Because God Loves…

1 John 4:7-21

Continuum of Attitudes

Strongly against	A little against	Neutral	A little for	Strongly for

1 John 4:1-6

- Test what people believe and teach
- Truth matters
- To deny that Jesus is God's Son is the antichrist

1 John 4:7-11

The Big Idea

Because God is love
His people MUST love
especially each other

Not hating or harming is not enough!

"whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen" 1 John 4:20

The command is not "don't harm your neighbor"

"Love your neighbor as yourself." Mark 12:21

Love

Genuinely wanting God's best blessings for the other person

Genuinely asking: Is there something God is prompting me to give/do/sacrifice for their sake?

Doing what God prompts

While discerning the spirits…

Continuum of Attitudes

Strongly against	A little against	Neutral	A little for	Strongly for

What should we do?

Genuinely want God's best blessing for them

Forgive = release from personal vengeance and want God's blessing for them

Pray honestly

Know His love and forgiveness personally

"But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" Matthew 5:44

Love with God's love (1 Corinthians 13)

Don't keep a record of wrongs

Never delight in evil or reports of evil

Always protect, trust, hope, persevere

"Since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (verse 11) is both logic and means

"We know and rely on the love God has for us" (verse 16) is both comfort and means

"He has given us His Spirit" (verse 13) is both assurance and means

Ask God: Is there an action you are asking me to do?

"People don't need a place to ATTEND. They need a place to BELONG."

Get to know someone
Listen with genuine empathy
Open my heart and my space
What do I have or am I able to do that would bring good to them?

"Love people closer to Jesus"

Reflection Questions for later today or this week…

1. What does it mean that "God is love"? (Note that John says this in verses 8 and 16)

2. What does the command that we "must love our brother and sister" mean? Why is "not hating" or being "neutral" about someone not enough?

3. Where does the power or ability to love come from?

4. What does it mean to forgive? Who is someone you need to forgive?

5. We are to ask God: "Is there an action you are asking me to do?" Why is it important that we ask this question? How can we come to know God's answer to that question? What might make it hard for us to hear or accept His answer?

6. What is an action you will take in order to love someone "in actions and in truth"? (see 1 John 3:18)

7. What does it look like to discern what is good and right at the same time that we love?

8. **Digging deeper:** Read Matthew 5:43-48. Jesus ends the section by saying, "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." In these verses, what is the perfection He is expecting? What is the significance of saying "Be perfect" rather than just saying "Be good"?

Conversation starters

What does it mean "to belong"? Where do you experience that?