

Growth Group Leader Guide

This “growth group leader guide” is meant to be just that, a guide. Please feel free as the leader of your group to add questions or comments as you feel necessary to fit your group’s dynamics.

Also, don’t feel pressured to cover every question.

1 John 4:12-21

Read as a group 1 John 4:12-21

- What insight, principle, or observation from Sunday’s message did you find to be most helpful, eye-opening, or troubling? Explain.

4 – Main Points of Sunday’s Sermon

- **Biblical Love Makes the Invisible God Visible**
- **Biblical Love is Doctrinally Sound**
- **Biblical Love Brings Assurance**
- **Biblical Love is Practiced**

1) Biblical Love Makes the Invisible God Visible

- **Read 1 John 4:12.** Based on this verse, why is it imperative that Christians be marked by God’s love?
- Read and discuss the following quote –
 - **John Stott** – The unseen God, who was once revealed in His Son, is now revealed in His people if and when they love one another.... God’s love, which originates in Himself (7,8) and was manifested in His Son (9,10) is perfected in His people (12). It is ‘brought to perfection within us. God’s love for us is perfected only when it is reproduced “in us” or “among us” in the Christian fellowship. We are to love each other, first because God is love (8,9), secondly because God loved us (10,11), and thirdly because, if we do love one another, God dwells in us and His love is perfected in us (12).
- Can you think of anyone that was drawn to the Church because of the love they witnessed or experienced?

- Where does love come from, and what are the ramifications of this for those who claim to be Christians?

2) Biblical Love is Doctrinally Sound

- **Read 1 John 4:13-15.** Why do you think John adds these 3 verses in this passage on love? Do they seem out of place?
- What does biblically sound confession, theology and doctrine have to do with Love?
- How is 1 Cor. 13:6 so countercultural?
- Why do words like theology & doctrine sound cold and/or unloving? Is that more from the Bible or our culture? Explain your answer
- Read and discuss the following quote.
 - **Douglas O'Donnell** - I am of the opinion that there is nothing so deadly in the entire world as theological error. Moreover, I believe that there is nothing so unloving as theological error. In fact, it is better to have a millstone tied around your neck while swimming in the Mediterranean Sea than to teach a child that Jesus has not come in the flesh to die for our sins. Theological error is far more deadly than medical error, for theological error can cause the loss of both body and soul (Matt. 10:28).
 - We must not be confused by the media elites, pop philosophers, and antichrist celebrities who sound so broad-minded, humble, and loving when they talk about Jesus. They claim to have high regard for him but deny his deity, atonement, and resurrection; they tout him as a great moral teacher, but reject his ethic of love – on issues such as adultery and fornication. They call the Golden Rule their rule while they crush those who oppose their pluralism. Such tolerance without truth so easily tantalizes. But the word of God thunders against such triviality, saying that there is nothing loving about theological error. Nothing! The wrong view of Jesus is a deadly plague that will kill the church.
- Is God's love conditional or unconditional?
 - **Leaders Cheat:** this question could be answered in a number of ways so be prepared for a lively discussion. As a leader, make sure the point gets across that God's saving love is conditioned on faith & repentance. Also, remember that we are talking about God's love not election. Election is

unconditional, but God's saving love is conditioned on faith and repentance. For preparation in answering this question look up the following YouTube video.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fcOzTZUOBn0>
- **Title of this video:** God's Love is NOT "Unconditional"

3) Biblical Love Brings Assurance

- **Read 1 John 4:16-18**
- Is fearing God healthy or unhealthy? This is a complicated question so take some time to think it through as a Group.
 - ***Leaders Cheat:** Biblically there are two types of fear. Fear of judgment & a fatherly fear or reverence. Look up Exodus 20:20 for an example of both types of fear.*
- In what ways did John insist that love leads to confidence and not fear?
- How does Romans 8:35, 37-39 make you a stronger Christian?

4) Biblical Love is Practiced

- **Read 1 John 4:19-21**
- How did John expose the lies we often live out? How is love to be expressed?
- According to John, why is it impossible to love God and hate our neighbor at the same time?
- What "safeguards" did John include in his description of love, to keep his readers from thinking of love as a nebulous, fussy, vague, sentimental feeling?
- Based on 1 John 4:7-21, what does a God-honoring love look like in a believer's life?
- How do you apply in your life the statement "We love because He first loved us?"