



Chapter & verse – Helen Garton (page 24)

Read 1 John 4:7-12, followed by Helen Garton’s article.

1. This month’s Bible passage is said to have been written by the disciple described as ‘the one whom Jesus loved’. It is part of a letter thought to have been circulated to many churches at the end of the first century. What difference, if any, does that context make to your reading of the Bible text? Is it easier to love after experiencing love?
2. Helen Garton’s first paragraph describes ‘feeling pretty smug’ after a church mission meeting. What thoughts or feelings are you left with after church-related/Christian activities?
3. The last verse of the Bible passage says that ‘if we love one another, God lives in us’. What might God living in each one of us look like? And what practical steps might we take towards this?
4. Helen’s third paragraph introduces ‘Mrs Mutton-dressed-as-lamb’. What did you make of this descriptor? What kind of judgments do you make of people?
5. ‘... and you call yourself a Christian!’ How do perceptions of Christian behaviour differ from reality? Where do perceptions of Christian behaviour come from?
6. Helen’s fifth and sixth paragraphs give examples of what the Bible does and doesn’t say about love. Can you think of other examples?
7. ‘If you can’t love people, get out.’ Do you agree with this view? Why?

For further reflection: ‘If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal ...’ 1 Corinthians 13

Prayer: Loving Father, we have learned what love is from your never-ending, unbreakable love for us. Help us to love with a love that is bigger than our own prejudices and weaknesses. Teach us to love as you have loved us. Amen.