

So That You May Know

An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John**

Chapter 14- The Second Line **1John 3:11-18**

119. Distinguishing Between Love and Hate- Part 3

WAOY Friday/Monday 12/07-10/07

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 "The Distinction Between Love and Hate". So, let's read **1John 3:11-18** again together:

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

12 not as Cain, *who* was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous.

13 Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you.

14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

16 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

17 But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?

18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

Now on the last broadcast- we were exploring just what John meant when he brought out the 8 verses that we just read. John was drawing a clear distinction here between true love and hate. And on the last broadcast- we were going over just what true love is and we were getting into the fact that our love for God is a gift from God. And on today's broadcast- I want to go over some more of this.

We must remember, beloved that God loved His people *totally* and *fully* from the very beginning. God's Love for His chosen people does not grow and it does not develop. Part of what the word, "*foreknowledge*" that Paul used so many times in his writings means- is not simply that God knew before- but that God loved before. So the Bible teaches that God "set His Love" upon all those whom He chose to save from before the foundation of the world.

But while it is true that God's Love for us does not grow- our love for God *does* grow. And it *should* grow and in fact if our love for God is *not* growing – that is a sign that something is horribly wrong with us. And we can tell if our love for God is truly growing because our obedience to God will get better as our love grows.

Now the Bible teaches that before we were saved- when we were yet in our sins- we did *not* love God. Now I know that to say that is very unpopular today- but it is nonetheless what Scripture teaches. No lost person loves God- not one; no lost person is good- 100% of all lost people are sinners; none are righteous- they are lost and part of what it means to be lost is that lost people do not possess the ability nor the desire to love and serve God.

When we are saved- God gifts us with love for Himself. So we are indebted to God for even the love that we have for God. So it is true then that *all* saved people love God- because part and parcel of the new divine nature is that our new nature loves God and loves the things of God.

And John is teaching that here. John doesn't teach that *some* saved people love God while *others* -who are equally saved- do not love God- no, John teaches here that *all* saved people love both God and the brethren because that saved person has been given the supernatural ability and desire to love God and love all those who are saved.

And so by default- John is also teaching here that if a man does *not* love God or if a man does *not* love the brethren it is because he does *not* have within him that God given ability and that God given desire which indicates that he is not saved.

Now we must also know that since our love for God does grow and since our love for God does develop- we must yield ourselves to those things that help our love for God to grow. So as we read and study God's Word- as we pray and as we engage in fellowship with other believers as we participate in the two Ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's

Supper and as we yield ourselves to serve others- our understanding of God will grow and therefore our love for this great and glorious God will begin to blossom.

Now as we read and study God's Word- we will run across verses and passages which seem to describe a God that we may not understand or like very much; and we will find out things about God that may not sit well with us; and we will discover Attributes about God that we might not care for.

And when that happens- we have two choices. One choice is that we can sanitize the Bible and we can take out of the Bible those verses that offend us or we can simply ignore them or we can say in our arrogance and pride- "*I don't believe or accept that*".

But when we do that- we must understand dear friends that we are setting our *own* standard of Who God is and our own standard of what God will or will not do above that of God's Own description of Himself in Scripture and that is the very definition of blasphemy.

Anytime we set our own human ideals above that of Scripture- we are in affect saying that our standard of morality and our standard of right and wrong and our limited ideas of Who God is and what God will and will not do is better and higher and more important than God's- and that is a very dangerous and sinful thing to do.

This is what Paul meant when he said in **Romans 1:16:**

For I am not ashamed of the gospel...

But when we don't like something that Scripture says and we try to change it or ignore it or explain it away- when we say that we don't believe something that God's Word clearly teaches- we are in fact proving that we are ashamed of what the Gospel says and we are so ashamed of it- we are trying to change it or get rid of it.

But to love God is to love *all* that Scripture reveals about God- and I suggest to you that human beings do not possess the capacity in themselves to love God like that. So for anybody to be able to love God in the way that God Himself says is proper is a gift from God to us. So we should pray, beloved, that God would be merciful to us to give us the love for Him that we do not possess in our own frail human weakness.

