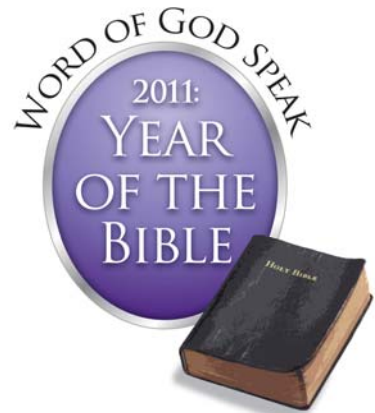


Week 47: 2 Peter 1-3; 1 John 1-5 Study Guide for the week of November 21-27, 2011



Personal reflection / journaling exercise

This week, spend time with 1 John 4:7 – 5:5. In this extended teaching on love, what caught your attention? How does this add to your understanding of what real love is? Try to summarize this whole teaching of love in one sentence. Is God's love an "originating" or "responsive" love? Is our love originating or responsive? Why do you think this is important to John? (Remember, he also wrote John 3:16.) How does this teaching support the Biblical teaching that real love is a "lived out commitment" more than a feeling? How would perfect love help to drive out the fear(s) you have? (v.18) In what specific ways does this teaching inspire you to love?

Discussion starters *If you are leading a small group, you may not have time for all of these questions. Pick the ones that will work best for your group.*

1. Ice Breaker Question: What was the name of your "first love"? How old were you? Did that "relationship" end well or poorly?
2. Was there something that jumped out at you, surprised you, encouraged you, or disturbed you from the readings this last week (or two)? Why?
3. 2 Peter 1:3-11 List and review the amazing promises in these verses. How would you like to "escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires?" What do you think that means? What do the verses surrounding this promise teach about how we escape the corruption caused by our evil desires? In verses 5-7, there is a progression of virtues from faith growing into love. Can you spot where you are on that progression? What virtue are you being challenged to develop? How are you meeting that challenge?
4. 2 Peter 2:20-22 What are these verses teaching about someone who becomes a Christian but then falls back into the lifestyle of an unbeliever? What do you think about this teaching?
5. 2 Peter 3:8-9 What do you find comforting in these verses? Are you patient or impatient with yourself? With others? What situations tend to make you impatient? Do you view God as impatient or patient? How do you respond to a God who is patient? Will God's patience last forever (2 Peter 3:10)? Does God's patience allow us to become complacent or forgetful? Why or why not?
6. 1 John 1:8-9 Is it easy for you to admit you are wrong and say you're sorry? Why or why not? Have you ever been rebuffed, ridiculed, or made to feel even worse when you attempted to apologize? How does God promise to respond to your confession? What is confessing your sins in worship or at other times like for you? Describe how you think through confessing your sins. Now read 1 John 2:1-2. What speaks to you in this description of how Jesus forgives our sins?
7. 1 John 2:3-6; 5:1-3 For John, love is not just a feeling, but actions. According to these verses how does John teach believers to act since we love God? How are you loving in word and speech (1 John 3:18)? In truth and action? *If you want to go deeper in your discussion about Biblical love, go through together the personal reflection / journaling exercise above.*
8. 1 John 5:11-13 What does this brief summary of the gospel teach?

Bible verse to memorize: 1 John 5:13

Caring Time

It is important to make time in your group to care for each other. Sometimes that happens during the discussion and sometimes it is best to end your time together praying for each other.

One possibility this week is to break into pairs and pray for each other out of 1 John 4:18. After you have broken into pairs, have one of you go first and answer this:

What is a fear you have that sometimes distresses you over which you would like prayer?

After the first person has answered, the second person is invited to pray over the fear that the first person described, reminding him/her of God's promise that perfect love casts our fear. Then switch.

Also encourage people in the group to get together outside of the group time to foster deeper friendships with each other. Remember that being in a small group is primarily about sharing life together. It has been said that the most important time in small groups is the time people connect outside of the meeting time.