

Let's Look at Love

The Bible describes three kinds of love:

Eros Love is a Greek term which actually means desire and longing, i.e. fornication

Phelos Love, love like the one you have for a companion or friend

Luke 22:47 And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss **[Gr.: Phileo]** him.

Agape Love represents the divine-love of the Lord towards his Son Jesus Christ, the human beings and all believers.

1 John 4:7-21 ⁷ Beloved, let us love **[Gr.: Agape]** one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. ⁸ He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. ⁹ In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. ¹⁰ Herein 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 ought also to love one another. ¹² No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. ¹³ Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴ And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. ¹⁵ Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. ¹⁶ And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. ¹⁷ Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. ¹⁹ We love him, because he first loved us. ²⁰ If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? ²¹ And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

1. Love. That one word can make a heart flutter uncontrollably. It can make the toughest man blush. It can make a grown man cry and women jump for joy.

2. The world is almost obsessed with this thing called love. The world sings about it. Almost every song on the radio is about love in some form or another.

This week 4 out of the top 5 pop songs had a love theme (the other song was actually about loving who you are), all top 5 country songs had a love theme, 4 out of 5 rock songs have a love theme, and all Christian songs have a love theme but it's a different kind of love.

3. We have an insatiable desire to write about it. Almost without exception, you can walk into any store and just see shelf after shelf lined with romantic novels. Love has taken over the airways and the movies.

4. Psychiatrists say that three of the greatest needs of a human being are: The need to be wanted, the need to be needed, and the need to be loved.

5. The Bible is God's love letter to man. The Apostle John is the expert on love.

- Paul was the apostle of faith.
- James was the apostle of works.
- Peter was the apostle of judgment.

But John is the apostle of love. No one in the Bible speaks of love with more depth and detail than does John.

I. Love's Sure Evidence (vv. 7-8)

“⁷Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. ⁸He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.”

1. If you were put on trial for being a Christian, love is the one incontrovertible witness that would convict you of being saved. You see love can prove two things about you:

A. You Are In The Family of God (v.7)

1. One surefire mark that a man is a child of God is love. God's children are loving children. When I was born into this world I took on the nature of my parents. When I was born into the spiritual world, I took on the nature of God. The Bible says in **2 Peter 1:4** that “...ye might be partakers of the divine nature,...” When I was born physically, I took on my father's nature and acted naturally. But when I was born spiritually, I took on God's nature and acted supernaturally.

2. What is God's nature? Love, for "God is love." Notice that it does not to say that love is God. You cannot reverse that statement. All that God is and does is motivated by love.

- God created this world purely out of a motive of love.
- God created you and me just so he could love us.
- God created heaven so that he could have a place where we could love each other for all eternity.

People have idolized love, placed its importance above God in violation of the first commandment.

3. Incidentally, God even created hell out of a motive of love. Hell was originally created for the devil and his angels. It was created so that his children might be forever separated from those who rebelled against Him. There are those that ask: why then would a loving God send someone to hell? God does not send anyone to hell. Man sends himself. The only reason that a man goes to hell is because he has rejected the love of God.

4. But if God is a God of love then if you are a child of God you also are going to love.

B. You Are In Fellowship With God (v.8)

. ⁸He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.”

1. The word “knoweth” in verse 8 has a much deeper meaning than simply intellectual understanding. It is not so much a mental knowledge of the head as it is an intimate knowledge

of the heart. **There is a difference between knowing Jesus and knowing about Jesus.** Is Jesus in your head or is Jesus also in your heart?

2. If you want to know how well you know God, if you want to know how close you are to God, then ask this question: How much love is in my heart right now? If the love of God is not in you right now, you do not know God.

II. Love's Supreme Example (vv.9-11)

⁹In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. ¹⁰Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

1. The word "manifested" in verse 9 literally means "to come out in the open," or, "to make a public display." **The cross is God's flashing neon sign that God loves you.** The cross is not only the demonstration of love; the cross is also the definition of love.

A. True Love Is Sacrificial Love

1. God gave his only begotten Son. The word only begotten is one word in the Greek and literally **means "one of a kind," "unique."** When God gave his very best, He spared nothing in bringing us salvation. You have to sacrifice in order to love. **Love costs.** Years ago young people were going around talking about "free love." If it is free, it is not love.

2. It cost God his only Son to love this world. "For God so loved the world He gave His only begotten Son." **It cost Jesus his life to love the church.** "Husbands love your wives even as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it." (Eph. 5:25)

B. True Love Is Selfless Love (v. 9)

1. God sent Jesus not for what it would do for him, but for what it would do for us. **Real love is always a love that seeks to meet the need of somebody else.**

2. It was a selfless love that sent Jesus to the cross.

C. True Love Is A Satisfying Love (v.10)

¹⁰Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

1. **The word propitiation literally means "satisfaction."** God's love is a holy love. That simply means that God could not love the sinner and yet allow his sin to go unpunished. God loves the sinner but he hates the sin. The Bible says "the soul that sinneth it shall die."

