

Instructions:

Group leaders, take some time before your gathering to look over these questions. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you pick 3-5 questions to discuss that pertain to your group's unique style and needs.



Series: The Way of Love

We know what the scriptures say: love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, and strength; love your neighbors as yourself; love is patient and kind; God is love. But living the way of love in Jesus is a daily challenge. Does love really make a difference when the world seems bent on hate, selfishness, and greed? And who is to say what love is, or what is loving in any moment? Do I really have to love my enemy? What does Christian love look like today?

Key Scriptures

1 Corinthians 13

1 John 4:7-21

Questions Related to This Week's Teaching:

1. The Apostle John has been nicknamed the "Apostle of Love". How did he earn this moniker?
2. In his three epistles, what is it John was trying to address?
3. How, based on your understanding of the word, would you define "love"?
4. What are the four Greek words used for love in scripture? Define each if you can.
5. The greatest of these four is what?
6. According to John, the way the world can recognize a true follower of Jesus is how?

Going Deeper

Read 1 Corinthians 13

[For context on the church in Corinth and how this passage fits in the wider letter of 1 Corinthians 12-14, consider this article: <https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/fourth-sunday-after-epiphany-3/commentary-on-1-corinthians-131-13-7>]

- How do you understand these words differently knowing that Paul was writing to a community of Christians in Corinth and not romantic couples?
- How does this challenge how you understand and experience love?
- When have you seen this kind of love lived out by a church community?
- As outlined in the source above, Paul was writing this letter to a community deeply divided in competition and rivalry over spiritual gifts. How do the words of this chapter hit differently knowing that Paul was calling the Corinthian church to a self-giving, self-sacrificing love that is not boastful or envious, and keeps no record of wrong? How then does the love Paul articulates unify a community of people?
- What do you think Paul meant in verse 12 by being fully known? By whom? What role does being known play in loving one another? Or asked another way, is it possible to really love someone that you do not know?

Gary Chapman famously wrote the book on “The Five Love Languages,” guiding married people in understanding the best ways they can receive and express love. The following article invites you to reflect on the five love languages but in the context of a church community, seeking to grow in the agape love of God and one another and serve the community. Consider reading this article and then reflect together: <https://ianjonesblog.wordpress.com/2012/07/25/the-five-love-languages-of-church-6/>

- Are you familiar with the five love languages? Do you know what your top love languages are?
- How could your understanding of your love language impact how you participate in our church community?
- Did you agree with this article’s evaluation of the love languages for a community? Where did it resonate with you? Where did it lack?
- How could this tool be an opportunity for us as a church community to grow in love of God and one another based on our unique gifts as members of one body (which Paul talks about in 1 Corinthians 12, right before he talks about love expressing itself in community in 1 Corinthians 13)?