

1John 3

God's Love is Critical - Part 3

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John 13:34-35

So now I am giving you a new commandment: "Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will **prove** to the world that you are my disciples."

Prove - evidence, genuineness authenticity of.

Love is *agape*. The term implies a selfless, self-sacrificing love focused on other people. It is the unselfish loyal concern for the good of others. Agape loves even if the recipient never responds and it gives with no strings attached.

- Agape love:
 - This is the identity and lifestyle of the follower of Christ
 - It demonstrates itself in unselfish concern for others and there are no strings attached
 - It does not wait or require a response from others, it is selfless, and it comes from God
 - It is best demonstrated and seen in action
 - Love is the principal thing, it is our goal, it is our target, it is what we aim for.

Those who exhibit this kind of love give strong evidence to support that they are true believers.

Love is best seen in actions and in most cases is to be identified with what we do—in our compassion and commitment to those around us.

John 14:15

If you love Me, keep My commandments.

Obedience is the first action of love.

Keep - hold fast, guard from loss or injury.

John 15:12-13

This is my commandment, that you love one another, even as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

John 15:17

This is my command: Love each other.

Revelation 22:14

Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may enter through the gates into the city.

- This is the mark of a true disciple of Christ
- We are commanded to obey with love
- The statement 'love one another' is used 17 times in the New Testament
 - 1Corinthians 13 – gifts operate through love, and gifts are for the benefit of others, in chapter 14 gifts work our love

Purpose Written – 1John

1John 1:4

We are writing these things so that you may fully share our joy.

- The book is about our fellowship with God and also with one another – the enemy desires to disconnect us from God and from one another
 - It is about our unconditional love towards others
- The spirit of the world and the end of the age had entered the church and John addressed it
 - The follower of Christ must put God first, anything that comes before God becomes evil
 - 1John 5:21 – John admonishes the people to stay away from idols – idols are things that occupy the place of God
- John is so concerned that our lives reflect our faith in Christ.

Simplest of Epistles to understand, John gets right into it—there is no greeting or other introduction, no thanksgiving stated but truly demonstrated, and no final greetings.

Look at the clearly outlined parallels:

- Deception vs. truth
- Light vs. darkness
- Truth vs. error
- Righteousness vs. sin
- Children of God vs. children of the devil
- Loves the body of Christ or does not love the body of Christ
- Work of the Spirit vs. work of the flesh
- Love of the Father vs. love of the world
- Genuine believers know God; false believers do not know God
- Spirit of God vs. the spirit of the Antichrist
- Right vs. wrong - but whatever is done, spoken or acted upon must done in love.

Love is the proof of discipleship.

The marks of a true disciple of any master are:

- Belief in his master's words
- Attachment to his master's person
- Obedience to his master's precepts.

John 14:15

If you love Me, keep My commandments.

Matthew 7:21-23

Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

- The word "if" is used 22 times in the Bible, this word is conditional, therefore, we have a responsibility
 - Obedience is the first part of love; it is action that flows out of the love we have for God and others
 - In the Old Testament, Cane did not obey God, even though he had the ability, he lacked the intentionality.
- Imitation of his master's example - obedience and imitation may be summed up in one word—love (i.e. If you love me you will keep my commands and love one another).

Love was to be the clear distinction and sign through all the centuries that would define the followers of Jesus from all other schools, creeds, and combinations under heaven.

- The Pharisee was known by his broad phylactery
- The Sadducee was known for his adherence to rituals
- The priests and scribes were marked out by their peculiar robes
- The Roman by his toga, or the eagle on his helmet, according to whether he was citizen or soldier
- But the Christian trademark was and is love.

Romans 8:38

And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Matthew 22:36-40

"Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the Law of Moses?" Jesus replied, "you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' ³⁸This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰All the other commandments and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments."

- **Commandment** – means it is not optional—it is an order from God Himself
- **Most** – means greatest in number, quantity, extent, highest in rank, importance
- **Important** – carrying or possessing weight or consequence, of valuable content, or bearing significant weight.

The 10 Commandments:

- The first four deal with our relationship with God
- The last six deal with our relationship with one another.

Nine Beatitudes:

- Four deal with our relationship with God
- Five deal with our relationship with one another.

Paul's Prayers:

Philippians 1:9

I pray that your love will overflow more and more...

Ephesians 3:17

...Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong.

William Law, an 18th century preacher quoted, *"There is no greater sign of your own Baptism in the Spirit than when you find yourself all love and compassion towards them that are very weak and sinful, and especially towards those who oppose or misuse you"*.

When You Love Someone:

When I fell in love with my wife Cathy something happened inside me that made me:

- **Desire** her greatly
- **Think** about her often
- **Talk** about her to all I came in contact with because she was and is in my thoughts often
- **Find** out all about her that I could. I just loved talking to her on the phone as our relationship was a long distance one.

