

¹¹ I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³ He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. ¹⁷ For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”

¹⁹ There was again a division among the Jews because of these words. ²⁰ Many of them said, “He has a demon, and is insane; why listen to him?” ²¹ Others said, “These are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”

My Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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Small Group Study Questions

As you reflect on the message from this week, was there anything you heard for the first time? Was there something said that challenged you or confused you?

Getting to Know You

1. How many popular songs can you think of that include the word “love”? Do you have a favorite? What do you “love” most about it?

Digging Deeper

Our “Big Idea” this week is **love is a poetic and painful pursuit**.

2. When you consider everyday conversations, popular music and art, and culture in general, what are some ways people understand the meaning of the word “love”? How do those either reflect or contradict what you know about God’s love?

John further describes the poetic and painful love of God that pursues people in **1 John 4:7–12**. Read this passage carefully and prayerfully as you answer the following questions.

3. Why is it impossible for someone to say they know God if their life is not characterized by love?
4. How did God show his love according to verse 9? What was his purpose in showing his love in this way?
5. According to verse 10, who loved first—God or us? In what state were we when he loved us?
6. This passage teaches us that God sent his Son to be the *propitiation* for our sins (v. 10). This means that God lovingly sent his Son, and Jesus willingly laid down his life as the perfect sacrifice that covers and forgives us so that we do not have to experience God’s righteous judgment because of our sin. Briefly describe how this truth demonstrates how God’s love is both *poetic* and *painful*.

Live It Out

- ## Prayer Requests

One of the most significant ways we grow spiritually together is to pray for one another each week. Use this section to write down the requests of those in your group so you can remember to pray for them throughout the week. Remember: *what is shared in your group should stay in your group.*

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