

**ECC Growth Groups – Term 4, 2014**  
**Behold our God – Study 5: God is Love (1 John 4)**

Split your group into pairs/triplets. Give each pair/triplet one or two of the following descriptions of love and get them to think through what is being communicated in terms of what love is.

*“A single text from you can change my mood at any moment”*

*“Meeting you was fate, becoming your friend was a choice, but falling in love with you was beyond my control”*

*“You see me at my absolute worst, and you love me anyway”*

*“To love is nothing ... To be loved is something ... To love and be loved in return is everything”*

*“They say that love is the key to happiness. You must have unlocked my heart because I am so happy with you”*

*“Never love anybody who treats you like you’re ordinary”*

*“Love is easy and natural when you do it with all your heart”*

*“Love the person who deserves it, not the one who requires it”*

*“Love is the only thing that everybody needs”*

*“When love is not madness it’s never love”*

*“Love is the absence of judgement”*

*“Love is like a magic key that opens the door to happiness”*

Bring the groups back together and get them to briefly report back to each other from their discussions.

Spend some time praying together before you look at God’s Word.

Read 1 John 4:7-21.

Twice in this passage John makes his famous statement, “*God is love*” (verse 8 and verse 16). But as we saw at the beginning of our study, there are many different definitions of love. How has God shown his love?

The quality and quantity of love can be seen both in terms of the one giving the love and also in terms of the one receiving the love. Verses 9 and 10 tell us a lot about God's love and it is worthwhile considering the various parts in detail.

John says that God "*sent his one and only Son*" (v 9). What does this tell us about God's love?

From verse 10, what did Jesus do when he was sent into the world?

What does this tell us about God's love?

How are those who receive God's love described?

What does this tell us about God's love?

From the rest of the passage, what should our response be to God's love?

Give people five or ten minutes to spend on their own in personal reflection. They may use the following questions to guide them in this.

If God is love, how does this truth help me when I feel discontent in my circumstances or resentful of others?

If God is love, how does this truth help me when I am feeling distrustful or fearful?

If God is love, why do I become half-hearted or cold in living for him?

If God is love, can people see this truth in the way that I love those around me?

As group members feel comfortable, have them share some of their thoughts from the time of personal reflection.

See Appendix 3 – ‘Theology to Doxology’ and then close the study with a time of prayer.

**Appendix 1 – Discussion Starter**

*“A single text from you can change my mood at any moment”*

*“Meeting you was fate, becoming your friend was a choice, but falling in love with you was beyond my control”*

*“You see me at my absolute worst, and you love me anyway”*

*“To love is nothing ... To be loved is something ... To love and be loved in return is everything”*

*“They say that love is the key to happiness. You must have unlocked my heart because I am so happy with you”*

*“Never love anybody who treats you like you’re ordinary”*

*“Love is easy and natural when you do it with all your heart”*

*“Love the person who deserves it, not the one who requires it”*

*“Love is the only thing that everybody needs”*

*“When love is not madness it’s never love”*

*“Love is the absence of judgement”*

*“Love is like a magic key that opens the door to happiness”*

**Appendix 2 – Activity: Personal Reflection**

If God is love, how does this truth help me when I feel discontent in my circumstances or resentful of others?

If God is love, how does this truth help me when I am feeling distrustful or fearful?

If God is love, why do I become half-hearted or cold in living for him?

If God is love, can people see this truth in the way that I love those around me?

### Appendix 3 – Theology to Doxology

For our *'Theology to Doxology'* in this study the song, *'Here is love'*, has been selected. If you would like to listen to a version online, you can use the URL below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oTOP304FOG0>

If you would like to sing together or simply read out the lyrics, they are included below:

#### Verse 1

Here is love vast as the ocean  
Loving-kindness as the flood  
When the Prince of Life our Ransom  
Shed for us His precious blood  
(REPEAT)

#### Chorus 1

Who His love will not remember  
Who can cease to sing His praise  
He can never be forgotten  
Throughout Heav'n's eternal days

#### Verse 2

On the mount of crucifixion  
Fountains opened deep and wide  
Through the floodgates of God's mercy  
Flowed a vast and gracious tide

#### Chorus 2

Grace and love like mighty rivers  
Poured incessant from above  
Heav'n's peace and perfect justice  
Kissed a guilty world in love

#### Misc 1

(Bridge)  
No love is higher no love is wider  
No love is deeper no love is truer  
No love is higher no love is wider  
No love is like Your love O Lord  
(REPEAT 4X)

#### Misc 2

(Ending)  
Yes here is love  
Vast as the ocean  
Yes here is love  
Vast as the ocean  
(REPEAT)

CCLI Song # 3287884

Matt Redman | Robert Lowry | William Rees

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