

**FOR THE BROTHERS:
A STUDY IN THE EPISTLES OF JAMES, JOHN, JUDE
AMEN BIBLE STUDY 2016-2017**

**God's Love and Our Love
I John 4:7-21
March 23 2017**

"By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." – John 13:35

"The greatest single cause of atheism in the world today is Christians who acknowledge Jesus with their lips, but deny him by their lifestyle. That is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable." – Brennan Manning

Why Do We Love Others?

I. It is God's nature.

A. Our love for others is evidence of our new birth.

⁷ *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.*

B. Our love for others is evidence that we know God.

⁸ *Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.*

II. It is God's demonstration in Christ.

⁹ *In this the love of God was made manifest among us....*

A. It was an act of human history.

...that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. cf. John 1:14

B. It was an act of eternal proportions.

¹⁰ *In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* cf. Romans 5:8; Romans 3:25; Hebrews 2:17; I John 2:2

"For the essence of sin is man substituting himself for God, while the essence of salvation is God substituting himself for man. Man asserts himself against God and puts himself where only God deserves to be; God sacrifices himself for man and puts himself where only man deserves to be." – John Stott (*The Cross of Christ*)

III. It is God's work in His people.

A. God's love compels us.

¹¹ *Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.* cf. II Corinthians 5:13-15

B. God's love is completed in us.

¹² *No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.*

How Can We Love Others?

IV. We are empowered by the Holy Spirit.

¹³ *By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.*

A. To believe the truth of the Gospel.

¹⁴ *And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the*

world.¹⁵ *Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.*

B. To live in the love of the Father.

¹⁶ *So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.*

V. We are perfected in love.

A. We do not fear.

¹⁷ *By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world.*¹⁸ *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.* cf. Romans 8:1; 8:37-39

B. We love.

¹⁹ *We love because he first loved us.* ²⁰ *If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot^[a] love God whom he has not seen.* ²¹ *And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.*

Discussion Questions

1. Why does love have its origin in God? Can non-Christian people truly love? How is the love shown by Christians different?
2. How would you explain propitiation to a group of your peers? What does propitiation tell us about God? What does it tell us about man?
3. What is the difference between being compelled or controlled by God's love as opposed to being inspired or motivated by God's love?
4. How does John make the connection between true belief and true love? What makes this connection so important?
5. How does abiding in God's love give us confidence when we face the Day of Judgment? How would this reassure us in our daily living?
6. Why does love cast out fear? What does fear reveal about our relationship with God?

Going Deeper

1. We all need the daily reminder of God's love for us expressed in the Gospel of Christ. In what specific area of your life or relationships do you need that reminder this week?
2. What causes you to be afraid of God or to avoid him and shy away from him? What words of God's truth can be applied to that this week?
3. Who are the people in your life that you find the most difficult to love? What steps do you need to make to change that today?

