Re-Connect

Love

1 John 4:7-21

Throughout the bible, we are commanded to love one another. As far back as the law of Moses, God is always commanding his people to, “love your neighbour as yourself.” (Leviticus 19:18)

* Why do you think God wants us to love one another?
* Why is it so difficult to do?

***Read 1 John 4:7-12***

Some have said that John’s letter to his church is a ‘love-letter’. Over and over again, John teaches his readers about love. And here in these verses, the letter reaches its climax. The word love appears over and over again.[[1]](#footnote-1)

* What strikes you about John’s use of the word love in these verses?
* How do all the different loves connect (God’s love for us, our love for God, our love for one another)?

Twice John gives the same instruction to his readers:

7: “let us love one another”
11: “we…ought to love one another”

* Do you think Christians are good at loving one another? Why/why not?
* Do you have any stories of Christians loving one another particularly well? (Think especially of your own experiences of being loved by a brother or sister)

Have another look at verse 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.”

* How have your experiences of Christian love revealed God to you?

John continues his exploration of God’s love in the following verses:

***Read 1 John 4:13-21***

* What do these verses add to the picture of love?
* What is the role of the Holy Spirit in this? (vs 12, 13, 15 & 16)
* How does fear affect our ability to know God’s love and love one other (vs 18)?

***Final thoughts:***

Spend some time brainstorming ways that you can love people this week:

* As individuals (in your family, with friends, at church, in your workplace, etc.)
* Together as a group (how could you team up to love people this week?)

If you would like to, you could make a commitment to love do one or more of these things this week.

1. The Greek word for love in this passage is *agape*, which is selfless, generous, devoted love. Interestingly, the NIV translators have hidden a couple of instances by translating the word *agapetos* as ‘dear friends’ when it literally means ‘loved ones’ (verses 7 & 11) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)