

# So That You May Know

## An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John 4:11**

### Chapter 19- God's Love Brings Forth Our Love

#### 187- God's Love Brings Forth Our Love- Part 2

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WAOY Wednesday 05/14/08

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1John**, and today I want to continue to look at what John taught about how "God's Love Brings Forth Our Love". So, let's open our Bibles and read **1John 4:11** again together:

**Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.**

Now in this verse- the Apostle John shows us the great contrast between real, genuine Christianity and what is called mysticism. Mysticism is very concerned about the Love of God and the mystic is correct when he says that the highest good is the contemplation of God's Love.

But the great difference between Christianity and mysticism is that Christianity is not merely a truth that needs to be considered- no, Christianity is a life that is given which must actually be lived. So unlike mysticism that only *considers* truth- Christianity says that our examination of Truth leads us to do something that is measurable and that is definable in our own lives and for others. So as Christians- we are not to merely believe the Truth- but we are to love it and seek to obey it. So the Apostle John says here that since it is true that God loved us- then we have a duty and an obligation and a responsibility not to simply rejoice in that Truth; not to simply acknowledge that God's Love is wonderful and true- but we now that we have accepted that God's Love toward us is a wonderful and glorious fact- we now have a duty to act on that Love- and love one another.

So unlike mysticism that would simply rejoice over the fact that God Loves us – Christianity, John says, expects a change in our behavior because of the truth that we now have heard and believe.

You see, dear friends, the New Testament teaches that love- real love; godly love is much more than an emotional feeling. Love is an “act of our will”. So, love doesn’t just “feel” something- love always “*does*” something. So genuine love always makes demands on our lives; love inconveniences us; love requires of us; and love is probably the single most costly commodity on earth. People sell all that they have for love; people give away everything that they own; risk their lives; and many even die- all because of love.

And that is natural, human love. So just think how much greater God’s Love is than human love- and just think how much more valuable and how much more important God’s Love is than human love.

So we can see that God’s Love goes way beyond a feeling- it is not even something that we should contemplate philosophically. No, Love is the most practical thing in the world and it is proven and it is manifested- not by words- but by action.

For example- many say today, “*I love Jesus.*” But what exactly does that mean? That statement could mean anything from “*I am very fond of Jesus*” to “*I believe that Jesus existed*” to “*I actually serve and obey Jesus*”. But here is how Jesus defined love in **John 14:15**:

### **If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.**

So Jesus Himself linked love to behavior; He linked love to action; Jesus tied love in with how we live our lives; and what we do; and how we speak; and where we go; and what we accept and what we reject. So because Jesus did that- because Jesus tied our love for Him with our behavior- for anybody to say that they love Jesus automatically places upon them the weight of actually following and serving and obeying this Jesus Who they say that they love. And if they do not obey Him- then all they have done is throw meaningless words into the air.

So here the Apostle John teaches the very same thing. John says that God loves us. That is a statement of fact. That is a Divine Revelation. That is inspired Truth. Okay, now that we have heard that God loves us; now that we have accepted that statement as being true; Now that we agree with God that God actually does loves us- what do we do now? What do we “do” with that information? John says here in verse 11 that we are now to love one another.

Now the mystic will teach that we should read and understand that truth that God loves us and we should analyze it and we should explore it and study it and contemplate it and even rejoice over it. But that is where the mystic stops.

But to the Christian; to the believer- we must do everything that the mystic does- and then go one step further and we must so appreciate this truth and so value this truth that we actually modify and change and alter our behavior based upon that truth so that we may do to and for others what God does for us.

The Christian agrees with the mystic and so we teach that believers should read and understand and analyze and explore and study and contemplate the fact that God loves us. The Christian also agrees with the mystic in that we too must rejoice over the fact that God loves us. But the Christian is not allowed to stop there. No, the genuine born again believer must go further than the mystic. And so, since it is a Divinely inspired Truth that God loves us- we now have a *requirement* and a demand that flows out from this Divine love- to love one another. And if we don't take that next step- if we fully accept the fact that God loves us but we do not in turn love one another- then we are not faithful Christians, dear friends, and we are proving by our actions that we are nothing more than pagan mystics- no matter what we say. Read with me what the Apostle James said about this in **James 1:22-25:**

**22** But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

**23** For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror;

**24** for *once* he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.

**25** But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

Now let's get deeper into this. James says that hearing and even believing in the truth that God loves us without then altering our behavior to the point where we now love one another is not a good or

noble thing- no, James says that this is deception. And it is the worst kind of deception because it is self-deception.

And let's go ever further. To combine what Jesus, James, and John all said- for us to understand the magnificent truth that God actually and in reality loves us wicked sinners and to sing about that love and to rejoice over that love and then to stop there and not be changed by that love to the point where we now love one another- that is the *height* of deception and proves that we really do not know or love God at all.

