

Small Group Discussion Questions - Fall Semester // Week Eight

Remember, these questions are just tools for discussion. You don't need to 'get through them all'. Use the questions that are helpful, skip the questions that are not. And let the conversation flow naturally.

Optional Ice Breaker(s)

- a) What is one interest/hobby/skill that you have developed over the last few months? If you had more free time, what is one interest/hobby/skill that you would take time to learn?
- b) If you could only eat one food for the rest of your life, what would it be? If you could eliminate one food so that no one could ever eat it again, which food would you destroy?

Passage and Discussion

Read 1 John 3:11-24

- a) What stands out to you upon first reading of this passage? What is a theme, verse, or word that you find encouraging? What do you find challenging in this passage?
- b) First, begin with the simple question Dom asked on Sunday: "what is love?" How would you answer this question? If you were honest, before the message, would your answer have been "biblical", or would you have used other definitions?
- c) How do you think most people in our culture would answer the question: "what is love?" What are a few popular cultural examples of love? What are these definitions missing?
- d) On Sunday, Dom began by asking personal questions. The first one was: when you hear that our passage emphasizes the importance of love, do you lean into it or disconnect from it? Do you find yourself "tuning out" during sermons with common themes? How do we prevent ourselves from doing this?
- e) The second personal question was: are you willing to let God work through to make you a more loving person? Why is it important to not simply agree with a message on a theoretical level, but put it into action? How can we hold each other accountable towards doing this?
- f) What are a few of the differences that you see between Abel's death and Christ's death? In your own words, how does Christ's death give us the perfect picture of love? What is the connection between selflessness and love? What is the connection between selfishness and hatred?
- g) If you're honest, do you find yourself living more like Cain (angry, jealous, selfish, etc.) or more like Christ (loving, humble, selfless). How can we move towards becoming more like Christ?

- h) In verse 11, John reminds his readers that “this is the message [they] have heard from the beginning”. Where else do we find definitions or examples of love in Scripture?
- i) On Sunday, Dom shared about how, when he first became a Christian, he learned how to live out the Christian life on his own strength. Have you ever experienced this? Have you ever tried to become more like Christ on your own strength, by changing the way that you spoke, acted, etc.?
- j) Why does this kind of “self-made sanctification” not work? What happens when we try to become more loving on our own strength?
- k) **Re-read John 15:1-17.** How does this passage connect to our teaching about love coming from God? If love comes from God, how does He grow this love in us? What do we need to do in order to “remain in Him” and invite Him to make us more loving?
- l) What are a few practical examples of ways that we can put this love into action in our own lives? As you look back on the last week, did you have any opportunities to show love to the people around you? How can we move from loving “in word or thought” to loving other people with our actions?
- m) Scripture defines love, not in words, but through the example of Jesus, as evidenced by His death on the cross for us. How is the example of Christ as a definition of love differ from how we typically attempt to define it? How ought this ‘definition example’ influence how we live out love for others?
- n) Was there anything else in the message on Sunday that stood out to you as impactful or challenging?

Take it Home (Optional Ideas for Response this Week)

- a) This week, take a few moments to reflect on the three reflection questions that Dom asked at the end of his message:
 - i) Am I defining love according to what Scripture teaches, or am I defining love according to the world around me?
 - ii) Am I remaining in Christ? Am I growing in my ability to be connected to Christ, as the branches are connected to the vine?
 - iii) Am I fulfilling the command to love others in what I do?

Optional Ideas for Prayer Time

- a) In this season, it is important for us to be intentionally praying for each other. This also means that we must each choose to be honest and vulnerable with our prayer requests. Take time to 'check-in' about how each person is doing, and pray for them.

- b) As a group, spend a few minutes praying for this series that we are walking through as a church. Pray that God would use it to help each of us become more like Him, and to help our church become more like the community He wants us to be.