



# BETHANY CONNECTIONS

THEME OF THE DAY

## CONNECTED BY LOVE

text

John 15:9-17;  
supplemental reading, 1 John 4:7-12, 18-21

WEEKEND OF

*May 4-5, 2024*



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## PRAYER

Dear Lord, through your Word you declare yourself to be, 'love.' You showed your love in the gift of your Son. You ask us to love you and others as we have been loved. Send your Holy Spirit to move our hearts to do just that, lifted up by the undeserved love you've shown us in Christ Jesus. In his name we pray this, Amen.

## WARM UP

Today it's all about love. How many songs can you name, whatever era or genre, that include the word 'love' in the title? Keep going around the room until no one can come up with a new one...

Another conversation starter... What would you call, "the loves of your life?"

## DIG IN

Read 1 John 4:7-12, 19-21

Verse 7 – *“Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.”*

Agree/Disagree: An unbeliever can't love.

Verse 8 – *“Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.”*

Agree/Disagree: As people who know God we will always love.

Verse 10 – *“This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.”*

What does the word 'atoning' mean to you?

Consider the word itself... atone, or 'at-one.' What "at one" relationship did Jesus' sacrifice accomplish?

Why do we typically love things or people?

What does this verse say about our love for God... how is it different than his love for us?

Verse 12 says no one has ever seen God... why was that a strange thing for John to write? What do you think he meant?

Consider verses 8 & 19 together...

Why does God love?

Why do we love God?

Finish the statement, perhaps in different ways... "We only love God because \_\_\_\_\_" Comment on some different possibilities for that...

Why is it perfectly fair for God to ask us to love others?

Name some ways we can love 'a brother or a sister', remembering to love can be as simple as putting their needs before our own.

Read John 15:9-17

One big thing we haven't talked about yet - all the ways we use the word 'love.' Name some different ways we do...

In Greek there are different words for love, depending on the kind of love they mean.

ἔρως – Eros: \_\_\_\_\_

φιλία – Philia: \_\_\_\_\_

στοργή – Storge: \_\_\_\_\_

ἀγάπη- Agape: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ is the one used throughout our readings today.

How did Jesus say he remained in his Father's love?

How do we do the same with Jesus' love (what command do we follow)?

Verse 11 “... so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”  
Also consider Hebrews 12:2 ... what would you say was Jesus’ joy?

How does it find fulfillment or completion in us?

Evaluate: You haven’t loved enough if you don’t lay down your life for another.

How did the disciples “*know the master’s business*” now?

*Jesus said his disciples were no longer servants (literally slaves), but that they were now his friends.* - How does that change the way they (and we) will follow his command?

We might be tempted to think this is sort of a “*you scratch my back, I’ll scratch yours*” arrangement with Jesus... he loves us, so we should love others now. How does verse 16 counteract that?

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*Love can mean a lot of things. When it comes to God, praise his name that it also means the unconditional, self-sacrificing love he has shown us!*

Have a question about small groups?  
Contact your leader or Pastor Dan ([djohnston@bethanyappleton.org](mailto:djohnston@bethanyappleton.org))  
or Pastor Krenke ([mdkrenke@bethanyappleton.org](mailto:mdkrenke@bethanyappleton.org))