2. But God did not want to give us death, He wanted to give us life. So, God sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to die in our place and the Son of God put the wrath that was due to the sins of the world upon Himself. **What propitiation really means: He took the wrath that we deserved upon Himself so that we might live through Him.**

D. True Love Is A Sharing Love (v.10)

1. Notice that Jesus Christ was "sent" into this world. Babies are born into this world, but Jesus Christ was sent into this world. **As the Son of Man, Jesus was born into the world, but as the Son of God, He was sent into this world.** True love shares. True love gives. It does not give what a man wants nor does it give what a man deserves; it gives what a man needs.

2. The kind of love that marks a true Christian is a sacrificial, selfless, satisfying, sharing love.

3. A pastor was preaching a series of stewardship sermons. After one sermon a man walked out of the church who really loved his money, and really didn't care about God or the church, and he said to the pastor, "All I ever hear out of you is give, give, give, give." The preacher looked at him and said, "Sir, thank you for the best definition of Christianity I've ever heard."

You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving. A man who does not give joyfully and generously to the work of God does not understand Christ. He does not understand Christianity and he does not understand the cross.

III. Love's Spiritual Essence (vv. 12-16)

¹²No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. ¹³Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. ¹⁵Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. ¹⁶And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

A. Love's Provision (vv. 12-13)

1. The kind of love that we are speaking of is a holy, heavenly love. **Love is not natural; it is a supernatural quality;** it is a love that can come only from God, because love, true love, is of God.

2. Notice that John says that God has given us "of His Holy Spirit." Now God has given us his Holy Spirit but here John is not talking about the gift of the Holy Spirit as much as he is talking about the Holy Spirit's gift to us. Love is not something naturally produced in you. **Love is something supernaturally produced through you.**

3. I can preach to you until I am blue in the face, "love one another." You may hear me and you can grit your teeth and think about those brothers and sisters that you find it very hard to love, and you can say, "Alright, I am going to love him. Alright, I am going to love her." You can begin to repeat to yourself over and over, "I love her, I love her, I hate her." **Love is not something you work up within you. Love is something that God works out through you.**

4. Notice **Romans 5:5** And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

As the Holy Spirit dwells within you and fills you, He just keeps emptying the love of God into your heart. **The next time you find someone that is hard to love, instead of gritting your teeth and saying, "I'm going to love you no matter what," just say, "God, you love him through me."** Christian living is not your living for God, it is God living through you. Christian loving is not your effort to love others for God, it is your yieldedness to allow God to love them through you.

B. Love's Profession (vv. 14-15)

¹⁴ And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

¹⁵ Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

1. A man who is full of the Holy Spirit will love God. Because the love of God is poured out in his heart through the Holy Spirit. But the man who is full of the Holy Spirit will not only love God, he will also love Jesus and will profess that Jesus is the Son of God and the Lord of all. Why? Because **the same Holy Spirit who gives a man love for God will also give a man love for Jesus.**

2. The Bible says in **1 Corinthians 12:3**, "...no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." If Jesus is not Lord in your heart then God's love is not in your heart. For love's profession is Jesus Christ is Lord.

C. Love's Possession (v.16)

¹⁶ And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

1. **If you live in God and God lives in you; if you belong to him and He belongs to you, one thing that will be true of you, and must be true of you, is your heart will be full of love.**

IV. Love's Supernatural Effects (vv. 17-21)

¹⁷ Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. ¹⁹ We love him, because he first loved us. ²⁰ If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? ²¹ And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

The love of God not only conforms us to his character, but it transforms us in His image.

A. Confidence (vv. 17-19)

1. **You do not fear anyone that you love.** I had a very healthy respect and admiration and reverence for my father, but I never really had what you would call fear for my dad because I loved my dad. As I grew and matured I realized that his discipline was not a mark of his hatred; it was a mark of his love. The Bible says, "Whom a father loves, he disciplines."

2. **One of these days you, and you alone, are going to stand before the judgment seat of God. Does that frighten you? Make you uneasy? Make you uncomfortable? Make you squirm? As you think of standing before the judgment seat of God, is that something you dread? Well, it shouldn't. Because if you love God, and if God's love is within you, why should you be frightened? Romans 8:1** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

3. One thing is true about a genuine child of God. He or she has absolutely nothing to fear now or in the future from their heavenly Father.

B. Compassion (vv. 20-21)

²⁰If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? ²¹And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

1. John, three different times in this book, calls men liars. He says in chapter 1 verse 6 that if a man lives in darkness, but claims to have fellowship with God, he is a liar. He says in chapter 2 verse 4, if a man lives in disobedience but claims to know God, he is a liar. Here he says that if a man lives in dis-fellowship, but claims to love God, he is a liar. His argument is very simple. **It is humanly impossible to love a God you have not seen, if you cannot love a brother who is standing right in front of you.**

2. **That is why we are told in Matthew never ever try to worship God without first reconciling with a brother with whom you are out of fellowship.** Do you love your brothers? Do you love your sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ? **It is not a matter of harmony, it is a matter of holiness.**

3. The Bible says without faith it is impossible to please God. The Bible says that hope deferred makes the heart sick. But the Bible also says there are these three: faith, hope, and love, but the greatest of these is love.

4. The greatest sermon ever preached is the sermon of a loving fellowship. Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples if you have love one for another."

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