 - Self validating- "All I need is to love myself"
 - Earned- love is something we can only get when we are deserving of it. Love is something I can only give when someone is deserving of it.
 - Unattainable- "I will never know true love"
 - Conceptualized- love is an idea that keeps us going
 - Temporary- "I love you now but who knows about later"
 - Limited- There is only so much love to give or receive
8. Share of times when God's love has impacted you or transformed your view of love. Feel free to share of times when a warped view of love has done damage in your life.
9. Think practically. Who do you need to commit to loving in your life? How are you going to do that?