

Community Group Study - Winter/Spring 2018

1 John 3:11-18

Theme: Gospel Partners Love One Another

Introduction to Winter/Spring Study: Gospel Partnership

This semester we're doing a study on "Gospel Partnership" that ties in with our preaching series on Philippians. Paul thanks the church in Philippians for their "partnership in the gospel" (1:5). Today, our relationships in the church are still built on this "gospel partnership." We'll explore the foundation of that partnership in the first two studies, the goal of the partnership for two studies, and then some practical help for relating to one another as gospel partners.

Study Overview

When we become "gospel partners" we become united in Christ, but we must live out that unity practically. We're not simply "business partners" but we're family and should have a gospel affection for one another. One of the most important ways we live out our unity is simply by loving one another. This isn't a cliché but instead should be a thoughtful and profound pursuit for every Christian.

Text : 1 John 3:11–18

[11] For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. [12] We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. [13] Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. [14] We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. [15] Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

[16] By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. [17] But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? [18] Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. (ESV)

Questions

1. What does it mean in verse 11 that John has been telling them to love one another "from the beginning." Why do you think John talked so often about this?
2. In verses 12-15 John warns about the danger of hating one another. Why does he use such an extreme example?
3. In verse 14 John says that loving one another provides evidence of something. What does it provide evidence for? What if we don't love one another?
4. In verse 16 John points us to the example of Jesus. How does Jesus provide the "definition" for love? And how does Jesus' example affect us?

5. In verse 17 John says that if we don't love another practically it calls something into question. What does it call into question and why?
6. What does it mean to love in "deed and truth" as opposed to "word and talk"?
7. How would summarize this section if someone asked you, "Why do I have to love other Christians?"

Application

- Perhaps we don't "hate" one another to the point of murder, but what are some ways we can lack love for one another? What some common challenges and temptations?
- How could John's encouragement help us next time we're tempted to not love one another?
- We may think we're loving one another but perhaps not according to John's definition in verse 16. What would it look like to "lay down our lives" for one another?
- What are some ways we can love one another in our group and church in "deed and truth"? What could that look like?

Prayer

- Spend time thanking Christ for his love for us
- Offer to pray for anyone who wants prayer for this area and wants to love others more like Christ
- Pray for any needs in the group this week and seek to love them in "deed and truth"