

Know What's Real - Love for Others

What is the greatest commandment? Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. And love your neighbor as yourself.

John hit on that first part a couple chapters back when he said that everyone who loves God is born of God. When you are born again, this is when you realize the love that God has for you, it's more than a knowing in your head, it's in your heart. And when you get that realization of what Jesus has done for you, it's easy to love God....

But that other part.....man, that's hard. Love your neighbor as yourself? Most people love themselves an awful lot....and we are supposed to love others that much?

John digs into that today. His teaching is profound. And it is a burden lifter...

1 John 4:7-8 (NKJV)

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

Beloved - here we go again....seems like if John doesn't start a section with little children, he starts with beloved. I think God wants you to really know that you are loved. You are dear to Him, esteemed, His favorite, worthy of love....

Let us love one another - this is what the entire section is about. Why should we love one another? Love is of God. If you've experienced it, then you know how amazing it is....why wouldn't you want others to experience it too? And for lots of people they have to have a connection to God and that connection just might be YOU!

Everyone who loves is born of God - this isn't speaking of general, worldly love....it is specifically speaking of loving one another. Our love for one another is a consequence of being born of God. It means we've been changed by the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ!

God is love - What an amazing thing...God is love. But do you know that God is not ONLY love?

Love is an attribute of God. But so is holiness, graciousness, righteousness, goodness, sovereignty, and even wrath. There are many more but the point is there are a lot of attributes found in God.

It's easy to claim that love is the greatest of these, but we must be careful to not put one attribute of God above the rest.

If we say His sovereignty is above everything else you can begin to think God created evil and God is not good. But God is both sovereign and good. He's both equally, continually, perfectly.

So God is love....absolutely, but we read back in chapter 1 about how God is holy. God is both love and holy. He's both equally, continually, perfectly.

So we must be careful about elevating an attribute above the rest. And we tend to do that with love. But when we elevate God's attribute of love above the rest, we turn it around and say that not only is God love, but love is God. That is not the same thing, and it's not true....

When we say that love is God, we then have a definition of God to judge God by....whatever WE think love is....

Then we say things like God wouldn't send anyone to hell or God wouldn't exclude people by saying Jesus is the only way to heaven and other religions are wrong because God is love....God is love....

But when we say that what we are really saying is love as we understand it is God.

God is love....this means that Whoever God is, however God is, whatever God says, that is the definition of what is loving.

We don't have a definition of love that we judge God by, we have God by which we judge all other definitions and examples of love by.

Everything that God does is loving.

Love is selfless and sacrificial

Leads us to the cross.....

1 John 4:9-10 (NKJV)

In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, 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.

God loves first

1. Jesus

His only Son. One of a kind. No one else in the same category.

God entering human history to love us.

2. Love

We know God loves us because He sent His Son to die for us.

You can't understand the love of God without the wrath of God. Remember that? It's one of those attributes I shared earlier.

Propitiation - "He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." This was the appeasing of God's wrath toward our sin.

God's love points to the cross

3. The Cross

Here at the cross is where we see the holiness of God and the love of God intersect. Because He is holy, He has wrath against sin. But because He loves us, He sent Jesus to literally be the substitute, to take our place and pay the penalty of sin so the holiness of God is met, the wrath of God is satisfied, the love of God is given.

God's attributes work in perfect harmony. He doesn't sacrifice one for the sake of the other. So here for God to remain loving without compromising His holiness, Jesus came and died in our place.

Church....this is love.

God can't love you any more than He already does.

God's love flows to us through Jesus, then through us to other believers by the Holy Spirit

1 John 4:11 (NKJV)

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

1 John 4:12 (NKJV)

No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. 13 By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

We love by the power of the Spirit. This is a supernatural love.

God doesn't ask us to do something that we can't do. There are people that you can't love, naturally. But you can supernaturally by the Holy Spirit's power.

By the Holy Spirit's power we share God's love. The same love we have received....

You don't have to be the source of love. God is the source of love. His love comes to you (Jesus), then through you (Holy Spirit) so you can love others.

If there is someone you can't love....PRAY.....ask the Holy Spirit to give you the grace to be able to share the love with them that God has shared with you.

Matthew 5:44 (NKJV)

But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,

Love them, bless them, do good to them, PRAY for them....

This is how you keep from wrath, anger, payback, and hurt from dominating your life and enables you to live in God's love by the power of the Holy Spirit.

This is the best life. It's a satisfying life. It's a live of joy and peace because it's rooted in love....Not your love....God's love....

Not only does God's love flow to us and through us to other believers, but it then flows out to the world.

1 John 4:14-16 (NKJV)

And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world. 15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. 16 And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

Savior of the world - Jesus actually came to save those who are against Him. I was one of those. You either were are maybe still are one of those. He came for YOU!

Not just to show His love, but to share His love.

"God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him."

Love flows back and forth, both ways

Arteries and veins - arteries carry blood away from the heart, veins carry blood back to the heart.

The love of God works like this, it's a back and forth thing.

1 John 4:17 (NKJV)

Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.

The primary culture we are in is worldly, not Godly. We are here to show the love of God in this world. Yes, even in a world where Christians have become the enemy.

How do you, as a Christian, behave in a world that doesn't like you?

Love - this is our witness to the world.

What would happen if people see you in a situation that you should be angry, but you love?

What about when you have the chance to get someone back, but you love?

What about when you have your own issues (all the time) but you love, and help others?

This will make them curious and maybe even question, why????

We love. Why do we love? We are loved. Who loves us? Jesus.

This is how you win over the unbeliever. Not by winning arguments. Not by being smarter. But by loving with a love that is not man made but is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit.

1 John 4:18-19 (NKJV)

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment.

But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. 19 We love Him because He first loved us.

We fear when we are afraid of punishment. We fear God when we sin. But He loves us. We can come to Him with confidence that He will forgive us and continue to love us.

See if you still have fear in coming to Jesus, you have not been made perfect in love. If you have confessed Jesus Christ is Lord and it's really what your heart believes, you don't have to fear God's wrath....it is finished....the debt has been paid.

We love Him because He first loved us!

1 John 4:20-21 (NKJV)

If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not

love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? 21

And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.

God's love doesn't just flow to you and stop. It flows through you.

Fear or Love?

Our world is fear driven. The government thrives on fear. The news thrives on fear. If you can get people to fear, they will take the easy way out. They will accept whatever alternative that's presented.

Fear leads to hate. When we are afraid that something is going to happen to us, it causes us to hate the perceived threat.

If you say you love God and hate your brother, you are a liar.....

A claim to love God is simply a delusion if we don't have unselfish love for other believers...

Remember -

God doesn't ask us to do something that we can't do. There are people that you can't love, naturally. But you can supernaturally by the Holy Spirit's power.

By the Holy Spirit's power we share God's love. The same love we have received....

You don't have to be the source of love. God is the source of love. His love comes to you (Jesus), then through you (Holy Spirit) so you can love others.