

This is love

(Part 1)

1Jn 4:7-12

March 5, 2017

1Jn 4:7-12 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9 By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.

I. Overview:

John turns again to the theme of love. There is so much more to the Christian life than resisting error and testing spirits. The positive side is shown in the love Christians have for each other. 'Let's do it,' writes John, 'Let's live together in the love of God!'

Love is, first of all, something we receive from God. He has shown his love in sending Jesus to die for us. Jesus has won forgiveness of our sins and restored us to life in the family of God. If this is how much God loves us, then surely we can love one another.

The love Christians have for each other is a real experience of God's love. God is invisible, but through the church we can realize and receive his love for ourselves. In John's Gospel, the invisible God is seen in the coming of Jesus (Jn 1:18). In this letter of John, the invisible God is found in Christian fellowship. (from The Bible Guide; by A. Knowles).

II. Word and phrase study of 1Jn 4:7-12

4:7 "Beloved, let us love one another"

This is a recurrent theme in John's writings and the essence of the relationship test (Jn 13:34; 15:12, 17; 1Jn 2:7-11; 3:11, 23; 2Jn 5)

"for love is from God"

"from (of) God" = flows from God (from Vincent Word Studies)

God is the source of love and not human pity, emotion, or philanthropy.

1Jn 4:16 We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

Love is not primarily emotional but purposeful.

Jn 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. (1Jn 4:10)

"and everyone who loves is born of God"

"who loves" = Persistence in loving; (loves is present tense)

"Born of God" is John's favorite term for becoming a Christian (1Jn 2:29; 3:9; 5:1; 4:18; Jn 3:3, 7, 31; 19:11).

"and knows God"

Not only have we been "born of God," but we also "know God."

This "knowing" is another recurrent theme of I John; it (know) is used over 77 times; it is not simply a matter of understanding facts; it is a matter of perceiving truth (1Jn 2:3-5).

Truth and love stand related to each other. Loving is the condition of knowing. (from Vincent Word Studies)

In the Bible, the word know has a much deeper meaning than simply intellectual acquaintance or understanding. For example:

- The verb know is used to describe the intimate union of husband and wife (Gen. 4:1).
- The term "know" reflects the Hebrew sense of ongoing, intimate fellowship (Gen 4:1; Jer 1:5).

- To know God means to be in a deep relationship to Him - to share His life and enjoy His love.

To know God - refers to an intimate, experiential knowledge (1Jn 2:3; 4:6) of God, rather than just information about God. John never says that those who do not love are not born of God (1Jn 4:7). Yet it is impossible to know God intimately without loving others, for God is love.

4:8 "The one who does not love does not know God",

Lifestyle love is a valid test of true Christian faith.

Since God is love, and we claim to have a personal relationship with God, we must of necessity reveal His love in how we live. A child of God has been "born of God," and therefore he shares God's divine nature. Since "God is love," Christians should love one another.

The fact that Christians love one another is evidence of:

- their fellowship with God
- their sonship from God,
- that they know God.

Their experience with God is not simply a once-for-all crisis; it is a daily experience of getting to know Him better and better.

"The one who does not love does not know God."

Certainly many unsaved people love their families and even sacrifice for them. And no doubt many of these same people have some kind of intellectual understanding of God. What, then, do they lack? They lack a personal experience of God.

To paraphrase 1Jn 4:8: "The person who does not have this divine kind of love has never entered into a personal, experiential knowledge of God. What he knows is in his head, but it has never gotten into his heart."

"for God is love"

What God Is:

This is the third of three expressions in John's writings that help us understand the nature of God. Of course, none of these in themselves, are a complete revelation of God; it is incorrect to separate them.

1. "God is spirit" (Jn 4:24);
This refers to His essence and to His spirit nature. Jesus Christ is now in heaven, He has a glorified body and is not flesh and blood. He is spirit and isn't limited by time and space the way we are.
2. "God is light" (1Jn 1:5); "God is light," and therefore He must uphold His holy Law.
This refers to His holy nature. In the Bible, light is a symbol of holiness and darkness is a symbol of sin (Jn 3:18-21; 1 Jn 1:5-10). God cannot sin because He is holy. Because we have been born into His family, we also have received His holy nature (1Pt 1:14-16; 2Pt 1:4).
3. "God is love." (1Jn 4:8) "God is love," and therefore He wants to forgive and save sinners.
This does not mean that "love is God."

It has been said that "love does not define God, but God defines love." God is love and God is light; therefore, His love is a holy love, and His holiness is expressed in love.

Even His judgments are measured out in love and mercy (Lam 3:22-23).

One of the best ways to contrast God's love and God's wrath is to compare Deut 5:9 with 5:10 and 7:9.

God is love - A person who claims he knows God and is in union with Him must be personally affected by this relationship. A Christian is to become what God is, and "God is love."

A large quantity of radioactive material was stolen from a hospital. When the hospital administrator notified the police, he said: "Please warn the thief that he is carrying death with him, and that the radioactive material cannot be successfully hidden. As long as he has it in his possession, it is affecting him disastrously!"

References used in this Study:

Willmington's Bible Handbook
Study Guide Commentary Series
The NKJV Study Bible
The Bible Exposition Commentary (by W.W. Wiersbe)