



# Morningside Church

## Sermon Discussion Guide

**Title:** Love

**Date:** December 15, 2024

**Scripture Text:** 1 John 4:7-14

**Notes:**

We continue our focus on the observance of Advent. Advent's areas of focus help us keep our attention on Jesus during this time of year we celebrate His birth. So far, we've looked at *hope* and *peace*. This week our focus is *love*. Much has been written and sung on the topic of love. It is a key topic in our culture. The problem is do people understand the true meaning of love. Many consider it a warm feeling, or what some have called "twitterpated". The Bible teaches that God is love, and that Christians demonstrate their commitment to Him by loving one another. Today's passage presents three facts about what love really is.

**I. The Origination of Love (1 John 4:7-8)**

The Apostle John identifies his readers as those who are loved ("beloved"). And those who are loved [by God], love one another. The love mentioned here is a love whose source is God and identifies the Christian with God. For the lost, true love is not experienced as they don't know God. But, for the Christian, they should always be loving. The only way to know God is through His love.

- How would you distinguish the cultural definition of love compared to God's definition?
- The Greek word translated for love is *agapē*. What does *agapē* mean?
  - *Agapē* is a term that originates from Ancient Greek and is used to describe the highest form of love. It refers to a pure, selfless, sacrificial love that intentionally desires another's highest good.
  - Who is someone you know that has shown a love like that?
- What is the connection between someone's relationship with God and their demonstration of love?
- How can you be a better lover based on God's definition?

**II. The Demonstration of Love (1 John 4:9-10)**

God demonstrated His love for us by sending Jesus to pay the penalty for our sin. He sacrificed Himself for our salvation. "The coming of Christ is, therefore, a concrete, historical revelation of God's love, for love (*agapē*) is self-sacrifice, the seeking of another's positive good at one's own cost, and a greater self-giving than God's gift of his Son there has never been, nor could be." (Stott). Our love for God is born out of His love for us as seen through the redemptive work of His son, Jesus Christ.



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### **Notes:**

- Explain how God showed His love for us.
- How can our showing love for God help others see Jesus in us?
- How do we show love for God?
- How does God's love, through Him sending His Son for our salvation, motivate you to love one another?
- Based on [vss. 9-10](#), how would you define love?

### **III. The Exhortation to Love (1 John 4:11-14)**

Those loved by God [Beloved], since God loves us, the least we can do is love one another ([vs. 11](#) paraphrased). No one has seen God, but they can experience God by experiencing the love a Christian offers. It is by God's love that we can love those who love us (the body of Christ, the church), but also those who hate us. If we love only those who love us, how is that any different from how the world loves ([Matt. 5:43-48](#))? The value of demonstrating God's love to others is demonstrating that God loves everyone, friend and enemies.

- Describe what it looks like for Christians to love each other?
- How is that unique compared to our culture?
- How is loving a fellow believer different than loving a lost person?
- Why is it important to love both?
- Love is an action, not a feeling.
  - What does 'love in action' look like?
  - Why is it wrong to act based on feeling love rather than it being an act of obedience?
  - The feelings may come, but not having loving feelings for another is no excuse not to love.
- Who is a fellow believer you need to show love to today?
- Who is a non-believer you can show the love of Christ to today?

The love we show to one another ought to be like the love which God has shown to us. I mean by that it should be sincere and pure, without ulterior motives or other hidden thoughts of the kind we normally associate with robbers and other evildoers.

Oecumenius