



LOVE

FOR THE
ILLAWARRA

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

LIFEGROUP STUDIES

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LIFEGROUP STUDY - PART A (WEEKS 1-5)

Term 1 for 2025 will see Figtree Anglican Church studying John's gospel together. We will do this in two parts. Part A will survey chapters 1-12 as we are introduced to Jesus, God's son who teaches about God's love. We will see how the love of God is central to the forming of God's family.

In Part B (chapters 13-21) we will take on a companion reader, David Mansfield's book *About Love*. This will provide insight to our reading and teaching of the gospel as well as providing some questions for discussion. *About Love* explores chapters 13-21 of John's gospel, observing what it is to be 'Loved by Jesus, the king of community', and 'Loving like Jesus, in the community of the King.'

Expect to see how God's love shapes his community! In 2025, we will partner with many other churches in our region for the 'Hope for the Illawarra' movement; simultaneously we hope to see in this series God's love for the Illawarra.

Useful resources:

The Gospel According to John by D.A. Carson

John by Andreas J. Köstenberger

About Love by David Mansfield
(Available to purchase at Figtree Anglican Church)

STUDY 1

JOHN 1:1-18

A warm up: If God's love was on display in a local community, what would you expect to find?

"God is love" declares John (1 John 4:8), the apostle that Jesus loved. In his Gospel, or testimony to the life of Jesus, John gives us a picture of God's love by introducing us to God's son Jesus. In his writing there are several themes all driven by the love of God.

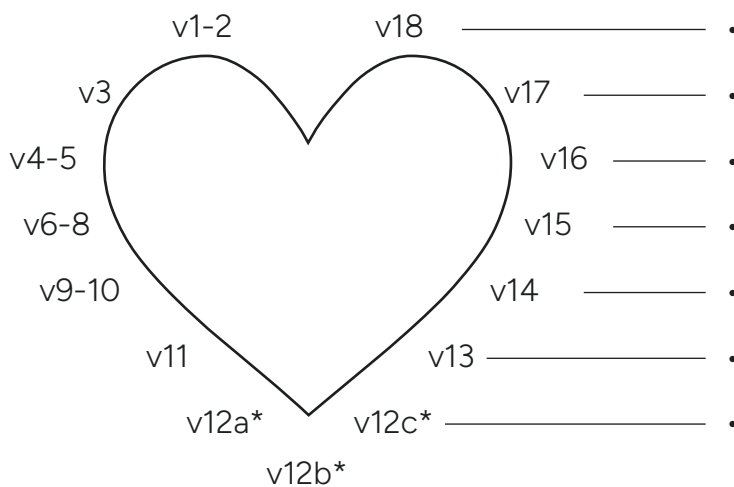
The prologue of John's gospel (John 1:1-18) introduces all the major themes of the book. As is so often customary in the bible, John

employs a chiasm, a mirror like technique of writing designed to reinforce themes, and point to a central climactic point of focus. The verse notes in the lines below tend to mirror and/or complement one another.

Let's introduce ourselves to the book, and John's idea of love by studying the reflected themes in the verses below, attempting summaries of the themes alongside the mirrored verses. E.g. v1-2 are mirrored by v18 and the theme is an eternal Father and Son relationship.

Theme:

- Eternal Father and Son relationship



*the word order of verse 12 is a little mixed up in the NIV English translation. It makes for smoother reading, but loses the pattern. Verse 12 reads in the original language:

- a:** Yet to all who did receive him, **b:** he gave the right to become the children of God
- c:** those who believed in his name.

STUDY 1

2. Verse 12 Introduces is the focal point of John's prologue. Why do you think this is the focal point of the structure? (Compare with John 20:30-31). What is the relationship between Jesus and the formation of community?

3. The themes you have noted above give some shape and character to God's love as seen in John. What further comments or questions do you have about the shape of God's love so far?

4. Considering the themes you have encountered; how might you expect God's love to make a difference in your world?

STUDY 2

JOHN 2:13-23

1. Write your own acrostic poem for Love, e.g.:

Labour L _____

Overwhelming O _____

Vigilant V _____

Emotional E _____

Share and discuss some of the words you have used.

