

# God Loves Us

1Jn 4:19 - 5:2

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1 Jn 4:19 - 5:2 We love, because He first loved us. 20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. 21 And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also. 5:1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.

## Overview:

God never commands us to love without first loving us. We are free to love because we are greatly loved ourselves. Just as secure children have their parents' love in their emotional bank, so Christians have the assurance of their heavenly Father's love.

The love of God checks us when we are tempted to dislike or reject a fellow Christian. Saying we love God and hating a Christian brother or sister doesn't fit. Loving others isn't just a nice thought. It's God's command.

The quality of all our relationships - with family, church, neighbors and strangers - is a sign of our relationship with God. It's very likely that if we're in a bad relationship with someone else, we're also in a bad relationship with God.

## 4:19 "We love, because He first loved us"

**The Greek language** - 'we love' and not 'let us love'; Our love is in response to His love for us.

**The is the repeated emphasis of 1Jn 4:10** - 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.

## The covenants are the greatest manifestations of God's love, grace and mercy.

We understood our relationship with God best through covenant. The covenants between God and man had to originate with God for He alone has the mind, authority and ability to make them effective. It was always His heart and nature that motivated Him to initiate the covenants with man.

### God is a Covenant-Maker; He initiates the covenant:

Jn 6:44 No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; ...

Jn 6:65 ... no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father.

God established His covenant with Noah (Gen 6:18).

He made a covenant with Abraham (Gen 15:18; 17:2).

God made a covenant with David (2Sam 23:5).

He promised to make a new covenant with the House of Israel and Judah (Jer 31:31-34).

He has also made an everlasting covenant (Isa 55:3; 61:8).

### God is a Covenant-Keeper

God reveals His faithfulness and trustworthiness in that He keeps the covenant that He makes. Once God has made a covenant He does not forget it nor become negligent of it. He always follows through with the commitments He has made

Dt 7:9 "Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments; (2Chr 6:14; Ps 111:5)

Ps 111:9 He has sent redemption to His people; He has ordained His covenant forever;

### **God is a Covenant-Revealer**

In order for man to be in covenant relationship with God He must reveal the covenant to man, openly declaring the promises and terms. Apart from God taking the initiative and revealing His covenant to man, man would be ignorant of the availability of covenantal relationship with Him

Ps 25:14 The secret of the LORD is for those who fear Him, And He will make them know His covenant. (Dt 4:13)

### **God is a Covenant-Enabler**

The same God who makes, keeps and reveals His covenants to man also enables man to fulfill his part of the covenant. Apart from the enabling grace of God man has proven his inability to keep the terms of any covenant. This was particularly illustrated under the Mosaic Covenant. (Eph 2:4-13)

### **Man's responsibility is to believe and receive.**

Jn 6:28-29 Therefore they said to Him, "What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?" 29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent." (Jn 3:16-18, 36)

Jn 1:11-13 He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

## **4:20 "If someone says"**

**If someone says**; this is the seventh and last time that John say's this; He is quoting statements of the false teachers in order to make a point. Every time that John states this, He is giving them a warning against pretending. The other six places are found in

1) 1Jn 1:6; 2) 1Jn 1:8; 3) 1Jn 1:10; 4) 1Jn 2:4; 5) 1Jn 2:6; 6) 1Jn 2:9.

This is the seventh statement

7) 1Jn 4:20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

## **"I love God, and hates his brother"**

The verb expresses duration and habit; to hate (in the past) and keep on hating (now & the future).

Our lifestyle of love is the clear evidence that we are Christians.

Conflict is possible and to be expected, but having hatred is contrary to the life of a Christian.

## **"he is a liar"**

**The sense is**, that no man, whatever may be his professions and pretensions, can have any true love to God, unless he loves his brethren; that this must be a false profession

### **John calls the following believers liars:**

1 Jn 2:4 says, "I know Him," and doesn't obey, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;

1Jn 2:22 Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ?

1Jn 4:20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar;

### **False teachings are also part of the lie.**

1Jn 1:6 say, you have fellowship with Him, walk in darkness, we lie, don't practice the truth;

1Jn 1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

1Jn 5:10 does not believe the testimony that God gave about His Son

### **The devil's nature - he is a liar!**

Jn 8:44 "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him.

Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

(Gen 3:4; 2Ch 18:19-21; Ac 5:3; 13:10; 2Cor 11:3, 13-15; 2Thes 2:9-11)

## **"for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen."**

Greek grammar:

**does not love** = "The one who does not keep on loving" (present active)

**has seen** = "has seen and continually sees"

**cannot love** = "Is not able to go on loving,"

It is easier to love a person you see rather than a person you don't see. This is especially true in the case of your brother, a person who is much like yourself.

John now argues that the one who does not do the easier thing, - loving your visible brother, will surely not be able to do the more difficult thing, - loving the invisible God.

Lack of brotherly love shows that you do not really know or love God.

You could translate this verse like this:

'He sees his brother, yet he doesn't love him. He doesn't see God, consequently he cannot love God,' - or - 'He does not love his brother whose face he sees. How can he love God? For God's face he does not see.'

Cannot, or, according to another reading of the Greek, "how can he."

Semantically the two readings do not differ, since the second one contains a rhetorical question anticipating a negative answer. The subsequent clause contains a climax, which may have to be made explicit, for example, 'certainly he cannot,' 'even less can he.'

## **4:21 "And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also."**

**Commandment**, is in the singular; "God has given us this commandment", to love God and your brother.

**The verbs** are in the **present tense** expressing God's expectation of the believer; to love God and his brother.

The verse briefly **repeats 1Jn 2:7-11**.

These two passages may be viewed as John's version of Mk 12:29-31; the two great commandments; love God and love your neighbor.

**Brother** - the term "brother" is ambiguous. It could mean "fellow Christian" or "fellow human."

This verse summarizes the chapter!

You can't counterfeit love.

Love is the evidence that you are a believer.

Hate is the evidence that you are a child of the evil one.

False teachers were dividing the church - causing many conflicts over doctrine and ethics.

## **1Jn 5:1-3 repeats one of the major themes of I John.**

Love, God's love, is expressed by ongoing love (1Jn 2:7-11; 4:7-21) and obedience (1Jn 2:3-6).

Notice: A believer is one who:

- 1) loves God;
- 2) loves God's child (1Jn 5:1);
- 3) loves God's children (1Jn 5:2);
- 4) obeys (1Jn 5:2-3);
- 5) overcomes (1Jn 5: 4-5).

## 5:1 "whoever loves the father loves the child born of Him"

This is a **general rule of family life**: Everyone who loves a father also loves that father's children..

It is assumed that the child will have love for the Author of his being. Love follows directly from life. And in this spiritual connection between God and man, love is directed towards God and extended to all those to whom belong to God.

## 5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.

**This verse could be translated into their way:**

We love the children of God whenever we love God and obey His commandments.  
Whenever we love God and observe His commandments, we must also love His children.

Our love to the brethren is the sign and test of our love to God  
Our love to God is tested by our "keeping his commandments" [Loving God and the brethren]  
We know we are loving God as we love His children.

## Love is more than enthusiasm

John has been called the apostle of love, and 1 John certainly offers plenty of evidence to show why.

"Love" is a very confusing concept today, because people use the word "love" to describe all kinds of things that they love. One minute we might say we "love" peanut butter and in the next we "love" our spouse. Likewise, we "love" pets, food, sports, vacations, cars, children and so on. What can "love" possibly mean if it applies equally well to dogs, machines, food, or close companions?

The Bible is not confused or vague about the powerful concept it calls love. Greek, the international language of Jesus' day and the language in which the New Testament was written, had four distinct words for love, each with its own shade of meaning:

(1) **Eros** denoted the relationship between male and female, including physical desire, craving, and longing. That word for love is not used in the New Testament.

(2) **Stergos** described affection and was applied especially to the mutual love between family members. It is not used in the New Testament either.

(3) **Philos** reflected the care and concern that friends have for each other, what we would call brotherly love. Peter spoke of this kind of love when he and Jesus discussed his future task of serving others (John 21:15-17).

(4) **Agape** - described a unique type of supreme love involving a conscious and deliberate choice to do good for another, a commitment based on the willful choice of the lover, not the qualities of the person receiving the love. Agape- love is perhaps best seen in God's love for the world (Jn 3:16) and in the love that God calls believers to display (1Cor 13:1-13).

When Jesus recalled the greatest of the commandments, both of which had to do with love (Mt 22:34-40), He was calling for agape- love, a sustained and conscious choice to graciously serve God, neighbor, and self, expecting nothing in return. Followers of Christ learn this kind of love as God loves them first. He then commands us to live in the same way toward others (1Jn 3:11-24). God's love empowers us to love by choice rather than just emotion or senses, and to sustain our love even in the face of hostility or rejection.

