

## CORE COMPETENCIES

### Core Beliefs

- Trinity
- Salvation by Grace
- Authority of Bible
- Personal God
- Identity in Christ
- Church
- Humanity
- Compassion
- Eternity
- Stewardship

### Core Practices

- Worship
- Prayer
- Bible Study
- Single-Mindedness
- Biblical Community
- Spiritual Gifts
- Giving Away My Time
- Giving Away My Money
- Giving Away My Faith
- Giving Away My Life

### Core Virtues

- Love

**"I show sacrificial and unconditional love for others."**

- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness/Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Self-Control
- Hope
- Humility

One of the things I love about the apostle John is that he paints pictures in bold colors—he's rarely subtle. He has been indelibly clear when describing the nature of our God—completely light, without a hint of darkness. And he's not minced any words when he's called on us to demonstrate our own "followership" of Jesus—to walk in the light and not be characterized by sin. Here in this section, John paints again in bold relief in contrasting the true nature of love and its absence. While we're often tempted to "water down" the concept of love to fit our own choices, John does not let us off the hook so easily. Let's look intently at what God has said the true nature of love is and allow God's Word to be a mirror to our lives once again. Once again a huge thank you to Sandy G. who has provided us with a wonderful guide and tool to study Scripture.

Still Growing,

**Richard Gotthardt, Pastor of Spiritual Formation**

### If you are new to using the Engage:

There is a short guide that will give you the "Who, Why, What, and How" of using the *Engage* study Guide. You may access it through the Grace Community Church website at ([www.gracecommunityaz.org](http://www.gracecommunityaz.org)). (Access the Spiritual Formation Ministry page and click "Resources" on the left panel.)

### Review from last week's study of 1 John 3:1-10

Last week we saw that although God's love has been lavished upon us as His children, we cannot expect the world to recognize the family resemblance because it does not recognize our Father. We observed that Jesus came to take away sins and to destroy the works of the devil; consequently, our lives should be ones of moral consecration and dedication as we look forward to His coming again. We saw once again that our abiding in Him and His seed abiding in us will have outward manifestations. One trait that makes the children of God evident and plainly recognized is whether our lives are characterized by habitually wandering from or the violation of God's law; or habitually conforming and submitting to the claim of God upon our life in integrity, virtue, purity, right thinking, feeling and acting. God warns us not to be deceived in this matter!

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### Memory Verse for this week:

*"Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth."*

**1 John 3:18**

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### Day 1 (1 John 3)

Begin your time in God's Word, thanking Him for giving you His word and choosing to reveal Himself to you through it. Ask that His Holy Spirit would guide you as you read and study and to clearly reveal to your mind, heart and will those specific areas that He would want to apply to your life so you could more closely resemble your Heavenly Father.

Last week we began our study of the third chapter of 1 John. This week our time will be spent in the last part of that chapter. **If you did use the *Engage* study guide last week, you can skip to the \*\*!**

If you did not use the *Engage* last week, here is what you need to do in order to be up to speed for this week! Begin by reading the entire chapter at least two times, marking one of the following each time: *God* and *Jesus*.

In this chapter it can be difficult to determine whether a pronoun refers to God the Father or God the Son. Don't become frustrated or discouraged! Do the best you can and remember that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are after all one God!

Because one of the goals of inductive Bible study is to learn everything you can about God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, use your markings to help you add to your list anything that answers a who, what, when, where, why, or how question about God or Jesus.

Did you notice any clear references to the Holy Spirit? If so, mark those and add your observations regarding the Holy Spirit to your list as well.

In the overview lesson on 1 John, one of your assignments was to read through the entire book of 1 John marking several key words. In doing this, we were able to observe the words repeated most often in the book of 1 John, and key to properly understanding and applying the truths presented here, were the words *love*, *know*, *sin*, and *abide*. Each of these words appears a number of times in the third chapter, and will help us to determine the main thoughts being communicated.

Once again, in order to get a sense of the flow of the whole, we need to read several times through the entire chapter. If you did the overview lesson on 1 John, you will have already done the first step of marking, so you can simply read through the chapter and make sure you have all the key words and synonyms marked. If you did not do the overview, you will need to read through the chapter at least four times, each time marking a different key word with a distinctive color or symbol. Be sure and include any pronouns or synonyms of the words as well. I know that this may seem repetitive to you and you may be tempted to read it only once or twice and mark all the words at the same time, but please resist the temptation and allow yourself maximum exposure to God's truth!

*love, know, sin, abides* [NIV: *lives, remains, in vs. 15, 17*]

**\*\*Last week** you should have already marked some key words in 1 John 3, so we will begin today with reading one time through the entire chapter in order to be aware of the immediate context of our passage. Once you have read thoughtfully through the chapter, use your markings of key words in verses 11-24 to add to your lists.

By way of a reminder, a list is simply a separate sheet of paper where you record everything that you observe about a particular word that would answer a "who, what, when, where, why or how" (5W's and an H) question. As we make lists about the key words from the text, it helps us to more clearly see the truths that God has given to us. Doing this throughout a book of the Bible is a very helpful tool to see the flow of thought and repetition of any key ideas, subjects and themes.

