

# NCC Life Group Devotional

**Read—1 John 2:7-14**

## **Loving Others, Loving God**

God talked about the great commandment to love others over 1400 years before the Savior arrived. Deuteronomy 6:5 makes clear we are to love God with all of our being. But then He added in Leviticus 19:18 to also love our neighbors as much as we do ourselves. So loving God and loving others is certainly not new.

This is hard sometimes. We live in a world that encourages us to think of ourselves before anyone or anything else. So when we are commanded by God to put Him and others ahead of our own interests, we struggle. But listen to His words. He gives us strength to do this because “the word of God lives in you.” (v 14) We have the Creator of the universe taking up residence in our body. He will give us what we need to be strong in Him and make His Truths a reality in our life.

When we choose not to love, God makes clear what will happen. We will live in darkness, meaning that we have created a chasm between us and God. We will stumble in our Walk and be in disobedience to God. However, when we find that Christ’s love is not being demonstrated in us, Jesus stands ready to forgive and bring us back into a right relationship with Him. Verse 12 reminds us that it is His name and His alone that offers us grace and forgiveness.

We must choose. We can either love the world or love the Father. We can’t do both.

### **Group Discussion**

1. Read the above mentioned verses in Deuteronomy and Leviticus and discuss why you think God did not mention loving others at the same time He spoke of us loving Him.
2. Do you sometimes struggle with accepting God's forgiveness? If so, why do you think that is?
3. Discuss what exactly what John is referring to when he speaks of "darkness." He mentions it 5 times in four verses.
4. Think of your sphere of influence. Do others see Truth in you? How can God's truth that John speaks of be evident in your life?
5. Discuss some common kinds of hate you see around you. How can you, as a Christian, counter that hate?
6. Hatred is a sure sign we are not walking with God. Is there a time in your life you'd like to share where you truly felt hatred toward someone? Are you still there? Do you need to confess before God? If not, did you overcome hate with love?
7. If Christ exemplified the highest form of love and we are commanded to be like Christ, do you think God is asking us to do something we are not capable of doing? Why or why not?
8. In verses 12-14, John talks about three spiritual stages. Discuss these, why they are relevant to the message and at what stage you belong.

### **Life Application**

1. How can you demonstrate God's love at home; at work; in the community?
2. Read Luke 11:23. What are we being asked to do here? How does our decision affect how we live in love?
3. How would you explain to your children what it means to be strong in the Lord and that the Word lives in them? How would you demonstrate these two concepts to them?
4. What is your greatest impediment to walking in the light? What causes you to stumble most?
5. Discuss a time when demonstrating love when it was really hard made a difference in your life? What happened?