Scripture defines love for us by describing God's love, using both nouns and verbs. Examining various passages, we find that God's love is:

Lasting (Ps 136; Rom 8:28-39; 1Cor 13:8)

Sacrificial (John 15:12-13; Rom. 5:8; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Gal. 2:20; 1 John 3:16-17).

Reconciling and healing (Mt 5:38-48; Lk 6:27-31; 2Cor 5:17-19).

Mutual between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Mt 11:27-30; Jn 14:31).

Effective; it involves deeds that benefit people (1Jn 3:18-19; 4:21; 5:1-3).

Fearless (Rom 1:16; 1Jn 4:18).

Discerning (1Tim 1:3-7; 1Jn 2:15-17; 4:1-7).

Accepting, not condemning (Lk 15:11-32; 18:10-17; Jn 3:16-17; Rom 8:1).

Generous (Lk 10:25-37; Rom 5:8, 15-17; 6:23; 1Cor 2:9; 1Pt 3:8-9).

The Bible exalts genuine love. It invites us to discover love's true nature by portraying love from many angles. There are many passages in Scripture from which we can learn a great deal about love:

The Song of Solomon describes in vivid imagery the sights, sounds, and sensations of romantic love (Song 4:10).

Moses' call to the Israelites to learn and practice the love of God toward all (Dt 10:12 - 11:22; 30:6-20).

Psalm 45, a "Song of Love" that praises the marriage relationship.

The Book of Hosea, in which God calls the prophet Hosea to seek out, rescue, and lovingly restore his adulterous wife.

The teachings of Jesus on love:

loving our enemies (Mt 5:43-46), loving the Lord (Mk 12:30-38),

the love of God the Father and the practice of that love among believers (Jn 13:34 - 15:19).

Paul's teaching on love:

love between neighbors (Rom 13:8-10)

love among church members who are experiencing competition and conflict (1Cor 13:1-7)

love among spouses, families, and other believers (Eph 5:25 - 6:24)

John's teaching concerning love among believers and how that love should operate in a hostile world (1Jn 3:1 - 5:3).

Perhaps the best summary of true, godly love is 1Cor 13, "the love chapter," in which Paul describes the love of God as it needs to be among the believers at Corinth. Likewise, the ultimate expression of God's love is Christ, who offered Himself up for the sins of the world (Jn 3:16).

The Bible invites us to discover what love really is. The love that our world promotes tends to be a distortion. People use it to make money, to hurt others or oppress them, and to gratify themselves. But following the love of Christ opens up a whole new world as we receive God's love for us, learn to love our neighbors, and obtain a healthy love for ourselves.

### **Questions to ask yourself:**

In what ways does your love need to develop? Have you grasped the dimensions of God's love for you? How can you cultivate Christ-like love and make it more tangible in your life, work, and relationships?

**Summary:**

The theme of God's love began chapter 3, and here it closes the chapter: "We love, because He first loved us." By nature, we know little about love (Titus 3:3–6); God had to show it to us on the cross (Rom. 5:8) and plant it in our hearts (Rom. 5:5). Note 1 John 4:10. "There is none who seeks after God," says Rom. 3:11 (NKJV), so God came seeking man (Gen. 3:8; Luke 19:10).

John shows the contradiction between saying we love God while hating other Christians. How can we love God in heaven when we do not love God's children here on earth? John uses the term "brethren" or "brother" seventeen times in his letter, referring, of course, to all of God's children, male and female. Christians are expected to love each other because they have experienced the love of God in their own hearts.

God commands us to love one another; see 3:11; John 13:34–35; John 15:17; Col. 1:4. It is too bad that our hearts are so cold that He must keep reminding us of this obligation.

Keep in mind that Christian love does not mean we must agree with everything a brother or sister thinks or does. We may not like some of their personal characteristics. But, because they are in Christ, we love them for Jesus' sake. Read James 4 to see what happens when selfishness reigns instead of love. (from Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament)

**The following references were used in this study:**

Barnes' Notes  
The Bible Guide; A. Knowles  
United Bible Societies (UBS) Handbook Series  
Robertson's Word Pictures  
Study Guide Commentary Series; by RJ Utley  
Jamieson, Fausset & Brown  
The Preachers Commentary  
A handbook on the letters of John; by Haas, Jonge, & Swellengrebel  
The Greek text with notes and essays; by B. F. Westcott  
Word in Life Study Bible  
Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament