

- 1 **1 John 4:16** says that “we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us.” Read Romans 8:33-38 and share 3 thoughts about the love that God has for His children.

♥ *How do you know that God loves you from your own experience?*

⚙️ *When does God love you most? Regardless of whether or not you know the right answer to that question, what are some of the ways that you misunderstand God's love? Discuss the possible answers that some might give and share what your inclination is.*

- 2 **1 John 2:17, 4:12, and 4:17-19** mention that God's love is “perfected.” Think about how we grasp the idea and meaning of that. What does the idea of “perfected” mean?

🗨️ *How does this happen? Discuss the idea of loving others as being the higher goal of the believer's life in contrast to being focused introspectively on one's own inner self.*

- 3 **Think about loving others from a theological perspective.** Talk about the meaning of the following theological concepts and how they are connected to loving others:

✍️ *Incarnation of Christ*

Propitiation


Depravity of man


- 4 **According to 1 John 3:11-15, why is it important for Christians to love one another?**

🗨️ *Think about those that are difficult for you to love. What makes it most difficult for you to love them?*


♥ *According to this week's text and 1 John 3:11-15, how can we grow to love those we most struggle with?*


5 Is it possible for one to call themselves a child of God while perpetually living with an unkind, malicious attitude towards others? Read the following truth statements and discuss why they are true and what stands out in each one.

 *A true believer shows kindness towards those whom they may naturally dislike. A true believer does not have a spirit that takes pleasure in hearing negative reports against God's people. A true believer does not find ultimate joy in slander, backbiting, criticism, and gossip. If wrong feelings towards other Christians arise in a true believer's heart, there should also be a feeling of sorrow over those attitudes.*


 *Which of the above statements are most convicting to you in your relationships? How so? Take time to pray for each other.*


6 D.Martyn-Lloyd Jones suggests several self-love manifestations. Read through the list below. Which ones do you struggle with most? How have the manifestations that you noted evidenced themselves in your life recently?

 *Self-centeredness – looking at myself, watching myself, examining myself, always regarding myself. Always looking out for myself. Thinking people are watching me or thinking about me.*

 *Self-indulgence – asserting myself; when I desire things, I must have them. I am very indulgent with myself; I prohibit things in other persons, but it does not matter if I do the same things.*


 *Self-glorifying – constantly looking for and expecting the recognition of others; boasting in oneself.*

 *Self-pity – wondering why people treat me this way. I have done no harm; I am not wrong at all; why should people be so difficult? I am having a hard time and it isn't really fair.*

 *Self-defense – always on the defensive, waiting for people to be unpleasant, almost making them unpleasant. How touchy I am, how easily wounded and offended. How ready I am to defend myself, to condemn others of the same things.*

 *Self-sufficiency – depending on oneself; exhibited by a lack of prayer. Trusting my own goodness and personal lifestyle to find acceptance before God.*

7 A fearful person will only think about themselves. What is your typical fear response? (Paralyzed, Withdrawal, Control, Frantic, Attack or Distract)

 *Share a circumstance where you allowed fear to control your thoughts, actions or emotions. How could the truths you've meditated on this week helped you to respond in confidence rather than fear?*

8 What are some practical things a Christian can do to better understand God's love for them and better love others around them? How can a proper understanding of a Christian's position in Christ aid this exercise?

PRAYER REQUESTS
