

## Small Group Discussion Questions - Fall Semester // Week Eleven

*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) As you begin to reflect on the past year, what are a few things that you can celebrate? What were a few good things that happened in your life over the last year?
- b) Who was one of your favourite teachers when you were growing up? What is one of your favourite childhood memories from school?

### Passage and Discussion

#### **Read 1 John 4:17-5:5**

- 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) Our passage teaches us that there are three objects of love: the world, the church, and God. On Sunday, Cam taught us that this list is in reverse order of importance. Why do you think it's important that we keep this list in order: God first, then the church and the world? How does loving God help us to love others?
- c) **1 John 4:17**: "In this world, we are like Jesus". What are a few words that you would use to describe how Jesus interacted with the world around Him? Would Christians today often be described by the same words?
- d) **Read v18**. How does fear stop us from loving the world around us well? What are a few examples of times in your life when fear prevented you from loving the world 'fearlessly'?
- e) As 1 John emphasizes throughout (exclusively, actually), we are specifically called to love the Body of Christ. Why do you think this is such an important directive? What are a few practical examples of what it means to love the Church?
- f) Would you say that the Church is often characterized by love for each other, despite their differences? How can we work towards becoming more loving as a Church, including our local church community?
- g) On Sunday, Cam reminded us that it is impossible to say that we love Jesus, but hate the Church. Do you think that this is a common attitude today? Why do you think people say that they love Jesus, but hate the Church?

- h) **Read Matthew 22:36-40.** In this passage, Jesus connects loving God with loving our neighbours. How is this teaching similar to what John is teaching in our passage? How is loving God and loving our neighbours (especially the Church) one commandment?
- i) **1 John 5:2-3** (and **1 John 2:3-5**) teaches us that our love for God means that we keep His commands. One commentator said that “obedience is God’s love language”. How do you respond to this teaching; would you have previously described loving God as obeying Him? How is obedience to His commands proof of a relationship with God?
- j) 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, spend a few minutes praying and reflecting on the three objects of our love: the world, the Church, and God. For each area, reflect on your own life: are you intentionally showing love in this area of your life? How can you grow to let God’s love work through you?
- b) This week, create a list of ways that you can show love to the Church during the Advent season. As we anticipate Christmas, how can you show love to your church community in practical ways?

### **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 our church community, especially those who are frontline workers (doctors, nurses, teachers, etc.). Pray that God would protect and bring peace into each person’s life this week.