

Josh 1.1-9 Discussion Questions

Questions are based on Dr. Perkin's interview.

Text: 1 John 3:11-21

Pastor Mike opened up with an admission and a question.

- First, he admitted that at times it can feel useless to proclaim love or to love in the midst of a world full of hate.
 - Do you ever feel this way too? When?
- Second, he asked the question, how do we walk in love in a world full of hate?
 - How have you wrestled with this question?
 - What have you learned from Scripture and walking with the Lord about how to do this?

Here were some key themes and comments from Dr. Perkins responses:

- Love is central to the gospel. It gives rise to justice and forgiveness, which is how we undermine hate.
 - How has God used the gospel in your life to stimulate a greater concern for justice?
 - How has God used the gospel to lead you to forgive and pursue reconciliation?
 - Which of these areas do you still need to grow in? A concern for and willingness to respond to injustice on the behalf of others? A willingness to absorb the wrong of others and forgive?
- The people of God are the expression of God to the world; we are the delivery system for God's love.
 - To whom in your life do you find it the most difficult to share God's love with?
 - What groups or individuals do you feel like the church is currently missing the opportunity to love?
- We are all broken; we are all sinful. We need love. God's love meets that need. We get some of that directly from him but we also experience it through God's people, the church. That is why we need to love one another.

- What is the hardest part about loving those inside the church?
- How has God used other Christians to reveal his love for you?
- Facing hatred is a scary thing. The way we overcome fear is mysterious. Courage is the management of fear. We manage fear by having confidence in God; that's what gives us courage. It is a miracle.
 - How has the gospel helped you to face your fears?
 - Have you specifically ever gone into a situation where you knew that you were going to face opposition, and were intentional about trying to respond in love? What happened? How did it go?
 - What did you learn from that experience?
- We are all in process. We just need to keep going.
 - In what area of your life do you need to be patient with your own spiritual growth?
 - In what area do you need to be more intentional about pursuing spiritual maturity?
 - How would you do that? What's the next step you can take right now to grow in this area?

Questions based on the text

Read 1 John 3:11-21

1. The text for this week focused on love and hate. Take a look at vv. 11-15.
 - a. The reality of hatred is unquestionable. We see examples of it in the news all the time. What is behind the hatred in our hearts? What does John say in this passage is a reason for hatred? (You might want to review the account of Cain and Able in Genesis 4). How does this compare with John 3:19-20?
 - b. What are some examples of hatred in our own day? Where do these stem from?
 - c. What kind of hatred is John talking about specifically here? (v. 13)
 - d. How have you experienced this kind of hatred in your life?
 - e. How have you responded to it?

2. How do we know that we love our brothers? What does this love look like?
(See vv. 16-18)

a. How have you experienced Christian brotherly love? What difference has it made in your life?

b. What are some specific ways that God is currently teaching you to love your Christian brothers and sisters?

3. John goes on to say that these tangible expressions of love for our brothers reassure our hearts before God (v. 19). Why would John feel the need to start talking about how to find assurance when our hearts condemn us?