2. "John 2:13-25 is a love story". Read the passage and then discuss your feelings about this statement.
3. a. At first glance, what do you think is the catalyst for Jesus' strong reaction in this event?
- b. Are you surprised/unsurprised that Jesus might act forcefully? Why or why not?
- c. How would you explain this as an account of Jesus being God's love in this community?
4. Take note of the verses that bookend this story (v13-23). What is the season that John wants us to take note of as we read? What themes come with this?

5. Read John 1:6-8,15, 29-30, and 35-36. Consider how Jesus has been introduced. Why might this be highly relevant to Jesus' place in the temple story?
6. How might Jesus' reaction to the sacrificial animals for sale reinforce the main thrust of John's gospel? (Recall John 1:12)
7. What sign does Jesus offer that he is the authority and which people can come, meet, and indeed pray to God?
8. Reflect on what we have seen so far, along with the closing comments of v23-25. What expectations could we have for true love to be among people? What is needed?

STUDY 3

JOHN 5:31-47

*Archaeology is the search for fact, not truth.
If it's truth you're interested in, Dr. Tyree's
Philosophy class is right down the hall.*

- Indiana Jones

Discuss Dr Jones' statement.

Read John 5:31-47

1. There seems to be some key elements for truth communicating according to Jesus (v31-35). What key elements do you observe from these verses?
2. Jesus notes the strongest witnesses he has to his identity. What things does he point to? (v36-40)
3. How do you think Jesus arrives at the conclusion that the Jewish leaders 'do not have the love of God in your heart' (v42)?
4. a. What seems to be blocking these leaders from receiving Jesus and the testimony about Him? (v39-44)
 - b. Who is the object of their love?
5. a. How do you understand that their 'accuser is Moses' (v45)?
 - b. What might this reveal?
6. What is the effect on love when truth is absent? Where have you seen this?
7. What is the effect on truth when love is absent? Where have you seen this?
8. When Jesus is brought into a community, how might his love and truth shape that community?

STUDY 4

JOHN 10:1-21

Read **John 10:1-10** and then complete the following bios:

Name (v1):

Distinguishing style (v1):

Sheep reaction (v5):

Mission (v10):

Name (v2):

Distinguishing style (v2):

Sheep reaction (v3-4):

Mission (v3,9):

1. Consider the distinguishing style of the two figures above. What does Jesus mean when he says, 'I am the gate'? (v7)
2. What does Jesus want the Pharisees to understand?
3. What are the implications of Jesus' discrimination here for us today?

Read **John 10:11-18** and then complete the following bios:

Name (v11):

Distinguishing style (v11,15):

Sheep/shepherd relationship (v14,16):

Mission (v15-16):

Name (v12):

Distinguishing style (v12-13):

Sheep/shepherd relationship (v12-13):

Mission (v13):

4. Consider what Jesus wants the Pharisees to learn about him from the following now:
 - a. "I am the good shepherd" v11,14
 - b. What drives Jesus to fulfill his role?
 - c. Who are the 'other sheep that are not of this pen' (v16). What does Jesus demonstrate to the Pharisees with this statement?
5. a. What do the themes of surrender, sacrifice, courage, care, and seeking teach us about the kind of shepherd Jesus esteems?
 - b. Where have you seen this, where have you seen it lacking? What could you do?

STUDY 5

JOHN 11:1-37

Outside of the Bible, what is your favourite love song or story? What makes it so appealing?

Read John 11:1-37

1. Jesus' feelings for Lazarus are named three times (v3, 5, 36).
 - a. How does Jesus feel about Lazarus?
 - b. Who tells you? What is their perspective?
 - c. What do you think this does to shape the story?

Now stand in the shoes of others:

2. Standing in the shoes of Mary and Martha:
 - a. What surprises you about how Jesus shows his love?
 - b. What have you learnt about how Jesus loves?
3. Standing in the shoes of the Jews:
 - a. What surprises you about how Jesus shows his love?

- b. What have you learnt about how Jesus loves?

4. Led by the narrator:
 - a. Are there some actions of Jesus that are surprising?
 - b. What do you suppose the narrator is trying to help us see about Jesus' love?
5. What might we remind ourselves when God's love and perhaps his actions are hard to understand?



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