

1. What kind of feelings do John's stark language (light/dark, truth/liar, love/murder) in this letter evoke? Why do you think he chooses to speak in extremes so often?
2. Is having a special love for other Christians, or viewing other Christians as "our people," the same as tribalism? Is a special brotherhood among Christians a good thing?
3. Why does John keep using the phrase "this is the message you have heard from the beginning" (1:1, 2:7, 2:24, 3:11)? Why would older teaching be more reliable for Christians?
4. Cain's hatred for, and murder of, Abel is because neither love nor eternal life abided in him. What does it mean for love and life to abide in us, and how would that affect us?
5. How do you think most people define love? Do you think Jesus' example challenges how we typically think of love?
6. Why does sacrificial love assume that people have actual needs? What need of ours did Jesus give himself for?
7. What kinds of needs exist in a church like ours and how can love lead us to meet those needs?
8. Practically speaking, what does loving each other in word and deed look like for Christians? Are there things you do (or might start doing) in your family to practically love each other? Are there things we do as a church (or might start doing) to practically love each other?