

INTRODUCTION

1. Please turn in your Bibles this morning to 1 John chapter 4.
2. We have just completed the first section of chapter 4, verses 1-6.
3. This morning we are beginning to look at the next section which begins in verse 7 and run through verse 21 or the end of the chapter.
4. Let me read as you follow verses 7-21.
5. Jesus said to His disciples in John 13:35 (NASB) By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”
6. How will the world know that we belong to Jesus? When we love one another.

7. People, whether they realize it or not, are looking for love.
8. But they look for it in the wrong places.
9. They search for it in relationships and activities but according to 1 John 4:7-21 it is found in Jesus Christ because God is the source of true love.
10. And since He is the One who created love, He knows what true love is and how it functions.
11. Most people define love as feelings but true love is more than feelings.
12. The Beatles use to sing a song "All you need is love."
13. If they'd been singing about God's love, the statement would have a grain of truth in it.
14. But what usually goes by the name love in popular culture is not authentic love at all; it's a deadly fraud.
15. Far from being "all you need," it's something you desperately need to avoid.

16. The apostle Paul makes that very point in Ephesians 5:1–3. He writes, “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.”
17. The simple command of verse 2 (“walk in love, as Christ loved us”) sums up the whole moral obligation of the Christian.
18. After all, God’s love is the single, central principle that defines the Christian’s entire duty.
19. This kind of love is really “all you need.”
20. Romans 13:8–10 says, “The one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments ... are summed up in this word: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”
21. Galatians 5:14 echoes that self same truth: “The whole law is fulfilled in one word: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”

22. Jesus likewise taught that all the Law and the Prophets hang on two simple principles about love—the first and second great commandments (Matt. 22:38–40).
23. In other words, “love ... is the bond of perfection” (Col. 3:14 NKJV).
24. When Paul commands us to walk in love, the context reveals that in positive terms, he is talking about being kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving to one another (Eph. 4:32).
25. The model for such selfless love is Christ, who gave His life to save His people from their sins.
26. “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). And “if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 John 4:11).¹
27. As we consider the text before us, this is the third and final time John appeals to the subject of brotherly love.
28. He first mentioned it in 2:7–11, where it is given as an indicator of one who is walking in the light.

¹ <https://www.ligonier.org/blog/what-true-love/>

29. The second occurrence comes in 3:11–18 (or even 3:10–24) and is mentioned as evidence that one is a child of God.²
30. So all that has been said about love (1:8–10; 3:1, God’s love; 3:13–18) is now fully developed.³
31. John simply links into 3:10, 11, 23 as a weaver repeats a color in his design. We belong together in love; we do not belong together with those who have the spirit of the deceit (v. 1–6).⁴

LESSON

- I. The Exhortation to Love (v.7a)
 - A. It is Addressed to All Believers
 1. They are called “Beloved”
 2. Gr.agapetoi, “only-beloved” (BADG), “esteemed, dear” (Thayer), “divinely loved ones” (MacArthur). It occurs 5 times in 1 John (3:2, 21; 4:1, 7, 11);

² Akin, Daniel L. [1. 2. 3 John](#). Vol. 38. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001. Print. The New American Commentary.

³ Lenski, R. C. H. [The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude](#). Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1966. Print.

⁴ Ibid., Lenski.

62 times in the NT.⁵

3. There is a pastoral warmth in the word (*[beloved] agapētoi*) that would be welcomed. He loves them and will now challenge them to love others as well.⁶
4. They are exhorted to continue love one another
5. John includes himself by the words “let us”
6. It’s true for the teacher as well as the student.
7. John’s purpose is to encourage and stimulate the practice of Christian love.⁷
8. The word for love (*agapao*) is a present active verb which means he is exhorting them to “keep on loving.”
9. The noun (*agape*) refers to a self-sacrificial love (e.g., Jn.3:16)

⁵ King James Word Book

⁶ Ibid., Akin.

⁷ Hiebert, D. Edmond. [*The Epistles of John: An Expository Commentary*](#). Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1991. Print.

10. They are to “keep on sacrificing themselves for one another”
11. The reciprocal pronoun “one another” insists that this love must be mutual, must flow freely in both directions. It is a call for a high, unselfish love which freely seeks the true welfare of the one loved.⁸
12. This is not the first time John gives this exhortation. He mentions it 4 other times (3:11, 23; 4:11, 12)
13. Believers are to love one another in 3 ways:
 - a) By sacrificing ourselves

How will other believers know we love them?
When we sacrifice ourselves for them.

(1) 1 John 3:16

(2) John 15:13

(3) Romans 12:10 (NASB) Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give

⁸ Ibid., Hiebert.

preference to one another in honor.

(4) Philippians 2:3-4 (NASB) Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

b) By meeting each others needs

(1) 1 John 3:17-18

(2) Romans 12:13 (NASB) contributing to the needs of the saints.

c) By loving God and keeping His commandments

This is actually where it all begins!

(1) 1 John 5:2

(2) John 15:9-10 (NASB) Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. 10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My

love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

A.W. Tozer said, "...the final test of love is obedience. Not sweet emotions, not willingness to sacrifice, not zeal, but obedience to the commandments of Christ."⁹

B. It Comes from God (v.7b)

John says, "for love is from God."

