

# LOVE GOD, LOVE OTHERS

A Study of John's Three Letters.

## Our study begins in: 1 John 4:16-19

In this passage we read the definition of who God is. GOD IS LOVE. Not only is God defined by love, but we as believers can be confident in the reality of God's love. How cool is it that the Creator of the universe really does love us? Sometimes we are good at reciting this and talking about it, but struggle to live within the certainty of God's love. At the root of this struggle is something that has been present in humanity since the beginning of time: the tendency to be afflicted by fear.

We learned this week that fear is a wedge that keeps us isolated and separated from God and from each other. However, as John explains in this week's passage, there is no fear in love. In other words, love kills fear, love casts out fear and love eliminates fear from our lives, allowing us to live a bold and courageous life.

So how do we allow this perfect love to completely permeate who we are?

Jesus Christ exemplified a lifestyle that abided in God. Jesus was connected to God, He trusted God, and He lived in God. We were intended for the very same life. Jesus came and showed us the way. He showed us what it meant to live in God, without fear, because of the trust He had in His Father. Even though this is

what God intended for us, we still tend to allow doubt, fear and anxiety to creep in.

But here's the deal: God loves us. He wants good for us. When we believe in God's love for us, we are able to live fearless, bold and courageous lives. When we believe God loves us we no longer need to be fearful about finances, the future, or experiencing rejection, failure, pain, or even death, because as it states in Romans 8:28, "we know that in ALL things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to his purpose." (NIV)

A God who desires good for us wants us to give Him our fears. A God who desires good for us wants us to be courageous and bold. A God who desires good for us wants us to completely abide in His love and be free to live and love like Jesus Christ.

### Discussion Questions

What does it mean to not be afraid of God while still fearing God? What is the difference? What does the fear of God look like in your life?

How often do you doubt that God wants good for you? What moments in your life consistently stir up that doubt?

What fears are present in your life right now? What is pulling you apart from or keeping you separated from God? How can you overcome it?

Talk about a time when you saw or experienced love overcoming fear or love causing someone to act in a bold and courageous way.

What are some practical steps we can take, as a community or as individuals, to cast out fear? What does it look like to be bold and courageous right now?

Do you really believe that God loves you? What does that mean to you?

### Next Steps

Read Psalm 23 several times this week. Reflect and meditate on it and ask God to allow it to penetrate your heart. As you do this, continue to give God your fear as He gives you courage to understand and trust His love for you.

When you are struck with fear or worry this week, respond instantly with prayer. Do not respond with anxiety or stress or an abrupt solution. Instead, immediately bring your fear straight to God in prayer.