

## Week 2: And the Greatest of These is Love

1. What stood out to you from the message this past Sunday? Was there anything that seemed timely or relevant to you? Was there anything which made you uncomfortable, or with which you disagreed?
2. Read our value statement for “Love” below:

*This is our highest value and the one that undergirds all our others. Love is what we see in Jesus, the way we define God, and the way we seek to relate to others. As followers of Jesus our journey is ultimately a progressive experience of oneness with God and oneness with one another. For us, love is our final authority and more important than being right. We will disagree on all manner of things, but we will always love.*

- Discuss what this means to you practically.
  - How do you relate to the statement “*love is our final authority and more important than being right*”? In what ways could this be a unifying way to live? In what ways could it be problematic?
3. Read 1 John 4:7-16 and discuss:
    - What does this passage say about God with regard to love?
    - What does it say about the human experience of love?
    - How does Jesus’ life and death impact the human experience of love according to this passage?
    - According to this passage how can we practice and embody love?
  4. Read 1 John 4:18-21 and discuss:
    - In what ways might fear be the antithesis of love?
    - How do you see fear playing out in human history (and the human experience in general) as anti-love?
    - How do you see fear playing out in your own life both past and present? What has been the impact?
    - What does this passage say about the antidote to fear? How could you engage with this more in your own life?
  5. Break into smaller groups of 2 or 3 (or stay together as a larger group if that feels appropriate). Read the scripture from the prayer practice overleaf and pray for one another to experience more of God’s spirit and love with regard to the areas of fear in our lives.

**Practice for the week: Awareness of oneness**

*For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God.*

**Romans 8:14-16 (NIV)**

This week, take a moment each day to be mindful that you are a "child of God," completely loved, and one with God. Read the above passage and sit quietly. Focus on your breath as the very presence and spirit of God and breathe it in. As you breath out, let go of any fearful, anxious, or negative thoughts about yourself and return to a center of complete acceptance and belonging. Invite God's spirit to resonate with your spirit and increase the amplitude of your conscious oneness with God.