

Taking it Home:

- One of the first verses many of us memorize is John 3:16. How does this verse serve as a summary of God's love expressed to you? Read also Romans 5:8 and contemplate what it means when you say that Jesus Christ died for you. Like soaking in a bath, some of us need to soak in the truth of God's love for us.

- When the apostle Paul prayed for the young churches in Ephesus and Colossae, his prayer was they would be rooted in love. Read Paul's prayers in Ephesians 3:14-21 and Colossians 2:6-7 and practice praying this same prayer for yourself and for your small group. Ask God specifically to help you be rooted in Christ's love. Invite your group to pray for each other by name using these prayers as a model.

- One of the tensions we may feel as we study the essence of discipleship is that we're not yet talking about all of the evidence of following Jesus. When we get the essence right, the evidence shows up. 1 John 5:2 reminds us that when we are loved by God and love God, we will obey Him.

Next Steps

- Spend time contemplating this week how the love of Christ defines who you are.
- Memorize one of the verses you studied in this study.
- Pray for someone you know who needs to respond to the good news of Jesus.

For a restatement of Pastor Matthew's sermon points, visit pastormatthew.net and click on the "Write This Down" tab.

Follow Me
Loved By God
1 John 4:19

Dr. Matthew St. John
Bethel Church
September 28, 2014

Loved By God

Notes:

For more information about Growth Groups, the At Home Study Guide, and a podcast of sermons with study guide, visit www.bethelhc.com.

At Home Study Guide

For the week of September 28, 2014

1 John 4:19

Quick Review: This week's study will give you an opportunity to consider the greatest quality of what it means to be a follower of Jesus. Of all the character traits which mark a disciple, love is the greatest. This is easy to say and hard to live. Throughout history men and women have questioned what is true love? Art, books, music, movies and business have all tried to capture and define what is, "love." Even the word, can feel squishy or soft because of so much noise about what it "really" means. Personally we are challenged by our flesh, a broken world, and an enemy that all war against our understanding of God's love for you and me. The love that God has for us goes far beyond what is natural and normal. Your heavenly Father's love for you is a supernatural, loyal, unconditional, patient, loving kindness as evidenced in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Have you experienced this love? Would you like to?

My Story:

- When you think of love or being loved, who do you think of and why?
- Is it hard for you to imagine that some can love you despite your secret or not so secret hang-ups?
- Right now as you think of following Jesus, do you find it more freeing or more restricting?

Growing Deeper:

- Read 1 John 4. Underline or take note of each place love is mentioned. Allowing ourselves to experience God's love may be one of the hardest things we do. God's love for you is an invitation for you to receive Him as He has revealed Himself to you in the person and work of Jesus. What is the manifestation of God's love according to vv 9-10? Why is the order of love important in verse 19?
- Of all the character traits that could mark a disciple, Jesus taught that love is the greatest. Read John 13:31-35 and contrast Jesus' love to the patterns of this world. What did Jesus do that modeled this kind of love he expects His followers to share in John 13? Where else in scripture do you see this teaching repeated?
- What you do is important and intertwined with who you are. It is even more important to consider **whose** you are. Study the story in Acts 19:11-20 of the sons of Sceva. Why did these men fail in casting out demons? How did their emphasis on method fail them? How did God use their failure to grow His Kingdom?