

Life Group Guide

1 John 3:11-24

Connect: 30-45 mins Connecting.

Consider sharing a meal together, discussing the highs/lowes of the week, or any celebrations/hard things that happened last week, follow up from prayer requests or confessions last week.

A reminder: If you are looking for more in depth study to do during the week, before the sermon, this is a free 12 week course through 123 John:

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/course/knowning-the-bible-1-3-john/#week-1-overview>

Discuss: Scripture/Sermon Discussion (30-45 mins)

1. Reread this week's passage 1 John 3:11-24. Have someone summarize the sermon in 1-2 minutes. What stood out? What was challenging? Encouraging?
2. The sermon mentions "Abiding not only changes our actions, but our motives." In what ways have you experienced this in your own life?
3. Read Matthew 5:21-26 as a cross reference to 1 John 3:11-15. How does Jesus' teaching further explain anger and hate? Why is that significant not only in our relationship toward others, but in our relationship with God?
4. If we are abiding in Christ, what does John tell us in 3:13 might be the result? How do Matthew 5:10-12 & John 16:33 amplify what 1 John 3:13 states? Can you share an experience that you personally or someone you know has experienced this kind of "hate" or even persecution? How did the gospel bring comfort and encouragement?
5. How did the definition of hating others in the context of this sermon (to disregard, to think less of, to love less) reframe how you view loving others through good deeds? What are some practical acts of serving and loving others you can live out this week?

Closing Practice: Experience Ongoing Freedom (30-45 mins)

Amends is a powerful act to show humility, repentance, and obedience toward someone who you have wronged or hurt. Consider spending a few minutes in prayer individually, asking the Lord to bring to mind a situation or a person that you may need to go to for forgiveness. Amends can range from something that occurred this past week to a situation of hurt that was years ago. Use the following framework to discuss as a group if there are any amends you need to make and next steps to take if so.

*You will find a description of what Biblical Amends is and is not in our Foundations curriculum (Week 5, Day 4) or see below.

Amends

To make *amends* means to make “reparation or payment for a loss, damage, or injury of any kind; to pay back.”¹ Why? Because our sin impacts others; our actions, words, and inactions affect others.

Sometimes asking for forgiveness requires a practical step to make someone whole. Maybe you have wronged someone financially or harmed them in a way that could require compensation or restitution. Maybe you have spoken ill of a friend or disparaged their name behind their back. If so, amends may be necessary. As you consider your sin issues, be mindful of those you have wronged and may owe amends to (Romans 13:8).

If you think amends are required, here is a list of how to approach amends biblically.

Characteristics of Biblical Amends:

1. A humble attitude of repentance, love, and obedience
2. An honest specific confession of sin
3. An apology
4. A request for forgiveness
5. Willingness to make restitution
6. Readiness to share Christ
7. Steps of change

The goal is to walk humbly with another person with the desire to restore relationships, if possible.

Unfortunately, restoration is not always possible, but amends go a long way when beginning the process. Step 6 of the “Characteristics of Biblical Amends” (listed above) speaks of a readiness to share Christ. As the offended party sees your humility and desire to make things right, a door may be opened to share the gospel. Don’t be surprised if your desire to make amends gives you an opportunity to share your story.

In Luke 19, Jesus has an encounter with a tax collector named Zacchaeus. He had climbed a tree in hopes of seeing Jesus as He passed by. Jesus, knowing what was in the heart of Zacchaeus, told him to hurry and come down. Jesus was going to have dinner with him that night.

This encounter with Jesus changed his life. He now embraced the gospel and began to look in the mirror. He was a tax collector. As such, he was able to collect whatever tax he wanted. It was very likely he had taken advantage of many in the past. Yet, look at how the gospel moved Zacchaeus to make amends.

And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold” (Luke 19:8).

Can you think of anyone you might need to make amends to? If so, share that with your group. Maybe they can help pray with you as you put together an “Amends Plan” (who, what, where, when, etc.). You might want to put a deadline to the amends. Deadlines trigger the process and hold us accountable.

*Please note: Making amends does not mean full restoration of a relationship or that the other person will forgive you. This may take time and more processing. However, making amends is the first step. It is owning your part in how you’ve wronged someone or sinned, full stop. To dig deeper into the amends process, consider setting aside time with your lifegroup leader, mentor, or a life group coordinator if needed. Or visit Regeneration on Monday nights at The Well.

¹re:generation, Respond to God’s Grace (Steps 7-9) pg 79.