Love flows from or out of (*ek*) God and has God as its spring or source. Not only is this true of God, but all who love have been born (*gegennētai*) of God.¹⁰

John Stott calls this the "most sublime of all biblical affirmations about God's being."¹¹

Just as God is life (Ps. 36:9) and the source of eternal life (1:1–2; 3:1–2, 9; 5:12; 2 Tim. 1:1; Titus 1:2), and just as He is light (1:5–7; 2:8–11; cf. Isa. 60:19), He is also love (cf. 4:16).

Therefore, if believers possess His life and walk in His light (righteousness and truth), they will also both

⁹A.W. Tozer, *The Quotable Tozer I*, p.23).

¹⁰Ibid., Akin.

¹¹Stott, John., *Letters of John*, 163.

possess and manifest His love, since **everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.**

Because they are God's children, manifesting His nature, they will reflect His love to others.¹²

1. Love is God's nature

Love is inherent in all He is and does. Even His judgment and wrath is perfectly harmonized with His love.¹³

There is no love in the true sense but that which finds its source in Him.¹⁴

G.S. Barrett said, "The greatest words ever spoken in human speech, the greatest words in the whole Bible.... It is impossible to suggest even in briefest outline all that these words contain, for no human and no created intellect has ever, or will ever, fathom their unfathomable meaning; but we may reverently say that this one sentence concerning God contains the key to all

¹² MacArthur, John. [1, 2, 3 John](#). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2007. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.

¹³ MacArthur, John, Jr., ed. [The MacArthur Study Bible](#). electronic ed. Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997. Print.

¹⁴ MacDonald, William. [Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments](#). Ed. Arthur Farstad. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995. Print.

God's works and way ... the mystery of creation,
... redemption ... and the Being of God Himself.¹⁵

2. God is love

Love is not something that God does; it is what God is. In his eternal being and nature, God is love.

Other statements in the New Testament tell us what God is.

In John 4:24, Jesus tells the Samaritan woman that God is a spirit. He is immaterial, unseen spirit.

In 1 John 1:5, the apostle tells us that God is light.

Light portrays that he is a God of knowledge and wisdom, and undiluted in holiness and purity. There are no shadows in God.

Hebrews 12:29 tells us that God is a consuming fire.

¹⁵G. S. Barrett, *The First Epistle General of St. John*, pp. 170–173.

His burning holiness will either purify or consume us.

So God is spirit, light, a consuming fire, and now, love.

Love and holiness are not contradictory in God. Nor do any of his other attributes conflict with love.

All that God does is love because he is love.

All that God does is holy and pure, because He is light.

God's love is a holy love, not a blind or indulgent love.

God's holiness and justice are not cold and arbitrary; they are loving holiness and loving justice.¹⁶

- a) 1 John 4:8
- b) 1 John 4:16
- c) He is called "the God of love" in 2 Corinthians 13:11 (NASB) Finally, brethren,

¹⁶ Joel Beeke, The Epistles of John, p.159.

rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

3. Salvation produces love

John also says, “everyone who loves is born of God and knows God (v.7c)

This means you cannot truly love without knowing God and those who know God will love one another and not just other believers but also unbelievers too (Mat.5:43-44).

The verb rendered **is born** is a perfect passive form of *gennaō* and could be literally translated “has been begotten.”

Everyone God has saved in the past continues to give evidence of that fact in the present.¹⁷

John adds “and knows God” and weaves in this true heart knowledge.¹⁸

In other words, it is not the person’s ability to love that causes the new birth, but his ability to love

¹⁷ Ibid., MacArthur, John. [1](#), [2](#), [3 John](#).

¹⁸ Ibid., Lenski.

flows from his regeneration in Christ.¹⁹

- a) At salvation God pours out His love in our hearts by the Holy Spirit - Romans 5:5 (NASB) and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.
- b) We are now identified as those who love God - Romans 8:28 (NASB) And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.
- c) Our love to God proves we are known by Him - 1 Corinthians 8:3 (NASB) but if anyone loves God, he is known by Him.
- d) Love now has become the fruit of his life (Gal.5:22; 1 Cor.16:22)
- e) Love is the proof of one's salvation (1 Jn.3:14)

¹⁹ Ibid., Akin.

4. If you do not love one another you do not know God (v.8)

John says, “The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.”

5. Someone may profess to be a Christian but only those who display love like their heavenly Father actually possess His divine nature and are truly born again.²⁰

6. Joel Beeke says “If you claim that you belong to God and know God and are part of the family of God, yet have no love for God’s people, you are deluding yourself. You are trying to speak a language that is completely foreign to you. All through this epistle, John teaches that likeness is the proof of relationship. The great proof that we are truly related to the eternal God and belong to Him is that we are like Him---especially in exercising love. John says that everyone who loves had been born of God.”²¹

7. If the love of God does not dominate your life by manifesting itself to others you do not know Him----this is a universal truth!

²⁰ Ibid., MacArthur, John, Jr., ed. [The MacArthur Study Bible](#).

²¹ Ibid., Beeke.

8. Jesus told the Jewish leaders that they did not have the love of God in them because they did not receive Him - John 5:42-43 (NASB) but I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves. 43 I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him.

9. He told the scribes and Pharisees basically the same thing because they rejected Him - John 8:42 (NASB) Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me.

CONCLUSION

1. Do you know the true God and His Son the Lord Jesus Christ?
2. Do you claim to know Him?
3. Is God's love manifested in your life?
4. Do you keep on loving one another?
5. If you struggle to answer yes, you may be lost.
6. Repent today and surrender your life to Jesus Christ.
7. Let's pray.