

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 4:7-11

Read 1 John 4:7-11

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

3 – Main Points of Sunday’s Sermon

- **Biblical Love Starts with God**
- **Biblical Love is Sacrificial**
- **Biblical Love is Active**

I. Biblical Love Starts with God

- How is love depicted in television shows and movies? Considering our culture’s high divorce rate, how do most people seem to define marital love?
- What do you think our cultural understanding of love is? How does our cultural understanding of love influence our understanding of God when it comes to the phrase, “God is love”?
- How does John tell us to respond to the love of God?
- When in your life have you been the most overwhelmed by the reality of God’s love for you?
- According to John, where does love come from, and what are the ramifications of this for those who claim to be Christians?
- Read and discuss the following quote...

- To John, God is both “love” (1 John 4:16) and “light” (1 John 1:5). But the apostolic ordering is significant. It matters that light comes before love. God’s holiness (He is light) shows our unholiness (we are stained black with sin) and thus in need of a crucified Christ to wash us in his holy blood. (Love)
- A failure to see God in His holiness can breed irreverence. A failure to grasp God’s grace and love can lead to unhealthy fear. In your own relationship with God, are you motivated more by love or fear? Why? What can you do to find a healthy balance?

II. Biblical Love is Sacrificial

- How has God demonstrated His love?
- According to 1 John 4:9, one reason why God sent His Son is so that we might live through Him. What does it mean to live through Christ?
- John 15:13 says, **Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.**
- Most of us will not be put in the position of literally sacrificing our lives for a brother. With that in mind, list a number of ways that we can show sacrificial love to our church family.
 - *Leaders Cheat: have someone from the group write the list down.*
- (If married) List some ways we can show sacrificial love within our marriages.
 - *Leaders Cheat: have someone from the group write the list down.*
- What on these lists are easy for you to perform and which ones are hard for you to perform?

III. Biblical Love is Active

- Why is 1 John 4:10 so challenging when it comes to modeling God’s love?
- **Read Mark 10:17-22** and explain the different ways Jesus “actively” loved the young man in the story.

- **Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13** and discuss how you as a group can “Actively” love each other and those within our church. Pay close attention to **1 Corinthians 13:4-7**.
 - *Leaders cheat: Remind everyone that the context of 1 Cor. 13 is all about our relationships within the Church.*
- **Matthew 18:15** Discuss how this command is a command to actively love your brother.
- How does pursuing a brother that has offended you model God’s love for us?
 - *Leaders Cheat: Remember 1 John 4:10 and how God pursued us even though we wanted nothing to do with him.*
- According to Matthew 18:15, how are you to confront your brothers when they have offended or sinned against you?
 - *Leaders Cheat: the key phrase is “between you and him alone.”*
 - *Meaning we don’t gossip, talk badly about, or slander those that have sinned against us within the Church.*
- According to Matthew 18:15, what is the motive for confronting a brother that has offended or sinned against you?
- **Read 1 Peter 4:8**, what does it mean to cover up a sin in love?

Pray

- Pray as a group for marriages that are struggling within our church.
- Pray as a group for any relationships (known or unknown) within our church that haven’t been reconciled. (Without naming names)
- Pray as a group that our love for each other (at COBC) will be a testimony for the community of Tehachapi.