

Welcome HOME

vGROUP STUDY



VINTAGE PRESS

Welcome Home: vGroup Study

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This Group is Caring

Whether we moved across the state, across the country, or across the world, we all moved away from home at some point (some of you are still waiting for your chance). That first big move on our own can be exciting, but it can also be terrifying. We don't have the support we are used to; our family and the friends we surrounded ourselves with aren't there to hold us up when we need them. This not only applies to catastrophes, but to the day-to-day stresses and experiences we have. We miss those people that we could share both the good and the bad with.

Thankfully, as Christians, we have a place where we should be at home. We have a place where we can call each other brothers and sisters. This place is the local church, we hope that Vintage is that place for you. As brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ we should be able to share our joys and our tragedies with one another. Being able to connect with other believers is a part of why joining a local church is so important. The connections you form with your brothers and sisters in Christ is why we think being a part of a vGroup during your time at Vintage is so important.

- What were some of the struggles that you encountered the first time you moved away from home?
- How did your involvement, or lack of involvement, in Christian community affect how you dealt with hardships?
- How has Christian community impacted the way that you celebrate triumphs or times of happiness while away from what you would consider your "home"?
- What are some important experiences that you have shared with your vGroup?

1 John 3:11–18 provides us with a look at what living in Christian community means. This text definitely gives us some good things to think about as we look at the potential impact that being in a vGroup can have in our lives.

¹¹For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

¹²We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous.

1 John 3:11–12

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- What is the message that John is referring to in v. 11? What kind of importance would this message have if the community has been hearing it since the beginning? (Hint: Look back at John 13:34; 15:12, 17 for Jesus' words on loving one another.)
- What do we know about Cain? (Hint: Genesis 4:1–25 has the story of Cain and Abel.)
- How does Cain provide a negative example of how we are supposed to behave towards our brothers and sisters in Christ?

¹³Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. ¹⁴We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. ¹⁵Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

1 John 3:13–15

- Verse 13 looks a little bit odd in this context, but the author is trying to make a point. How important is loving one another when we know that the world around us is already set against us?
- How should our love for one another point to our love for Christ? How does the author intend for this love to be a sign that we actually belong to the body of Christ?
- Given the warning in v. 15, what kind of effort should we put towards cultivating love for one another? What are some situations in which cultivating love is difficult? How do you typically respond in those situations?

¹⁶By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. ¹⁷But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? ¹⁸Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

1 John 3:16–18

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- What does v. 16 mean by “he laid down his life for us?” (Think back to our discussions from *The Sayings*.)
- The implications of v. 16 go beyond the literal sense of dying in place of another believer, what are some common situations in your vGroup or in the larger context of our church family that give you the opportunity to put someone else before yourself?
- John does not hold back in v. 17–18, what does this message mean for how you relate to the people in your vGroup? How does your vGroup meet the physical needs of those in it?
- Are you willing to accept aid or help from the people in your vGroup?

1 John 3:11–18 presents some clear expectations for the radical nature of Christian community. The Church is not like a commune or a utopian movement that tries to redistribute resources. Those movements eventually fail because they are not sustained by the love that we find in Jesus Christ. The body of Jesus Christ has been around for 2,000 years, and there are no signs of dying when you look at the Church in a global context. The common thread that binds us together and should encourage us to show and receive love for one another is the love of Jesus Christ. The most obvious expression, in our lives at least, of the love that Christ commands us to show one another should be found each week as we gather in our vGroups.

- What are the most consistent expressions of Christ-like love that you see each week in your vGroup?
- What were some times that personal needs in your vGroup were met? (This is not boasting, but a time for reflection and either rejoicing or repentance.)

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- What are some areas that your vGroup can be better about showing the love of Christ, either through resolving conflicts or meeting the needs of group members?
- Are you comfortable with coming to your vGroup when you are in need? What might need to change to make that answer a 'yes'?