

3. Read 1 John 3:16-19. According to this passage, what are the markers of true love? What is the attitude behind these markers – pretty and polished? Or painful and messy?

“Understanding love in this way provides further insight into how hate, which John defines as the failure to provide for the life-sustaining needs of another, amounts to murder (3:15). It also makes good sense of the exhortation to lay down one’s life as not something to be achieved by those heroic few who rush into burning buildings to save others, but as something that everyone can do. Those who work for a living spend their time (i.e., their lives) earning a livelihood. Sharing those earned resources with the vulnerable poor means that one is laying down one’s life for the benefit of others”

- Karen H. Jobes, *1, 2, & 3 John*, ZECNT, (Zondervan, 2014), p.159.

4. 1 John 3:22-24 speaks of God’s *commands*. In which section of 1 John did we previously hear of these commands? From this previous passage and on 3:23, what insight do we receive concerning God’s commands?

Further Questions for Discussion

(Optional question for discussion if time permits. Do allocate adequate time for prayer and fellowship.)

5. *If you have time ...*

Read 1 John 3:19-21, using several different Bible versions. How similar or different are they?

“When we realize the utter and absolute demand of love, we may well find that our hearts do condemn us. We simply haven’t lived like that. But here is the mercy of God (v. 20): when that happens, ‘God is greater than our hearts. He knows everything.’ We can relax. He’s in control, and we wouldn’t even be experiencing this inner condemnation unless there was the work of God’s Spirit (v. 24), stirring us up to glimpse the life of love, even if that glimpse shows us how far we have fallen short.”

- Tom Wright, *The Letters of John: 9 Studies for Individuals and Groups*, (InterVarsity Press, 2012), p.29.

Suggestions for Prayer

6. Would you consider praying for:

- a. Those in your group, or others you may know of, who are struggling with unresolved anger or hatred. Pray that God will begin to bring about resolution and release. If the matter is a long-standing one, healing and closure may take time – pray for continued openness and for God to bring wise and well-trained individuals who can provide support on this journey of resolution.
- b. Opportunities to lay down the fruits of our livelihoods to support brothers and sisters in need. Pray also for God to give us the grace and ability to do so.