You ought to have one list where you are recording everything Scripture reveals to you about *God* (*the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit*), one about *abiding*, one about *sin*, one about *love*, and one for *know*. Your list on the word *know* should be divided into two columns, What I Can Know and How I Can Know It.

Spend some time reflecting on the truths that God has revealed to you about Himself today. Meditate on the sacrifice made on your behalf and the love that was clearly demonstrated by that sacrifice. Tell God you desire for your life to reflect that you have received His gift of love.

## Day 2 (1 John 3:10-24)

Read or recite your memory verse. Begin your study time in prayer to a Heavenly Father, who is the source of love.

Read through our Scripture passage beginning with verse ten. Last week we began a list on the traits that make the children of God and the children of the devil evident and plainly recognized. Verse ten gives us two broad descriptions. The following verses expand on the particulars. Add to your list from last week on the traits of each as described in verses 11-24.

*Children of God*

*Children of the devil*

Summarize what you observed regarding love and the children of God or the children of the devil.

Often we tend to equate the absence of “hate” as “love.” Just because we are not consciously seeking to harm our brother, that is not the equivalent of love. Read through and reflect on the information in the *Engaging the Greek* box.

### Engaging the Greek

The Greek verb *agapao* is translated *love* in 1 John 3, 10, 11, 14, 18, and 23. It means to esteem, indicating a direction of the will and finding one’s joy in something or someone. It differs from another Greek word for love (*phileo*), which indicates feelings, warm affection, or the kind of love expressed by a kiss. Most scholars agree that *agapao* is used of God’s love toward man and vice versa.

Each time *agapao* appears in this text, it is in the present tense and active voice. This means that the subject produces the action, and the action is to be continuous and ongoing, a pattern of life.

In 1 John 3:16 and 17, the Greek word translated *love* is the noun *agape*. It is defined as affectionate regard, good will or benevolence. With reference to God’s love, it is God’s willful direction toward man. It involves God doing what He knows is best for man and not necessarily what man desires. For example, John 3:16 states, “For God so loved the world, that He gave.” What did He give? Not what man wanted, but what God knew man needed, i.e., His Son to bring forgiveness to man.<sup>1</sup>

As you reflect on what God is truly trying to communicate to us, put into your own words what you observe as to the quality and level of love He desires to be evident in our lives.

How does your life reflect the family characteristics of a child of God?

What areas of your life do you sense God would like to mature you in this regard? Allow Him to speak to you today!

### Day 3 (1 John 3:11-24)

Read or recite your memory verse. Begin your time today thanking your Father God for the *great* love He has *lavished* on you, not with words and tongue, but with actions and truth!

Read once more through our Scripture passage for the week. Verse 18 draws a strong contrast. What is it?

Look back at 1 John 1:6, 2:4-6, 9. What do you see in these verses that help you to better understand the exhortation in verse 18?

John 3:16 says that “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only son.” 1 John 3:16 is the example by which we can know love is that of Christ. How did His love express itself in action?

What part of His life did He lay down for you? Be specific.

<sup>1</sup>Zodhiates, S. (2000, c1992, c1993). *The complete word study dictionary : New Testament* (electronic ed.) (G26). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

For you to love your brother in this way, what part of your life do you need to lay down? Be specific.

Is there any thing that can be “off limits”?

What are the circumstances described in 1 John 3:17 whereby God’s love can be manifested in your life?

1 John 3:16-17 illustrate two possible responses to this circumstance and the results of choosing each. Note each possible response and the promised results.

Read the following passages and note how they expand or confirm what you have seen in 1 John.

James 2:14-26

Colossians 1:1-6

Ephesians 1:15-16

Now allow God to speak specifically to your situation and life with the truth He has revealed. Love and time are intricately woven together. Loving someone and practically showing that love is difficult, if not impossible, if you never spend time with that someone.

We have seen numerous Scriptures that clearly proclaim to love is to meet needs. It takes time to learn enough about someone to know their hurts, their pains, their joys and their needs. So before you can show love, you must be able to give time.

Who is there in your life, perhaps a spouse, a child, an extended family member, a brother or sister in Christ in your Home Group or Community Group, that needs to be loved in a tangible way—a way that God has already equipped and blessed you with the resources that can meet that need?

Pray, asking God to open your eyes to see the need, your heart to be filled with the love only He can provide, and the will to make it a priority of your life! This is a prayer He is waiting to hear and answer!

#### **Day 4** (1 John 3:11-24)

Read or recite your memory verse. Once again, spend time telling God you desire to hear from Him, so your mind can be renewed and your life transformed by your time in His Word.

Read once more through 1 John 3:11-24. Take special note of verses 19-24 for our study time today. Verses 19-21 mention our heart four times. List everything these verses tell you about your heart.

These verses present two different possible responses of our hearts before God...confidence or condemnation. We are also told that we can “assure” or “put to rest” our heart in His presence by what?

Read these verses from the Message version as printed out below.

