

Victoria Fellowship Church
International & Interdenominational
Bible Study Worksheet – December 12, 2021

Theme: Love: A More Excellent Way

Topic: God's Love in Action

Main Text: 1 John 4:7-21

Key verse: 1 John 4:8 *"He who does not love does not know God, for God is love"* (NKJV).

INTRODUCTION: Our key verse emphatically states that *'he who does not love does not know God, for God is love'* (1 John 4:8). The reason Apostle John could be so emphatic is because God did not merely tell us 'I love you.' Instead, He demonstrated it. And *"this is how God showed his love to us: He sent his only Son into the world to give us life through him."* (1 John 4:9 ERV). Romans 5:8 gives us another view of the demonstration of God's love, *'... while we were still sinners, Christ died for us'* (NIV). Earlier on, Jesus Christ had drawn His disciples' attention to His model of love when He said to them *'... as I have loved you, so you must love one another'* (John 13:35 NIV). So, God has given us ample example of what His love looks like in action. God's love for us does not rest on any account of our own loveliness. In fact, God loves us despite the fact we were not at all lovely. We were sinners by nature, deserving only His wrath. Despite all of this, God loved us and sent Jesus to be a propitiation — to satisfy His justice and turn His wrath away from us. As John Calvin comments on this passage, "Christ, then, is so illustrious and singular a proof of divine love towards us, that whenever we look upon him, he fully confirms to us the truth that God is love."

1. **Read John 15:13; Luke 23:32-38; Romans 5:8; 1 Peter 3:18 (a) What insights do these passages reveal about God's love in action. (b) Jesus Christ said, 'as I have loved you, so you must love one another' (John 13:35). in the light of (a) above, what practical ways can we love like God loved us in Christ? (c) How would these apply in the case of a difficult person?**

Greek philosophy at the time of Apostle John's writing held that the highest form of love was love for that which was worthy of being loved. But in Romans 5:8, we see God loving us while we were the least lovable – while we were still sinners. Prophet Ezekiel vividly pictures our condition when God demonstrated His love for us: *"... On the day you were born, you were unwanted, dumped in a field and left to die. But I came by and saw you there, helplessly kicking about in your own blood. As you lay there, I said, 'Live!'"* (Ezekiel 16:5b-6 NLT). Since God is love, and since His sending of Jesus is the supreme demonstration of His love, then the highest form of love is to love even the unlovely. So, *"dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other."* (1 John 4:11 NLT)

2. **(a) According to 1 John 4:7-8, 12-16, why is it important that believers love one another? (b) Read John 15:13, 1 John 3:16-18, what would obeying this command look like in practical terms? (c) 1 John 4:18-19 says, 'love has no fear.' In what ways have you seen fear preventing people from loving others as God loves?**

In commanding us to imitate God in loving one another, Apostle John reveals a key ingredient necessary to love actively - that *"God is love,"* (1 John 4:8, 16). What he is trying to say is that loving others is not something anyone can determine to do all by themselves. God can love because love is an essential attribute of His. Love is a characteristic of His which manifests in all He does. So, this love of God is self-originating. And as 1 John 4:7 puts it, *'love comes from God...'* It does not arise from something outside of God but is inherent to His own divine nature. For fallen human beings, it is often the case that something outside of ourselves motivates us to love another person. We cannot, in our fallen nature, love the way God does. So, God must first infuse this DNA of His in us for us to love others the way He loves us.

3. **(a) 1 John 4:7-8 says, '... Love comes from God ... God is love.' What does this point to as we think of loving others as God commands us to? (b) What other ingredient does 1 John 4:13-18 point to as necessary for loving others as God loves us? (c) How serious is this command to love others and how should 1 John 3:14; 4:8 motivate us to overcome any reluctance to love others?**

Prayer: Thank you Lord for revealing to us that You are love. Please help us to love one another that it may be evident that we are your children and that we know You through Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior Amen.