

6. God is Love

1 John 4:7 – 5:5

Why are we so infatuated with love? It dominates our songs, poems, movies and novels. We value it above every virtue. We long to find it and fight to keep it. Everyone has an opinion about it, but no one seems to have enough of it. How can we explain our insatiable appetite for love?

Love is central to the apostle John's first letter. He helps us to understand its source, its nature and significance in our lives as Christians. Most importantly, John enables us to see what the often quoted statement, "God *is* love" really means.

Why do you think love dominates our music, movies, magazines and so many aspects of our lives?

Read I John 4:7-5:5.

1. I Jn 4:7 and following describes the Christian as one who has been "born of God." What does this description imply about what it truly means to be a Christian?
2. Does this mean that everyone who loves is "God's child", regardless of his or her beliefs? Why / why not?

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3. What do you think John really means when he says, “God is love” in verse 8 and again in verse 16?

4. What do you learn about the nature and depth of God’s love from this passage?

5. Verse 11 says, “Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” In what small and large ways can we sacrificially love each other?

6. In verses 13–18, what tests does John give us for determining whether “we live in him and he in us”?

7. It certainly seems possible that we could love God and yet hate one of our brothers or sisters. According to John, why is this impossible (vv 19–21)?

8. [optional] Many people claim to have some kind of special relationship with God. What does 1 John 5:1–5 tell us about those people who really have been born as “children of God”?

9. [optional] If some of these things in 5:1–5 are not true of a person, does this mean that they are not a Christian? Why / why not?

10. How has this passage deepened your understanding of
 - (i) God,
 - (ii) the children of God, and
 - (iii) love itself?