

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



**PRINCE
OF PEACE**
Called to Connect



Living with Love

December 21 & 22, 2019

God's love for the world is realized in the most compelling way through the incarnation of Jesus who is the Christ. Our ability to know God and walk with God and live a life of love came to fruition through Jesus life, death and glorious resurrection. This is also how the world will know God when we love one another. How is your love meter?

SCRIPTURE TEXT: 1 JOHN 4:7-12

Read the scripture text together as a group.

BACKGROUND INFO

Lots has been written about 1 John 4, one of the great "love chapters" in the Bible. The core points can be summarized pretty simply: Love is God's nature (note, it's not the Love is God). And the shape of God's love is seen in sacrificial service (agape) to the beloved. The Spirit is God's empowerment to us to love others in is way. When we love (agape) one another, God's love is revealed and completed. Some translations say that God's love is "perfected" but the Greek word (teleos) means "goal" or "complete". Another way to put this is that the goal of God's love given to us is that we might love our neighbor. If we only received God's love, that love has not accomplished what it is meant to do. We are conduits of God's love.

Burt Baccarat had it right. What the world needs now is love, sweet love. But not an emotional, Hallmark, flowers, candy and the quiver-in-the-liver kind of love. The world needs the kind of love is the Father's nature, is revealed through the Son, and flows through the Spirit. Trying harder to love is not the answer. To truly love, and sustain love, we need to be in communion with the Spirit, inviting the Spirit to do in and through us what we cannot do for ourselves.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Share some examples of when you've received agape (unconditional) love from someone else. How did it impact you?
- How can we rekindle our ability to love especially during the holidays and during the polarizing time in our country?
- Who do you struggle to love? How has God shaped your hearts to really love them?
- What practices help you to stay in conscious connection with the Spirit?

APPLICATION: This week, spend time each day inviting the Spirit to work in and through you. The world needs more love, and we can be conduits of God's love with those around us.