

## Book Recommendations

*Renovation of the Heart* by Dallas Willard

*Making Sense of God* by Tim Keller



## Week 1

Read aloud 1 John 2:15. Why is love of the world and love of God the Father incompatible?

Of power, pleasure and possessions, which one are you most tempted to love or look to for your happiness? Why do you answer as you do?

St. Augustine said that we are fundamentally shaped by what we love. Where have you seen this play out in your life?

Read aloud 1 John 2:17. How can we remember that this world is passing away and not to love it more than God?

What song, verse movie or image helps you best appreciate the love Jesus showed you on the cross? What about it moves you?

## Scriptures

That which was from the beginning which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands concerning the words of life – that life was made manifest, and we saw it, and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and made manifest to us.

1 John 1:1-2

Then he said, “That which we have seen and heard we proclaim to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And we are writing this that our joy may be complete.

1 John 1:3-4

We are going to skip ahead to 1 John 2:15 to one of those major themes. . He writes, “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him.” 1 John 2:15

For all that is in this world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and pride of life is not of the Father but of this world. 1 John 2:16

And the world passes away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. 1 John 2:17

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## Week 2

When introducing yourself, how do you usually identify yourself?

What does it mean to you to say that our deepest identity is as a beloved son/daughter of God?

God is a loving Father who knows us intimately, how can this knowledge positively impact our prayer?

When have you felt love from a person because they have accepted you when others didn't? Why is acceptance such an important expression of love?

When has someone shown love for you by challenging you to grow and change? Why is it an important expression of love?

What verse, song or image helps you to remember that God is a loving Father?

## Scriptures

See what love the Father has given us that we are called children of God; and so we are. 1 John 3:1a

The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 1 John 3:1b

Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 1 John 3:2

And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure. 1 John 3:3

By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious; anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother. 1 John 3:10

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## Week 3

Tell about a time when you allowed hatred into your heart, whether for a moment or for a season. How did it affect you and your relationship with God? How does John say it affects your relationship with God?

What is the difference between love as a feeling and the definition of biblical love? Who in your life is easy to love? Who is difficult to love?

What does John tell us about harboring hatred for others and love for God at the same time? What does John say is the reason we should love all of our brothers and sisters?

What are some of the phrases about love that John repeats over and over again?

Why do you think he does that? (Read 1 John 4:7-11 for help)

What is the source of Christian love for a brother or sister? How can we tap into that source?

## Scriptures

*Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister is still in the darkness. Anyone who loves their brother and sister lives in the light, and there is nothing in them to make them stumble. 1 John 2:9-10*

*Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister. 1 John 4:20-21*

*Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 1 John 4:7-11*

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## Week 4

How did Jesus demonstrate true love?

What does it mean to you to lay down our lives for one another?

How did John want his readers to love? How did he not want them to love?

Consider a few verbal ways you have shown love to others recently. What actions can you take to reinforce those loving words?

When you are “in need”, how can others love you?

Can you share a time you felt the presence of God when someone loved you well?

## Scriptures

The way we came to know love was that he laid down his life for us; so we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. 1 John 3:16

If someone who has worldly means sees a brother in need and refuses him compassion, how can the love of God remain in him? 1 John 3:17

Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth. 1 John 3:18

Now this is how we shall know that we “belong to the truth and reassure our hearts before him. 1 John 3:19

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## Week 5

People are God's Plan A to meet our needs and to experience his love. What are your thoughts on that statement?

When was a time you experienced love and support from being part of a community?

1 John 4:18 says that perfect love casts our fear. What fears do you have at the moment? How can perfect love cast out those fears in your life?

What does it mean to you to say that ministry is a way to express love for others? How does this impact your view of volunteer ministry?

What is something this group can do to help you to be an instrument of God's love right now?

## Scriptures

Beloved, if God loved us, we ought to love one another. 1 John 4:11

No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us his Spirit. 1 John 4:12-13

And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. 1 John 4:14-15

So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. 1 John 4:16

Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so we are in this world. 1 John 4:17

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfect love. 1 John 4:18

Those who say I love God and hate their brothers are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also. 1 John 4:20-21

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## Week 6

Why can it be easier to say we love God than to love the people around us?

When is a time someone did a favor or helped someone you loved and you felt like they did it for you.

How can we keep in mind that other people are God's sons and daughters and that they matter to him?

What is your attitude towards God's commandments? Do they tend to feel burdensome?

How does faith in Jesus help us to love others?

What has been your main take away or lesson from this series?

## Scriptures

Those who say I love God and hate their brothers are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also. 1 John 4:20-21

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child. 1 John 5:1

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. 1 John 5:2

For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, for whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith. 1 John 5:3-4

Who is it that conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? 1 John 5:5