

SERMON APPLICATION GUIDE

JOHN 3:16-21

DISCUSSION 1: GOD'S LOVE

1. When you think about God the Father, what thoughts and impressions first come to mind? What are some things in life that might have affected your view of and relationship to God?
2. Since our view of God, especially the Father, is prone to distortion based on personal experiences, how do you work to make sure these influences do not distort your view of God in unbiblical ways?
3. How might truly believing and resting in God's love for you change how you live? How could that affect things like worry and anxiety, living by grace vs performance, fear, being content with what God has given you vs thinking he's withheld good, and whether you live to please God or self?
4. Read a few of the verses about God's love in the "For Further Study" section. When you consider God's love, that he graciously loves us when we're against him and undeserving, how might that affect the way you treat others? Why does experiencing God's love help make us loving?

DISCUSSION 2: CHRIST'S DEATH

1. What are some benefits of reflecting on the coming of Jesus (incarnation) and the death of Jesus (redemption) during this Advent season?
2. What led you to believe in Jesus? Share both the personal need that pushed you to trust in him as well as what truths about Jesus you trusted in.
3. Sometimes Christians ignore the gospel after their conversion. What are dangers of ignoring the gospel for a Christian? What are ways you might be helped by remembering the work of Jesus and how it applies to you even now?

DISCUSSION 3: LIGHT VS DARKNESS

1. Why is it natural for us to want to remain in darkness rather than coming into the light and having our sin, guilt, and brokenness exposed? What are reasons you personally might not always share struggles, sins, doubts, or your mess with others in this group?
2. Though it might be hard and painful, why is walking into the light in honesty and humility better for you than keeping things hidden in the darkness?
3. What are ways this group can grow in honesty, vulnerability, accountability, and sharing ways we are struggling or even sinning? How can we better create a community of trust and encouragement so that we can together walk in the light rather than darkness? (See also the Group application below.)

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

1. What is Christmas all about? How does remembering the most important aspects of Christmas help us find joy and peace in God?
2. Why did God send Jesus to die on a cross?
3. What does it mean to “believe in him” (John 3:16)? Have you ever believed in Jesus? What did that look like?

APPLICATION

- **Group:** Come up with one way over the next week or two that your group can help encourage one another to walk in the light through honesty, vulnerability, and sharing what’s really going on in your heart and life. How can your group be intentional about creating a gracious and trusting environment where you can encourage one another and hold one another accountable for areas you are struggling, straying, sinning, or suffering? It could include breaking up into just men and women next time, having smaller groups of two or three people meet outside of small group, or simply committing to be more honest and going past the surface in what you talk about inside and outside the small group setting.
- **Individual:** Join others at College Park Church by reading through the 2018 Advent booklet, “[All Things New](#).” Included is a daily reading plan with questions, as well as a weekly hymn, recipes, activities, and recommended resources. Read through a daily Old Testament and New Testament passage connected to theme of each Sunday’s passage.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

- **Parallel passages:** 1 John 1:5-2:2; John 1:1-14; 3:31-36; Rom. 5:6-11; 1 John 3:16.
- **God’s love:** 1 John 4:9-12; 3:1; Rom. 5:8; Eph. 2:4; Jer. 31:3; John 15:13.
- **The Light:** John 1:1-12; 3:19-21; 8:12-20; 12:35-37; Ps. 27:1; Ex. 13:17-22; Is. 42:6.
- **Continue reading** through the Advent guide “[All Things New](#).” You can download it online or via the enews, or you can grab one on a Sunday.