



Move Toward The Source

1 John 3

Small Group Plan

I read about a man who was shopping. He entered a jewelry store to look for nothing in particular and for everything in general. He was just browsing with his wife in mind and decided that he wanted to purchase a small pendant in the shape of a cross. The salesperson wanted to be helpful. *"It seems as if we have two models. Would you like the one with or without the man?"*

With or without the man?

Is there a kind of Christianity that matches the jewelry? Does it come in two models? Is there a Christianity that has a cross, but no man? Is there a life that admires the ethics, the kindness, and compassion of Christianity, but has no plans to know and follow Jesus?

The cross that we read about in scripture is more than just a piece of religious jewelry. It is even more than a symbol of the Christian life. It is a picture of a life willing laid down out of love for people. And there is always a man on it.

OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

- Do you find it easy or difficult to really love a person? Explain.
- How has your view of love changed over time?

LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

— THIS IS THE MESSAGE —

1 John 3:11-15

¹¹ For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. ¹² Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil, and his brother's were righteous. ¹³ Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you. ¹⁴ We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death. ¹⁵ Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.

- When you were younger, and you heard someone discussing “the message of the church” — what did they say?
- How has your view of “our message” changed as you have matured?
- How can someone kill their own brother?
- Why would John use a story of someone killing his brother (Cain/Abel) as the illustration of love and hate among Christians?

— THIS IS HOW WE KNOW —

1 John 3:16-18

¹⁶ This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. ¹⁷ If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? ¹⁸ Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

- Explain how the cross defines God’s love — “this is how we know” ?
- Which is easier, to love with words, or with action? Explain.
- How could we “lay down our lives” today?
- How can we move from “seeing” to “pity” to “action”?

USE IT / APPLY IT ...

The Way of Christ (Love)	The Way of Cain (Hate)
Jesus is a model of love	Cain is a model of ... (v. 12)
Love is of God	Hate is of ... (v. 12)
Love indicates life	He who does not love is ... (v. 14)
Love shares	Refusing to share shows ... (v. 17)
Love goes into action	Talk with no action is ... (v. 18)

- Why does a **hater** want to kill a **lover** (Cain)?
- Why does a **lover** want to help a **hater** (Christ)?
- Augustine answered the question, “What does love look like?” this way:

*“It has the hands to help others.
It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy.
It has the eyes to see misery and want.
It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men.
That is what love looks like.”*

- How do you respond to this description of love?
- How is it different from the definition given by the world today?
- Close by asking God to show us the joy of generosity and confidence of sacrifice.