One Another

This phrase is found 87 times in the Bible. It means:

- **Reciprocal** – is a moving backwards and forward, with the idea of alternating with, to act interchangeably
- **Complementary** – to complete the whole or to supply a deficiency
- **Mutually** – related, done by each to the other, such as a mutual friend
- **Reduplicate** – to redouble, repeat, originally expressing mostly repeated or intensive action.
- Christian love is the trademark of our faith
- Love is the antidote to impatience; love is the answer to racism because God has crowned everyone with glory and honour.

To sum up the phrase, **one another**, it is to take the lead at times and at other times take the back seat and allow others the front. It is to alternate with each other, to act so interchangeably and complementary to each other that there is no deficiency or lack among us. It is to recognize that we are related and mutually the same in the Lord. It is to reduplicate our lives with expressive actions such as love, affection, kindness, tenderness, forgiving, and so on, that others would desire what we have and so we would therefore reduplicate our lives into theirs.

Why does God have to repeat himself so many times?

Romans 13:8-9

Owe nothing to anyone—except for your obligation to love one another. If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill the requirements of God's law.

- Owe means to be under obligation, to pay or repay.

1Thessalonians 4:9-10

But we do not need to write to you about the **importance of loving each** other, for God himself **has taught** you to love one another.

- Taught – divinely instructed, to impart knowledge of or skill in; give instruction in.

1John 2:7-8

Dear friends, I am not writing a **new commandment** for you; rather it is an old one you have had from the very beginning. This old commandment—to love one another is the same message you heard before.

1John 3:11-12

This is the message you have heard from the beginning: We **should** love one another.

1John 3:23-24

And this is his commandment: We must believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as he commanded us. ²⁴ Those who obey God's commandments remain in fellowship with him, and he with them. And we know he lives in us because the Spirit he gave us lives in us.

1John 4:7-8

Dear friends, let us **continue to love one another**, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. ⁸ But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

2John 5-6

I am writing to remind you, dear friends, that we **should love one another**. This is not a new commandment, but one we have had from the beginning. ⁶ Love means doing what God has commanded us, and he has commanded us to love one another, just as you heard from the beginning.

Ephesians 4:2-3

Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, **making allowance for each other's faults** because of your love.

Ephesians 5:1-2

Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. ²Live a **life filled with love**, following the example of Christ.

Colossians 3:14

Above all, **clothe yourselves with love**, which binds us all together in perfect harmony.

Philippians 1:9

I pray that your love will overflow more and more.

Philippians 2:2

Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and **working together with one mind and purpose**.

1Corinthians 8:3

But the person who loves God is the one whom God recognizes.

1Corinthians 14:1

Let love be **your highest goal!**

1Corinthians 16:14

And do everything with love.

2Corinthians 5:14

Either way, Christ's love controls us.

Galatians 5:6

What is important is faith **expressing itself** in love.

1Corinthians 16:14

And do everything with love.

Ephesians 3:17

Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong.

Ephesians 4:2

Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love.

In the book, "*Sparkling Gems*", Rick Renner presents an expanded interpretive translation of the love chapter in 1Corinthians.

1Corinthians 13:4-8

Love patiently and passionately bears with others for as long as patience is needed;
Love doesn't **demand others to be like itself**; rather, it is so focused on the needs of others that it bends over backwards to become what others need it to be.

Love is not ambitious, self-centered, or so consumed with itself that it never thinks of the needs or desires that others possess.

Love doesn't go around talking about itself all the time, constantly exaggerating and embellishing the facts to make it look more important in the sight of others.

Love does not behave in a prideful, arrogant, haughty, superior, snooty, snobbish, or clannish manner.

Love is not rude and discourteous, it is not careless or thoughtless, nor does it carry on in a fashion that would be considered insensitive to others.

Love does not manipulate situations or scheme and devise methods that will twist situations to its own advantage.

Love does not deliberately engage in actions or speak words that are so sharp, they cause an ugly or violent response.

Love does not deliberately keep records of wrongs or past mistakes.

Love does not feel overjoyed when it sees an injustice done to someone else but is elated, thrilled, ecstatic, and overjoyed with the truth.

Love protects, shields, guards, covers, conceals, and safeguards people from exposure.

Love strains forward with all its might to believe the very best in every situation.

Love always expects and anticipates the best in others and the best for others.

Love never quits, never surrenders, and never gives up.

Love never disappoints, never fails, and never lets anyone down.

Questions & Discussion

- 1) How is agape best demonstrated? What does it look like in real life to love people like God loves people?
- 2) What does the Bible mean when it states that God has crowned us with glory and honour?
- 3) In this book, John presents many contrasts and distinctions. Review and discuss (at length) the list provided above. How are the lines blurred in our present-day society?
- 4) What does it mean that gifts work by love?
- 5) Identify 3 to 5 present day idols. Determine how they impact people.
- 6) What does it mean to 'not love the world'?
- 7) Why is the term 'one another' used so often in the New Testament? Why is it critical to the New Testament believer?