1, 2, 3 JOHN
THIS IS THE LIFE
SMALL GROUP STUDY #9
LIVE OUT GOD'S LOVE
1John 4:7-21

Ice Breaker: If you were to draw a picture of love, what would it look like?

God's love is very different from the love we humans come by naturally. In this study we'll look at John's description of God's kind of love.

READ: 1John 4:7-21

> *7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for **love comes from God**. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because **God is love**. 9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. **10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another**. 12 No one has ever seen God; but **if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.**
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> **13 We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.** 14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. **15 If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. 16 And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.**
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> **God is love**. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. 17 In this way, love is made complete among us so that **we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him**. **18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment.** The one who fears is not made perfect in love.
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> 19 **We love because he first loved us.** 20 If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. 21 And he has given us this command: **Whoever loves God must also love his brother.**

Q: According to vs. 7, why is loving one another such an essential evidence of whether or not you know God?
- Real love can only from God… there is no other place to get it.

Q: According to vs. 10, how did God demonstrate His love for us?
- How would you explain this verse to someone who is unfamiliar with Christianity?
  - Our love for God didn't start with us… it started with Him loving us.

        ○ God is absolutely just… He has to punish sin. But God loved us so much that He let Jesus take our punishment for us.

Q: Based on the example we have in verse10, how should we respond to someone who doesn't love us back, has hurt us or maybe even hates us?
- Romans 5:8 says, "…while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." God loved us when were least loveable.
- Romans 5:10 says God loved us and saved while were still His **enemies**.
- If we are to love with God's love, we will have to love our enemies. (Matt. 5:44)

Q: According to vs. 11, how should God's love for us change how we love our brothers and sisters?
- We should be the ones to initiate love, not wait to respond to love.

Q: In vs. 12, why does John contrast us loving one another with no one ever having seen God?
- Our relationships in Christ are a window through which the world gets to see God.

Q: What does it mean to "know and rely on the love God has for us"? (vs. 16)
- We can have confidence before God and trust the process… He is making us into the image of His Son. (Ro. 8:29)
- You can rely on Him to make you able to love as He does.

Q: According to vs. 18, what effect should this confidence have on us?

Q: According to vs. 19, what is the natural response to understanding God's love for us?

APPLICATION ASSIGNMENT: *Answer the following questions as best you can, then get with your discipler/discipleship group and discuss your answers.*

1. If loving your brothers and sisters is the evidence that you know God, could you be convicted by a jury of your peers?
2. Which do you tend to do more often; initiate love or respond to love?
3. Which do you experience more: confidence or fear?