

Week 1.

- How do we generally know we are loved?
- Read 1 John 4:7-12.
- What or Who, is the source of all love?
- Why do you think John, nearing the end of his life, emphasised the love of God in his pastoral letters?

'God both loves more and before we do'

- Bernard of Clairvaux (Cistercian Abbot died 1153)

- Do you agree with the quote above?
- What makes God's love for us different from purely human love?

"The same God who loves us as we are, also loves us too much to leave us as we are. Perhaps because we tend to hold to ideas about God that reflect our own suppositions and fears, more than God's self-revelation. We reduce God to our own dimensions, ascribing to him our own reactions and responses, especially our own petty and conditional kind of love, and so end up believing in a God cast in our own image and likeness.

— Joseph Langford

- Do you agree with Langford's assessment?
- How might we respond to God's love for us?
- Read the text opposite. If we live out of God's love for us, what difference might that make to our community?
- Close in prayer taking time to reflect on God's Love as understood by Desmond Tutu :

"Like when you sit in front of a fire in winter — you are just there in front of the fire. You don't have to be smart or anything. The fire warms you."

Essential Gospel



God Loves You

'Love originates from God when we apprehend the depth of his love for us (1 Jn 4:7a) and when we are born anew by his spirit (1 Jn 4:7b). For John intimate knowledge of God is the same as enjoying the intimate reciprocity of God's love: he loves us, we love him, and this love spills over to those near us.

If we are uncertain about God's profound desire for us, we need only look to God's love shown to us in Christ. Christ is the material expression of God's tangible love. Because Christ laid down his life for us, so too we ought to do the same for one another (1 Jn 3:16).

1 John 4:10 says it succinctly: "This is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."

[Dictionary of Later New Testament & It's Developments : IVP : via Logos]

