

LOVE ONE ANOTHER: GREATER HEART

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1 John 3:11-20

11 For this is the message you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. **12** We must not be like Cain who was from 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 astonished, brothers and sisters, that the world hates you. **14** We know that we have passed from death to life because we love one another. Whoever does not love abides in death. **15** All who hate a brother or sister are murderers, and you know that murderers do not have eternal life abiding in them. **16** We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. **17** How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?

18 Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. **19** And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him **20** whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

REFLECT & DISCUSS

Context

The sermon series gets its name from 1 John 3:11, which reflects the “new commandment” Jesus gave his disciples in the upper room in John’s Gospel: love one another. 1 John will return to this theme again in chapter 4. The message of love for one another is by no means simple to embody, straightforward to understand, or easy to execute. Indeed, 1 John serves as a sermon to the early church, elaborating this basic message of Jesus. In this portion of the letter, we see the message of love linked to a famous story from Genesis 4: Cain and Abel, the first two sons of Adam and Eve.

Big Ideas

1. Everyone *professes* love, fewer *practice* it.
2. There are many things standing in the way of love, three of the *sneakiest* are:
 - a. Sleep: we need more/better
 - b. Shame: find it and name it
 - c. Finitude: you can't love everybody, but you can love anybody
3. Jesus loved from a well-rested, shame-freed, infinitely-tuned heart--God's very own.

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Reflect

1. Read the scripture passage carefully and slowly. What word or image stands out to you? Why?
2. What happened when you or someone you knew suffered from being “hangry” (hunger-induced irritability)? Do you think there is a similar phenomenon with too little quality sleep? How might the sleep expectations of our society and our personal sleep habits make loving each other more difficult? How might you change that?
3. Is shame something you are aware of in your own life? How have you struggled with shame and learned to let God’s love redefine you?
4. It’s hard to love anyone well if we are running around trying to love everyone a little. Real love takes time, attention, energy, and commitment. How might God focus your love where it is needed most to make a holy impact?

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