

THE LOVE OF GOD

1 John 4:7-11
December 18, 2011

INTRODUCTION: This letter is written by the aged John the Apostle. He has matured and in doing so, he has a good grasp on who God is. John will teach us that the fullest expression of God's love occurs when believers obey the Lord.

1 John 2:5,"But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him."

I find in this passage the overarching theme of the *Kingdom Life*. Because of Jesus, we have a love in the present because our hope for the future is sure in Christ. Then, we must add to this present assurance of Christ's abiding presence because of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We recognize a 3-fold basis for the Christian's life and relationship. It might be seen more clearly by the following model.

In the Present

Because of the Holy Spirit we "**know and believe the love God has for us**" (.16)

From the Past

"Because he first loved" we now love (.19)

From the Future

We have confidence for the day of judgment; because love casts out fear (.17-18)

"From these three sources of assurance we live our lives in the world. And we are to live in the real world; the world where the neighbor also lives. These passages conclude with that neighbor in mind. We must love the real people in the real places where we live. In the Kingdom Life there is not one ounce of escapism, but, instead, a fully involved, definite lifestyle in daily companionship with Jesus Christ."

Lloyd J. Ogilvie

I. THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF GOD'S LOVE. v.7-8

"Beloved" – divinely loved ones; God's love has been granted towards a person.

A. LOVE DEPICTS THE FAMILY. 7

"let us love one another, for love is from God" – our Lord is asking us to do what he did, love others!

Unlike emotional, physical, or friendship love, God's love is the love of self-sacrificing service. It's the love granted to someone who needs to be loved, not necessarily to someone who is attractive or lovable.

This entire phrase speaks of community's commitment,
"Beloved, let us love one another"

B. THIS LOVE IS DELIVERED FROM THE FATHER. 7

"for love is from God" – God is the Originator of this love. It is not a human virtue innate in us nor is it learned behavior. It is from God. He is the giver of love.

EXAMPLE: Have you ever been guilty of saying, *"I just can't find any love in my heart for that person."* (It comes from God). again, He is the Originator and we are the recipients.

1. This Love Validates Your Salvation. 7

"and everyone who loves is born of God" – just as breath is the sign of life in a new born baby, so love is a mark of a new born soul.

If a believer possesses His life and walks in His light, he will also both possess and manifest His love. John is reminding us of what Paul taught the Romans.

Romans 5:5, "Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us."

What a great reminder that we are relational people. We need a relationship with God and then with others.

John teaches us that even human love comes from God, *"a reflection of something in the Divine nature itself."*

A.T. Robertson

This is a call to persistence in loving and serves as proof of our new birth. Everyone God has saved in the past continues to give evidence of that fact in the present. Those who possess the life of God have the capacity and the experience of loving.

2. This Love Vindicates Your Salvation. 7-8

"and knows God" – in the Bible, the word **know** has a deeper meaning than simply intellectual acquaintance or understanding. The verb **know** is used to describe the intimate union of husband and wife (**Gen 4:1**). To know God means to be in a deep relationship to Him, to share His life and enjoy His love. The knowing is not simply a matter of understanding facts; it is a matter of perceiving truth.

v.8 “He who does not love does not know God”

1 John 2:3-5, “Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.”

“for God is love” – God, by nature is love, therefore, He defines love; it does not define Him.

*“The fact that He is love explains the divine plan of redemption. If God operated only on the basis of His law, He would convict people of their sin, and justly consign everyone to spend forever in hell. But His love provided a remedy for sin through the atoning work of Jesus Christ on behalf of all who repent of their sins and trust in His mercy. Therefore, **John 3:16!**”*

John MacArthur

The truth that God is love explains human choice. He designed sinners to know and love Him by an act of their wills, though not apart from the work of His Spirit.

II. THE EXPRESSION OF GOD’S LOVE. v.9

A. THE MANIFESTATION OF GOD’S LOVE. 9

Means to come out to the open; to be made public. It is the opposite of “*to hide, or to make secret.*”

You may consider your “*knowing God*” a private matter, however, He does not consider your “*knowing Him*” a private matter.

John 1:14, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

“toward us” (in us) – we are the objects of His love.

- **He sent prophets**
- **He gave scripture with prophecy**
- **He sent a sign**
- **He gave a dream**
- **He gave His star in the east**
- **He sent angels**
- **He appeared to shepherds**
- **He sent wise men**

1 John 3:5, “And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin.”

B. THE DEMONSTRATION OF GOD'S LOVE. 9

“God has sent His only begotten Son into the world” – unique, the only one of its kind. Babies are born, but God sent a baby, which is one of the evidences of the deity of Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:8, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

C. THE REALIZATION OF GOD'S LOVE. 9

“that we might live through Him” – because of Jesus I can live **“through Him,” “for Him,”** and **“with Him.”**

Eph 2:1 says we were **“dead in our trespasses and sin”** and **“you He made alive”**

INCARNATION – BIRTH – MANGER – MADE FLESH Jn 1:14

CRUCIFIXION – DEATH – CROSS – MADE SIN
II Cor 5:21

III. THE EXPLANATION OF GOD'S LOVE. v.10-11

“agape” – love of self-sacrificing service

A. THE CLAIM OF GOD'S LOVE. 10

“Not that we loved God, but that He loved us” – God's love can be given to God only when it has first been received from God. It exists *only* as response to His initial love for us. God's love sacrificed His most beloved possession for another's gain.

B. THE COVERING OF GOD'S LOVE. 10

“and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins”

Isaiah 53:4-6

**“Surely He has borne our griefs
And carried our sorrows;
Yet we esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten by God, and afflicted.
But He was wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities;
The chastisement for our peace was upon Him,
And by His stripes we are healed.
All we like sheep have gone astray;**

**We have turned, every one, to his own way;
And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”**

C. THE COMPELLING OF GOD'S LOVE. 11

If in sovereign mercy, God graciously displayed His love in sending Christ, as a follower, I should follow the example and love others with sacrificial, Christ-like love.

Ephesians 4:32, “And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”