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LIFEgroup Discussion Questions

November 26, 2017

The Father Heart of God: Keep it Simple

Text: 1 John 3.11-24

1. How are you going to celebrate Advent this season (remind them of Advent devotional readings on ridgeonline.org)? How does first John have the idea of Jesus' comings throughout it (First coming: 1 John 3.5, 8; 4.2-3; Second Coming: 1 John 2.28)?
2. John tells us to love one another and then provides an example of how not to love one another. What are some things we can learn from Cain's example about how not to treat one another (jealousy, hate, murder – not just physical, etc.)?
3. Why do you think John tells us not to be surprised when the world hates us? How does this change the way you interact with nonbelievers, current events, politics, etc.?
4. Are you surprised by verses 14 and 15, in which John says that our love for other Christians is one barometer of our faith in Christ? Why or why not? What is one important lesson about love, hatred, and faith we learn from 1 John 3:15? How can we destroy others besides physically murdering them?
5. What do we learn about love from Jesus' example? How does his example differ from contemporary notions of love? (See 1 John 3:18.)
6. John tells us that if we love "in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18), our hearts are reassured before God (3.19-21). How does knowing God's love for you strengthen your faith? Where does the ultimate source of our reassurance come from? How does this influence your faith in God and life? How does the presence and practice of sin in our life inhibit our relationship with God? Is there anything in your life that is creating tension between you and God? What do we learn from this passage about the correlation between our life and our prayers (3.22)? (See also 1 John 5:14–15.)
7. John gives us a good summation to make to simplify our walk with Jesus in 1 John 3.23 – believe in the name of Jesus and love others. How might this truth impact you today?

Something to take away and do: John provides one very practical way to love one another: meet the material needs of other believers (1 John 3:17–18). This week, as a group, prayerfully consider identifying an individual or family whose material needs you can meet. This is just one example. Feel free to explore other opportunities this Advent season to love others the way Jesus has loved you.

Pray:

1. Pray for the group and their loved ones to love others well, just as Christ loved us.
2. Pray that the group would experience grace and the Holy Spirit's empowerment to respond in love when the world expresses hatred.
3. Pray for the group to express sacrificial love toward those with material need.