



# Sermon Discussion Guide

December 16, 2018  
“Unconditional Love”  
Pastor Emily Vermilya  
John 1:14, 16-18;  
1 John 4:7-17; 20-21

## Prayer

We ask God to give you complete knowledge of his will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding. Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit. All the while, you will grow as you learn to know God better and better.

We also pray that you will be strengthened with all his glorious power so you will have all the endurance and patience you need. May you be filled with joy, always thanking the Father. He has enabled you to share in the inheritance that belongs to his people, who live in the light. For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins. **Colossians 1:9b-14**

## Discussion Starter

Share a story about a gift you received that you never used.

## Sermon Summary

When asked what God is like, most will say that He is “love”, but do we know what this means? Jesus said, “The Father loves the Son” (John 5:20) and he prays “that the love you (the Father) have for me may be in them,” (John 17:26). In fact, the love of the Father for the Son and for us is the same love to the same degree. Just as the Father loved us through the Son, the Son will love others through us. God is not just the standard, but the Source of our love for others. This changes everything about the way we love one another.

## Sermon Review Questions

1. When you think about the birth of Jesus, do you usually think of Jesus as more human or divine? Why? Why is it important to think about Jesus as completely human? Why is it important to think about Jesus as completely divine? What gift are we “receiving” at the birth of Jesus?
2. What are some ways we leave the gift of the incarnation unused?
3. *“Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and **his love is made complete in us.**”* (1 John 4:11-12) What might it mean that God’s love is made complete in us? How do we enact and embody the love of God given in the incarnation?

## Transformation Questions

1. What do you think God is saying to you?
2. What is keeping you from doing this?
3. If you were to do it, what might be a good first step?
4. Who will you tell? Or who will you ask to help you?

## Habit

This week read 1 John slowly throughout the week. While you read, focus on how John talks about God’s love and how we are meant to live in and embody that love. Ask God to show you the ways in which the incarnation shows God’s love for you. Ask God to show you who and how you are to love those around you with an incarnational type of love.

## Quote

“Maybe we still do not fully believe that God’s Spirit is, indeed, the Spirit of love, always leading us deeper into love. Maybe we still distrust the Spirit, afraid to be led to places where our freedom is taken away. Maybe we still think of God’s Spirit as an enemy who wants something of us that is not good for us.

But God is love, only love, and God's Spirit is the Spirit of love longing to guide us to the place where the deepest desires of our heart can be fulfilled. Often, we ourselves do not even know what our deepest desire is. We so easily get entangled in our own lust and anger, mistakenly assuming that they tell us what we really want.

The Spirit of love says: 'Don't be afraid to let go of your need to control your own life. Let me fulfill the true desire of your heart.'" **Henri J.M. Nouwen, *Here and Now***