

Deep Practice Discipleship Guide

Text: 1 John 4:7–21

Sermon Title: God's Love Revealed

Big Idea: God reveals His steadfast, holy, sacrificial love to us. We receive it by faith and reflect it through our lives.

1. Opening Reflection (10 minutes)

(Deep Practice Check-In)

Begin with a brief prayer inviting the Holy Spirit to guide your conversation.

Group Check-In Questions:

- How did you do on your deep practice exercise from the past week?
- What have you learned? (Even when something is hard, or we fail, we can learn something. If a person continues to struggle to fulfill their practice, it can be helpful to help them think about how they might take a smaller step that can eventually lead to the bigger commitment they are aiming for.)

Encourage honesty. This is not about perfection — it is about awareness and growth.

2. Scripture Engagement (10 minutes)

(Read the Text Together)

Have someone read **1 John 4:7–12**, and another read **1 John 4:13–21**.

After reading, allow 30 seconds of silence for reflection.

Initial Observation Question:

- What word, phrase, or idea stood out to you as the text was read?

3. Exploring the Text: Know → Receive → Reflect (20 minutes)

KNOW — God's Love Revealed (4:9–10)

Discussion (Understanding):

- According to this passage, how does God define love differently than the world often does?
- What does it mean that God “sent His Son” before we loved Him?

Reflection (Interpretation):

- Which aspect of God’s love stands out most to you right now?
 - Steadfast (God initiates)
 - Holiness-shaping (God deals with sin)
 - Sacrificial (God pays the cost)
- Why do you think that aspect is especially meaningful in your current season?

RECEIVE — God’s Love Experienced (4:13–17)

Discussion (Understanding):

- What does John mean when he says “God lives in us”?
- How does the Spirit’s presence change how we experience God’s love?

Reflection (Application):

- What keeps people from fully receiving God’s love?
 - Fear?
 - Shame?
 - Performance?
 - Distraction?

Light vs. Darkness Moment:

Read verse 18 aloud.

Discuss:

- How have you seen love push fear out of your life?
- Where do you still sense fear trying to compete with God’s love?

REFLECT — God’s Love Made Visible (4:11–12, 19–21)

Discussion (Understanding):

- Why does John say love for God and love for others cannot be separated?
- What does it mean that God becomes “visible” through His people?

MLK Connection Reflection:

Read the quote:

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”

Ask:

- How does this quote reflect the message of 1 John 4?
- Where does our culture try to fight darkness with more darkness?

4. Bible Storying Exercise (10 minutes)

(Reinforcing the Theme Through Story)

Story Passage: Luke 10:33–37 (The Good Samaritan)

Step 1 — Tell the Story

One person reads the passage slowly.

Step 2 — Retell Together

Invite the group to retell the story in their own words without looking at the text.

Step 3 — Story Reflection:

Ask:

- How is God’s love reflected through the Samaritan’s actions?
- What did loving cost the Samaritan?
- Who might be the “neighbor” God is calling you to love this week?

5. Deep Practice Commitment (10 minutes)

(Hands — Personal Action Step)

Return to the sermon practice:

“How can I reflect God’s love today in a tangible way?”

Quiet Reflection (2 minutes):

Invite each person to silently ask God where they are being invited to practice love. If they do not already have an area of discipleship that they are engaging in deep practice the following exercise might be helpful.

Write It Down:

Write one specific commitment using this format:

This week I will reflect God’s love by:

- Who: _____
- What: _____
- When: _____

Examples:

- Initiating a difficult conversation
- Forgiving someone intentionally
- Encouraging someone who feels unseen
- Serving someone quietly
- Choosing patience in a recurring situation

6. Group Sharing & Accountability (5 minutes)

Invite participants to share their commitment (as they feel comfortable).

Encourage the group to:

- Pray for one another
- Follow up next week
- Celebrate obedience, not outcomes

7. Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Suggested Prayer Direction:

- Thank God for revealing His love through Jesus
- Ask for openness to receive His love more deeply
- Ask for courage to reflect His love visibly this week

Leader Tip

Remind the group:

We are not trying to manufacture love — we are learning to live from the love God has already given us.