*19 This is the only way we'll know we're living truly, living in God's reality.*

*20 It's also the way to shut down debilitating self-criticism, even when there is something to it. For God is greater than our worried hearts and knows more about us than we do ourselves.*

*21 And friends, once that's taken care of and we're no longer accusing or condemning ourselves, we're bold and free before God!*

Suppose when you go before God, your heart does condemn you because there is a lack of love for your brother evidenced by your actions. According to 1 John 1:9, and 2:1-2, what should you do then?

Now let's look closely at the promise, encouragement and exhortations of verses 22-24. When we have confidence before God, what is promised to us?

There is a clear condition presented with this promise. What is it?

According to verse 23, and really a repetition of what John has been saying all through this letter, exactly what does he mean by verse 22?

Verse 24 uses the term "abide" or "lives in." Who abides [lives in] whom?

Last week we saw that children of God do not practice sin because God's seed abides in us. We looked up some other passages that showed us God's plan was to give us the power to obey Him through His Holy Spirit. According to what God has shown you thus far in your study of 1 John, what part does the Holy Spirit play in our keeping His commandments and loving one another? Use Scripture to support your answer.

### **Day 5 (1 John 3:1-10)**

The Core Competency that we will reflect on this week is the virtue of **Love**. Our creed says, "I show sacrificial and unconditional love for others."

1 John 4:10-12 *"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. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us."*

The four statements listed below are ones that you can use to assess your own personal Christian experience.

1. God's grace enables me to forgive people who have hurt me.
2. I rejoice when good things happen to other people.
3. I demonstrate love equally toward people of all races.
4. I frequently give up what I want for the sake of others.

Read the quotes below.<sup>2</sup> Reflect on everything your Father has shown you this week. Allow His Holy Spirit to teach and empower you to walk in love and obedience.

### **Act Out Love**

In his book *Mere Christianity*, C. S. Lewis wrote,

*"Do not waste your time bothering whether you 'love' your neighbor; act as if you did. As soon as we do this, we find one of the great secrets. When you are behaving as if you loved someone, you will presently come to love him. If you injure someone you dislike, you will find yourself disliking him more. If you do him a good turn, you will find yourself disliking him less."*

Our Daily Bread, Thursday, February 14.

<sup>2</sup>Galaxie Software. (2002; 2002). *10,000 Sermon Illustrations*. Biblical Studies Press.

### For Others

Lord, let me live from day to day  
In such a self-forgetful way,  
That, even when I kneel to pray,  
My prayer shall be for Others.

Help me, in all the work I do,  
Ever to be sincere and true,  
And know that all I'd do for Thee,  
Must needs be done for Others.

Let "self" be crucified and slain,  
And buried deep, nor rise again;  
And may all efforts be in vain,  
Unless they be for Others.

And when my work on earth is done,  
And my new work in heaven begun  
May I forget the crown I've won,  
While thinking still of Others.

Yes, Others, Lord, yes, Others.  
Let this motto be;  
Help me to live for Others,  
That I may live with Thee. (Anonymus)

### Sacrificial Love

Two weeks after the stolen steak deal, I took Helen (eight years old) and Brandon (five years old) to the Cloverleaf Mall in Hattiesburg to do a little shopping. As we drove up, we spotted a Peterbilt eighteen-wheeler parked with a big sign on it that said, "Petting Zoo." The kids jumped up in a rush and asked, "Daddy, Daddy. Can we go? Please. Please. Can we go?"

"Sure," I said, flipping them both a quarter before walking into Sears. They bolted away, and I felt free to take my time looking for a scroll saw. A petting zoo consists of a portable fence erected in the mall with about six inches of sawdust and a hundred little furry baby animals of all kinds. Kids pay their money and stay in the enclosure enraptured with the squirmy little critters while their moms and dads shop.

A few minutes later, I turned around and saw Helen walking along behind me. I was shocked to see she preferred the hardware department to the petting zoo. Recognizing my error, I bent down and asked her what was wrong.

She looked up at me with those giant limpid brown eyes and said sadly, "Well, Daddy, it cost fifty cents. So, I gave Brandon my quarter." Then she said the most beautiful thing I ever heard. She repeated the family motto, "Love is Action!"

She had given Brandon her quarter, and no one loves cuddly furry creatures more than Helen. She had watched Sandy take my steak and say, "Love is Action!" She had watched both of us do and say "Love is Action!" for years around the house and Kings Arrow Ranch. She had heard and seen "Love is Action," and now she had incorporated it into her little lifestyle. It had become part of her.

What do you think I did? Well, not what you might think. As soon as I finished my errands, I took Helen to the petting zoo. We stood by the fence and watched Brandon go crazy petting and feeding the animals. Helen stood with her hands and chin resting on the fence and just watched Brandon. I had fifty cents burning a hole in my pocket; I never offered it to Helen, and she never asked for it, because she knew the whole family motto. It's not "Love is Action." It's "Love is SACRIFICIAL Action!" Love always pays a price. Love always costs something. Love is expensive. When you love, benefits accrue to another's account. Love is for you, not for me. Love gives; it doesn't grab. Helen gave her quarter to Brandon and wanted to follow through with her lesson. She knew she had to taste the sacrifice. She wanted to experience that total family motto. Love is sacrificial action.

Source unknown