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Leader Guide

He Loves

May 1, 2022

Main Passage: 1 John 4:19

Theological Theme

The love of God is His benevolence, kindness, faithfulness, goodness, and grace directed toward His people. Those who have been blessed by the lovingkindness of God will in turn be enabled and moved to love God as well as fellow man (2 Corinthians 5:14; 1 John 4:19).

Introduction

- ❓ When was a time someone who was close to you recognized something was bothering you, even though you didn't say a word?
- ❓ What are some ways we recognize when something is amiss or uncharacteristic about a person close to us?

We are unable to love unless God first loves us (1 John 4:19). God's love is the motive and moral cause of our love. Christians were unable to love God when they walked in darkness. In fact, their rebellion against God and unwillingness to surrender to His will suggested that they hated Him. But God, in His great kindness, loved them while they were both unloving and unlovely. He loved them at an unfathomable cost, drawing out their love at the expense of the blood of Christ.

1. Our Duty (1 John 4:19a)

It's important to consider what John meant here when he said, "we love." He was writing to people who had placed their faith in Christ and repented of their sin. He wrote to Christians, and we ought to be careful not to apply these principles to all people. These words are directly only toward those who in Christ can now love with a divine love.

2. The Prove (1 John 4:19b)

Bakers will allow their dough to proof before putting it into the oven. Proving is the process of allowing the dough to rest and rise. During this time, the yeast ferments and produces gases, thereby leavening the dough. If the dough isn't proofed, the bake won't be right. The leavening of God's grace toward us in Christ Jesus is what makes it possible for us to do what we ought to do—loving God with all of our hearts and loving our neighbor as ourselves.

3. Divine Action (1 John 4:19c)

The main idea of this verse is that a person's devotion and obedience to God is preceded by God's kindness to them. This is an important principle because Christians are prone to think that they must bring the love of God down upon themselves by first proving their devotion and love for Him. Although this is a common conception, it is the opposite of the biblical conception of the love of God.

Questions to Guide Your Group's Discussion

- ❓ What does this passage say?
- ❓ What did this passage mean to its original audience?
- ❓ What does this passage tell us about God?
- ❓ What does this passage tell us about man?
- ❓ What does this passage demand of me?
- ❓ How does this passage change the way I relate to people? (*How can you use this information this week at work or with friends and neighbors?*)
- ❓ How does this passage prompt me to pray to God?

*Adapted from Seven Arrows by Matt Rogers pastor of The Church at Cherrydale, Greenville, SC