

the
truth
about
loving

CONNECT GROUP
DISCUSSION GUIDE

The Truth About Loving: Your Siblings



RENAISSANCE
CHURCH

Read

On Sunday Pastor Christian used 1 John 4:19-21 to talk about loving our siblings. Although John is talking about our brothers and sisters in Christ, we can apply his teaching to our flesh and blood siblings.

¹⁹ We love because he first loved us. ²⁰ Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. ²¹ The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also. (1 John 4:19-21)

Reflect & Discuss

This week we're focusing on loving our siblings. If you're an only child, apply the principles we're discussing to your relationships with your relatives and close friends.

1. Share a story of a conflict you had with one of your siblings. Are there any repeating issues or themes in your sibling conflicts? If you're an only child, share a conflict you had with a close relative or a sibling conflict you saw a friend have.
2. Why do you think we often have difficulty loving our siblings and others who are close to us?
3. Pastor Christian said that sibling conflict is rooted in the fear that we have to compete for our parents' love. How do you see that manifested in your family? Do you see any other roots of conflict with your siblings?
4. Pastor Christian said that when we trust that there is enough love, then we can cooperate with each other rather than compete with each other. How have you seen cooperation in your relationships benefit both of you?
5. How would you explain and apply the idea that, since God has no shortage of love, we can love others without fear that we won't have enough love? If we lived and loved in light of that truth, how could it transform our relationships?
6. In 1 John 4:20, the Apostle John says a lack of love for our brothers and sisters indicates a lack of love for God. How do you react to that concept? How would you explain it? What implications do you think it has for our relationships?
7. Read Romans 12:9-21 in the *Reflecting on Scripture* section below. Which of these characteristics of genuine love strike you? How could you do better at living out these pictures of love in your relationships with your siblings and others who are close to you?

Personalize It

Let's personalize and apply what we've been discussing.

1. 1 John 4:21 says, "The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also." With that in mind, Pastor Christian challenged us to "Stop competing. Start cooperating." How did you apply that to your life this week? If you haven't yet applied it, how would you like to do so this week?
2. Pick one of the characteristics of genuine love listed in Romans 12:9-21. What step(s) will you take this week to live it out in your relationships with your siblings or someone else close to you?
3. How can we pray for you?

Reflecting on Scripture

Using the *Reflecting on Scripture* guide available on the Connect Groups page on our website (www.renchurch.com/connectgroups), set aside at least ten minutes three days this week to reflect on Romans 12:9-21. Work through one paragraph a day, looking for practical ways to love your siblings or others who are close to you in the same way Jesus loves you.

Romans 12:9-21

⁹ Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; ¹⁰ love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹ Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹² Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. ¹³ Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are.

¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. ¹⁸ If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." ²⁰ No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.