



Small Group Questions

Part 2: Love

© 2015 Seacoast Church. All Rights Reserved.

Read

1 John 4:9–10; John 3:16; Romans 5:8 and 8:35–39; and Isaiah 40:3–5

Reflect

Jesus did not come into this world expecting or needing anything from us. He came to bring salvation and eternal life, and every day, he offers us the gifts of hope and of love. Yet, his definition of love is different than the world's. How would you define love? What words best describe it?

Pastor Josh Surratt describes how God's definition of love differs from that of the world.

1. God's gift of love is inclusive.
 - a. In the Christmas story, the angels first told the Good News to the shepherds (considered lowly in that society) rather than to high priests, rabbis or kings. How does this support John 3:16: "...whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life..."?
 - i. Can you think of other examples in the Bible that show God's inclusiveness?
 - ii. Who do you need to include this Christmas season?
 - b. In what ways have you seen human love be exclusive?
 - c. Have you ever found yourself thinking God cares more for some people than others? What other human ways of thinking do we tend to put onto God?
2. God's gift of love is unconditional.
 - a. Do you believe you matter to God just as you are?
 - b. Do you believe that no matter what you've done, God loves you?
 - i. What are you holding against yourself or someone else?
 - c. In what ways can you try to emulate God's unconditional love this season?
3. For many of us, God's gift of love will remain unopened.
 - a. Has Christmas become more of a routine than a true, heartfelt celebration of the most important birth in history? How might we be taking God's love for granted?
 - b. If you've never had the opportunity to experience God's love, what will it take for you to open that gift? What is holding you back? What is keeping you from thinking his gift is for you?

To fully experience God's love this Christmas, I have to address my...

1. Valleys: Unexpected loss
 - a. Are you experiencing a valley this season? Have you lost a job, a loved one, or made a bad decision that has led to the loss of someone or something you love?
2. Mountains: Unexpected pressure
 - a. What pressures and expectations are keeping you from focusing on God's love this season?
 - b. When things go well, how can we keep the focus on God rather than ourselves?
3. Edges: Unexpected emotions
 - a. The Christmas season often brings emotions to the forefront. What emotional edges are you dealing with? How will you address them so they don't characterize your life?

Respond

What is your next step? Where is God leading you? How can your small group support you and hold you accountable in this?