And conversely, the fact that we endeavor to love one another- although we may well fall short from time to time proves that not only that we believe in the truth that God loves us- but that we so highly value that truth that God loves us that we are humbly and willingly changed by that truth to the point where we now love one another.

And I suggest to you that that effort on our part to change our behavior that is based on the promise of God's love toward us is what faith really is.

Let me put this another way. The living of the Christian life- according to the New Testament is not primarily dependent upon some experience or some blessing which we have received. It is, rather the day to day outworking of the truth which we claim to believe.

If you look at it from the outside- all you see is a person who is denying himself as he struggles to keep God's Commandments. But to that individual- what he is doing is lovingly and graciously submitting his life to the authority of divine truth by altering his behavior so that he is conformed to the image of God.

So the principle that John is teaching us here by his example of love is that Divine Truth always in all cases produces a corresponding change in human behavior. If Divine Truth is actually believed- then that person's behavior will change. So if that person's behavior does not measurably change- then that doesn't in any way tarnish Divine Truth- it only proves that that individual really doesn't believe or accept it.

In verse 11, John says this, **"If God so loved us- then we ought..."**. Now the word, "ought" involves real unpopular and forgotten concepts like duty, responsibility, and obligation. So what John is saying here is that since it is true that God love us to the degree that He sent His only begotten Son to the Cross with all our sins upon Him so that the full brunt of the wrath and fury of a holy God could be poured out upon

Jesus instead of us- since God so love us to that degree therefore- we now have the duty, the responsibility; and the obligation to love one another.

So John is teaching that if I say that I believe *that* over there- then that places upon me the duty and the responsibility and the obligation to do *this* over here. So if God so love us- we ought. And so only by actually *doing* what is my duty to *do* can I truly say that I believe what it is I say that I believe. Now the Alabama English way of saying this is, "*Talk is cheap*". So *saying* you love God without a corresponding obedience to what God has commanded is not love at all- it is just talk. It isn't love; it isn't faith; and it isn't Christianity- it is just talk- and *anybody* can talk.

But only genuine Blood washed saints can obey. And so, this Epistle, like most of the New Testament was not written to the unbeliever- but to the believer. And John is not telling lost people to love one another- he is telling people who say they are saved to love one another. And he is telling those who have heard that God loves them and have believed that God loves them that since it is true that God does love them- they now ought to love one another.

Now back in **1John1:4**- the Apostle John said that the *reason* that he wrote all that he wrote was so that our joy would be full. So to apply that truth to this verse is to say that if you want your joy to be full- you must not only believe that God loves you; you must not only accept that God loves you- you must believe it to the point where that belief empowers you to love one another. In other words, if you want your joy to be full- you must take what you believe and put it into practice. So, in this case- if you honestly believe that God loves you- that knowledge alone will *not* make your joy to be full. No, if you want the fullness of joy- you must so believe that God loves you that your belief in that Promise will alter your behavior so that you will then become inconvenienced and you will begin to live in a radical and risk taking manner by loving one another.

Now perhaps some of you are like me and you have found that all Christians are not easy to love. But that has got nothing to do with it. Because the truth of the matter is that we are not always so easy to love either. So because our loving other people may be hard or because it is difficult or even because those you are trying to love might not even appreciate the fact that you're trying to love them- has got nothing to do

with it. You are not told to love one another because you will “get” love back or because it will make you feel better or because it will do something marvelous for you or for them. No, we must get out of the thinking that the only reason that we are supposed to do something is because of what we get out of it. We learned that concept from the lost world- not from the Bible.

No, John is teaching here that we ought to love one another for no other reason other than God so loved us. And so the only correct response to this wonderful, glorious marvelous love of God; the only proper reflection of the fact that we now believe and trust in that glorious Promise is that we now gladly receive the weight of the obligation to love one another. So as I strive to love another- I am *proving* that I value God’s Love. As I struggle to love those who are not always lovable- as I continue to love them even when they don’t appreciate it or even recognize it- I am offering a worship to God out of a genuine gratefulness for God mercifully loving me when I was unlovable in my sin. And as I strive to love for that reason- the Promise of God is that my joy will be full.

John also says here that we do not wait until we *feel* like loving each other- but that we *make* ourselves love; we *force* ourselves to love; we *fight* against our natural inclination to *not* love each other because John said “**we ought.**”

So if we place a high premium on the love of God; if we value God’s Love more than life itself; if we set God’s Love at the pinnacle of all that we are and all that we do- that will empower us to obey what God has said so that Jesus Christ will be rightly honored and our joy will be full and in this case John says:

**... if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another**

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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