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## **Sunday, July 31 - Discussion Questions**

### **Darkness & Dawn (A Parable)**

A Rabbi asked his students: "How can we determine the hour of dawn, when the night ends and the day begins?" One of the Rabbi's students suggested: "When, from a distance, you can distinguish between a dog and a sheep."

"No," was the answer of the Rabbi.

"It is when one can distinguish between a fig tree and a grapevine." stated a second student.

"No," the rabbit stated.

"Please tell us the answer then," asked the students. "It is when," said the wise teacher, "you can look into the face of another human being and have enough light to recognize your brother or your sister. Until then it is still night and darkness is with us." (Henri Nouwen)

- 1. Read the above parable and discuss what idea the author is trying to convey? What feelings does the parable evoke in you? Why do you think this is?**

### **The New Commandment**

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35)

Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard. At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother or sister is still in darkness. Whoever loves his brother or sister abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. But whoever hates his brother or sister is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes. (1 John 2:7-11)

- 2. How do the above scriptures expand on your understanding of the parable? What do you believe it means to love as Jesus loved? Is there a cost to that kind of love? If so, what is it?**



### **The Presence of People**

If man really is fashioned, more than anything else, in the image of God, then clearly it follows that there is nothing on earth so near to God as a human being. The conclusion is inescapable, that to be in the presence of even the meanest, lowest, most repulsive specimen of humanity in the world is still to be closer to God than when looking up into a starry sky or at a beautiful sunset. (Mike Mason)

- 3. Take a moment and look at the person across from you. What does it mean to see them as created in the image of God? Picture someone that you have difficulty with. What does it mean to see them as created in the image of God? How would this "vision" of people impact how you treat them?**

### **Closing**

#### **Encourage One Another**

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 15:5-6)

**Take 15-20 minutes to share about how God has been at work in your life. Share any victories or struggles that you are experiencing now and then take some time to pray for one another.**