

STUDY NOTES

ADVENT // A SERIES AT NEW CITY CHURCH

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The following content is based on the message “God is Love” spoken on 12/11/16 by Brian Kruckenberg at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis of the message but rather a brief look at the main ideas. To use this Study Guide effectively you must listen to the message found at <http://www.newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

Leaders using these Study Notes for group study and reflection should read the Biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance and not relying solely on this material for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective communities.

PRAYER

Pray and ask God to lead the discussion as everyone gets to share.

THE SCRIPTURE: 1 JOHN 4:7-21

LOVE ONE ANOTHER

John’s exhortation here is for Christians to love Christians. Look around the room. You should love these people—your brothers and sisters. However, not only our brothers and sisters, but Jesus tells us in other places that we are to love our enemies as well. So basically, we are to live a life of love and lots seems to hanging on this because John says, “love is from God and that whoever loves has been born of God and knows God!”

Our ability to love, in a true way, comes from the love of Jesus.

- *Who are the people you generally think about when you hear that Christians need to love people?*
- *It is true that Christians are commanded to love their enemies, but why do you think John so often commands Christians to love other Christians?*
- *What are your first thoughts about John saying that “the one who does not love does not know God”?*

GOD IS LOVE

This is not an abstract quality of “love,” but a sovereign, living God who is the source of all love, and who (as love himself) loves. God can’t help but love because that is who He is and what He does. That is important to remind ourselves of this because many

people don’t feel like they could be loved by God. The creator of heaven and earth LOVES YOU and did something about it. The love of God is so personal that He became ONE OF US. The Word became flesh and lived with us. Our act was to sin and reject the love of God, but God’s act was to love us and send His Son on a mission to get us back.

If God sending His son is the ultimate act of love than love at its truest is costly and sacrificial.

- *Why do you think we think of love in lighthearted, abstract terms rather than as costly and sacrificial?*

LOVE IS AND LOVE DOES

Our love cannot be static or complacent if it is to be true love. Even though we were sinners, God showed his love for us by sending His only Son to die for us. Therefore we have no right to withhold love from each other. And, when we love others, people SEE GOD! Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-8.

No man has seen God in his unveiled essence, glory, and majesty. He can be seen, however, in the lives of those who demonstrate his love to others.

- *Science has proven that forgiveness improves mental and physical health. How have you experienced that firsthand?*
- *What are some ideas that can help us practice 1 Corinthians 13 with people who we disagree with?*
- *Jesus initiated love toward us, which means we are going to have initiate love toward others. What are some ways that you can initiate love this week?*
- *What are some practical ways that we as a group show love for each other? And then, for people outside of our group?*
- *As a practice of love, pray **for** each other to initiate love this week.*