

Life Group Discussion Questions
"Love is... Godly"

1 John 4:7-12

BIG IDEA: *The better "Golden Rule" – Love others the way you have been loved by Jesus!*

Gathering Together (Icebreaker)

Starting with the youngest person in the group to the oldest, share a story about a time when you broke the OLD Golden Rule of *treating others the way you want to be treated*. (All of us are guilty of doing this!) Then, consider how things would have been different had you implemented the better golden rule of *loving others the way you have been loved by Jesus*. How would that have changed the outcome?

Growing Together (Truth/Equipping)

Read this week's passage of **1 John 4:7-12** together.

Awesome. Now read **1 John 2:9-10, 1 John 3:10-11 & 14-19 & 23, 1 John 4:20-21** together.

Ok, that was a lot, but what do these verses have in common? What point to you think John is trying to get across to the local body of believers and to us? Why does John repeat himself over and over and over?

1 John 4:8 tells us that "*God is love.*" What does this mean? What does this *not* mean? Is this truth ever hard to believe? If so, when and why?

How do we reconcile the truth that "God is love" with things like God's anger, judgment, harshness, justice, wrath, and His vengeance, or with the infamous question, "how could a loving God allow so much suffering?" What are your thoughts?? Are these things incompatible with love? If not, how not?

Twice **1 John 4:9-10** tells us that God the Father sent God the Son into the world. During this advent season, where we anticipate the celebration of Jesus being born as a baby on earth, why is it important to remember that Easter (the atonement / death of Jesus) is far more significant than Christmas (the incarnation / birth of Jesus)? Draw your answer from the text.

What is *the* defining characteristic of God's love in **vs. 9-10**? It's important to know this as **v. 11** tells us that this is how we "ought" love one another (hint: see **1 John 3:16** again). How is this love different from the world's definition of love as portrayed in books, movies, music, etc?

Getting Real Together (Accessibility)

Why is it so hard to love people the way that we have been loved? Can you share personally?

Read **1 Corinthians 13:4-8a**. Although you've heard it read at most weddings, we need to understand that this is not a passage about marital love but about how members of a local church should love one another. Does this describe the love you observe between believers that you know? How so or why not?

Which one of these aspects of true love comes easiest to you? Which is the hardest to implement?

What are some actual and practical ways that you could demonstrate this type of love at Oakwood? In your Life Group? In your family?

Praying Together (Supplication)

Have someone read this passage as a prayer for the Oakwood community as a whole:

Dear Heavenly Father,

By the power of your Holy Spirit, please produce this passage as a reality in us. - ⁷Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. – In Jesus name we pray, for Your glory and for our good – and all God's people said – Amen!