Now I hear people say all the time that they love Jesus- but it is fascinating to find out just what they mean when they say that. For

example- many people love the little baby Jesus lying in the manger that we see so much of during the Christmas season. Many, many people have lots of love for this innocent little baby because He is so cute and so sweet- and because this little baby makes no demands on their lives. These people tend to forget that this little baby grew up and did things and said things that most people find deeply and profoundly offensive. So much so- that they reject what He said and what He did as an adult. So that is really not love.

Then there are those who greatly admire the Jesus Who hung on the Cross. And these people admire His selflessness and His willingness to give His Own life for others and they see this as a type of humanistic morality- but again these very same people denounce and rebel against many of the things that this same Jesus did and taught- and once again- that is not love either.

We must remember that we cannot separate the Person of Jesus from the Words of Jesus. To love Jesus is to love not only Who He is- but it is to also love what He said and what He did. To reject what Jesus said or to reject what Jesus did- is to reject Who Jesus is.

And it even goes further than that. If you say that you love what Jesus said and yet you rebel against what He said, or you disobey what He said- then you prove that in reality- you don't love what He said at all. Listen to what Jesus Himself said about this in **John 14:15**:

If you love Me you will keep My commandments.

And again in **John 14:21**:

He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me...

And again in **Luke 6:46**:

Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?

So in reality to love Jesus is to obey Jesus. In fact- the only way that we have as human beings to prove that we actually do love Jesus is by and through our devotion and our obedience to the things that He said. And conversely- the only way that we have as human beings to prove that we do *not* love Jesus is by rebelling against what he said and by

doing what is right in our own eyes because talk is cheap.

So we cannot separate the Person of Jesus from the Words of Jesus and likewise- we cannot separate our love for Jesus and our obedience to Jesus.

And the Bible is clear about how we are to love God. We are not to love God with that kind of flippant, self- serving emotion that we call love. None of the Apostles ever taught that. No, true love means something, and true love will require of you.

So, we must be careful beloved that we tell every human on earth the truth- that loving Jesus- really and truly loving Jesus will cost you something. Make no mistake about it- you *will* pay a price to love Jesus- and that price is either worth it to you or it isn't. And the bottom line is that *whatever* it costs is worth it to those who are truly saved and it is *not* worth the price to those who attend church but who are not born from above.

So, the Bible is crystal clear about this- beloved. You will be persecuted if you love Jesus; men will hate you if you love Jesus; you may even lose everything you own and even your life if you really and truly love Jesus. That is the way that it has *always* been and that is the way it will *always* be and the dividing line between the two groups is that saved people are willing to pay that price while lost people are not.

So how much are we supposed to love God? To what extent are we to go to prove our love for God? Let's look at how Jesus Himself said that we are to love God. Read with me **Mark 12:30**:

AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.'

Now in this passage- Jesus is telling us that the *highest* and best form of love that a human being can have on this earth is not to love our wives or our children or our country or ourselves- but the highest and best form of love that anyone can have on this earth is to love God. So, love for God is preeminent and love for God is paramount. In fact, love for God is supposed to be the basis by which all the other loves flow.

Therefore- loving anything or anyone *more* or even to the *same extent* that we love God is not noble- beloved- it is the very definition of

idolatry. For example- anyone who knows me knows that I deeply love my wife, Rhonda. I will hurt you if you dishonor my wife. I love my wife so much that I never allowed my children to sass her or disrespect her. My wife is the queen of my home.

But I do not love my wife nearly as much as I love God. There is no comparison. My love for God is far greater than the love that I have for my wife will ever be. For me to love my wife the way that I love God is to put my wife on the same level as I do God and that is to make my wife an idol. And because she is human- sooner or later my wife will fail to live up to the expectation that I have placed on her and I will become disillusioned with my idol.

But because I love God *more* than I love my wife- I do not put my wife above God. I put God above my wife every time and the reason that I strive to love her like Christ loved the Church is because I love God and God told me to do that. God told me that I am to care for her and to provide for her and defend her and lead her and support her and cherish her and adore her. And I am to do that- not because she is worthy of me doing that- because she's not. I do that because I love God.

So because I love God- I love my wife- and it is my overwhelming love for God and my desire to please and serve God that motivates my love for my wife and my children and my country and everything else that I love. But if my love for my wife or children or country would ever begin to motivate my love for God- then I am out of whack and I am *not* loving God like John teaches here.

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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