

Village Guide

Current Series: Vivid

Texts: 1 John 3.1, 4.7-17

Core Value Focus: Transformation

Big Ideas from the Message:

- Our world, culture, organizations, and families all influence how we imagine God—often giving us false images of God.
- Quote from message: “For me, and for many of us, our first waking thought of the day is “I didn’t get enough sleep.” The next one is “I don’t have enough time.” Whether true or not, that thought of not enough occurs to us automatically before we even think to question or examine it. We spend most of the hours and the days of our lives hearing, explaining, complaining, or worrying about what we don’t have enough of. . . . Before we even sit up in bed, before our feet touch the floor, we’re already inadequate, already behind, already losing, already lacking something. And by the time we go to bed at night, our minds are racing with a litany of what we didn’t get, or didn’t get done, that day. We go to sleep burdened by those thoughts and wake up to that reverie of lack. . . . This internal condition of scarcity, this mind-set of scarcity, lives at the very heart of our jealousies, our greed, our prejudice, and our arguments with life. . . .” (Lynne Twist, *The Soul of Money*, 43-45)
- Our external influences often push us to see God through what we lack in self-image.
- Our world struggles to comprehend the beautiful love God offers humanity.
- God is love. Love looks like Jesus. Jesus looks at you with love. This is God’s posture.

CONNECT (5 min)

- Question chosen for open group discussion or someone pre-invited to share their story. (Optional)

HEAR (5 min)

- Spend some time in your group sharing what you recall from Sunday’s message. Give a loose theme or subject of the sermon to jumpstart everyone’s thoughts and recollections. (Example: “On Sunday, Kurt began a new series. Who was there on Sunday? Could you recap the content for us?” What struck you, and what questions did it leave you with?)
- Read 1 John 3.1 and 4.7-17. What did Kurt say that this passage reveals about God? About us? Do you see anything differently or that wasn’t mentioned in this particular sermon?

TALK (20 min)

*Note: This format is intentionally less linear in an effort to generate discussion. It is not meant to be followed left-to-right, nor do all the questions need to be asked. As a facilitator, stewarding good discussion means modeling **true listening**, which also means a conversation without an agenda. Use your discernment to see what your group needs to talk about.*

Conceptual	Practical Implications	Spiritual Formation
Scripture	Regular Life	Transformation
<p>As we already began, how do you understand God's posture towards humankind based on the passages in 1 John?</p> <p>What does it mean to say, "God is love"? Can we reverse this sentence to "Love is God?" Why or why not? (Certainly, this is semantical in some ways, so be comfortable teasing these ideas out and seeing how it might inform quality conversation.)</p> <p>If you were to look at the whole of the New Testament, does the picture Jesus paints of God (with his life and his words) line up with "God is love?" What challenges this picture? What inspires you based on what Jesus embodied and taught pertaining to a life of love?</p>	<p>We are all influenced, consciously and subconsciously by external realities. We do not come up with our vision of God and reality in a vacuum. If this is true, how have the forces of a globalized world, a rapid-paced culture, a polarized posture towards organizations, and/or family shaped your image of God?</p> <p>Does your experiential picture of God's posture towards humankind match your personal experience with God (as always, the personal is in the context of a community)? How might Jesus challenge and/or affirm this picture and experience?</p> <p>Do you have an internal checklist about dos and don'ts when it comes to Jesus' posture toward your life? Without having to disregard that the call to be a disciple of Jesus involves new patterns of living, how does a checklist approach to God distort the idea that God is love?</p>	<p>Take a few minutes of silence to think of what your current experience of life these past couple weeks have been like. (Give a few minutes for reflection before asking the question). If you were to imagine Jesus sitting across the table from you, what would his posture be towards you? Think of both verbal and physical communication. Try to imagine it.</p> <p>What is it about Jesus' posture, that you imagine he has toward you, that mirrors a God of love? [If you aren't sure that Jesus is 'real' at this point in your life, perhaps you can defer that question (a valid one) and entertain how positive images of a divine being like Jesus can narrate a better guiding story. Our narratives about ultimate reality give shape to our posture in the real world.]</p> <p>Can you imagine one step you might take this week to challenge the way external forces have shaped your view of Jesus?</p>

(Space for your own questions or notes)

LIVE (20 min)

- How might this conversation impact you this next week? What are you taking with you?
- How might we pray for each other based on this conversation and other highs/lows in life?