

So That You May Know

An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John 4:7&8**

Chapter 17- Being Born of God

173. Being Born of God- Part 1

WAOY Tuesday 03/25/08

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1John**, and today I want to look at what John taught about "Being Born of God". So let's read **1John 4:7&8** together:

7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

Now in my opinion- the Apostle John has completed his teaching after verse 6 of Chapter 4 and what we have in the remainder of Chapter 4 and in all of Chapter 5 is simply a *restating* of what John has already taught. From here to the end of the Epistle- no new doctrine is brought forth by the Apostle.

Now that isn't to say that what John says hereafter is not important- what John says here is of the utmost importance- which is probably why John is repeating what he has already taught- he wants to burn these powerful truths into our hearts. So because God the Holy Spirit inspired these words- I will do my best to expound on what John repeats here.

Now of all the religions of the world- Christianity stands apart as being a religion of love. Everything from God to Man in Christianity is because of Love and everything from man to God in Christianity is because of Love. Because God loved us- we are saved and because we are saved God graces us with love for Himself. It is very important for everyone to know that no human being possesses any love for God at all in and of themselves. We must remember brothers and sisters - that our love *for* God is a gift *from* God to those He has graciously saved.

Other than that- lost human beings do not love God at all and live their lives in hostile opposition to God and to His Word.

You see, dear friends- this is part of what it means to be lost- that as lost people we do not naturally love God because we lost that ability to love God when Adam fell in the Garden and we cannot get that kind of love back through our own power or strength.

And before we are saved- not only do we *not* love God- but as lost souls- we do not even *desire* to love God. So because that is true- we must give God glory and praise for even the love that we have for Him.

And because that is true- when a person does love God- when a human being actually does possess a genuine love for God- it is a miracle that allows you to do so. When we actually and sincerely and honestly love God- it is because God has Sovereignly and wondrously and supernaturally changed your nature and so it is a very amazing and notable thing.

So here John is reaffirming that those who have been born from above; those who have been regenerated; those who have received within themselves the new divine nature of the new birth- that we should love each other because love is of God.

Now the first time that John mentioned love was back in **1John 2:5** when he said:

but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him:

In this verse- John linked the Love of God to our obedience to the Word of God and I think that we need to keep this link in mind as we discuss God's great love.

You see, anytime that John used the word "love" to describe God's affection toward us- John always linked that affection to the Person of Jesus Christ- not to anything or anyone else. For example- when you want to talk about Gods' Majesty- you can talk about a waterfall or a mountain or a sunset. When you talk about God's Power- you can talk about a storm or Salvation- but when you talk about God's Love- you must talk about Jesus Christ- because Jesus was God's Love personified.

And anytime that John used the word, "love" to describe our affection toward God- he talked about things like obedience and service and

adherence to what God has said in His Word. So both God's Love toward us and our love toward God is caught up in Jesus Christ in that God's Love to us is manifested through Jesus Christ and our love towards God is manifested in our obedience to what God said by the power of Jesus that lives within us. And our love that we have and that we show for the brethren is the result of us being saved and loving and obeying God.

So always remember that John always included our desire and our effort to obey what Jesus said and to live up to the standards that Jesus set for believers when he talked about our love for God.

And this is very important for us to know today because we live in a generation that has redefined what the word "love" means. The hippie generation of the 1960's is the generation that is now in charge and we are the generation who are running the country and the major corporations and the Church and we are the generation who introduced the world to free love and a whole host of very evil and wicked sins which were all herded under the banner called "love". So we have a very bad track record of redefining what love is and what it is not.

So anytime I am discussing the love of God with someone- I always first ask them just what the definition of love really is- because the concept of love is something that is very misunderstood and misused in our day.

And let me give you some very concrete examples of how the term and the concept of "love" is misunderstood and misused in our day. For example- to many- the term, "love" means "tolerance" or "leniency". But that is not what "love" means at all. But those who define love that way believe that if they love someone- then they must agree with whatever that person says or does. But is that true?

Part of our problem lies in the fact that in the English language we only have one word to describe our affection for something - and because that is true- we tend to abuse the word, "love" a lot. For example- we might say that we "love" macaroni and cheese or some other dish and then we might also say that we "love" the Dallas Cowboys or some other sports team and then we might turn around and say that we "love" our wives and then we might say that we love God. In all of those cases, we use the very same word, "love" but in reality- we are describing very different levels and kinds of affection.

The New Testament was thankfully not originally written in the English language. The writers who were moved upon by God the Holy Spirit wrote their inspired Words in a particular style of Greek that was very common and it was the language that was used by those who were involved in transporting goods throughout the world. The wonderful result of the New Testament being written in Greek was that the New Testament spread all over the world very rapidly.

In this form of Greek- there are several words that are used to describe affection. In **1John4:7** John used a particular word here to describe the kind of love that is selfless in its operation.

So what John is saying here is that because we are saved- we must be selfless in our dealings with one another because God was selfless in dealing with us. We must not do something because of the opportunity for self-gain or for selfish reasons but we must reach out and do and give and be patient and merciful to one another regardless of what we personally may get in return- and here's the catch- we must do what we do even if the people don't appreciate what we do or even get angry for what we do.

You see, this kind of love does not seek anything in return. It doesn't do anything for money or recognition or prestige or any personal benefit at all. This kind of love has one motivating factor and that is it is for the glory of God- period. The word that John used here in verse 7 is unlike any other kind or type of human affection or emotion that exists and we must be careful that we distinguish this kind of love from all other kinds of love- or else we will get the wrong message in this verse.

For example, smiling at someone in Church on Sunday and then quickly forgetting about them as soon as the service is over is not fulfilling what this word says. This kind of love comes into play when the people we are trying to love are very hard to get along with. You know- kind of like when we are very hard for God to get along with us. This kind of love ignores what the other person says and does what it does what is right and what is correct and what brings glory to God- regardless of how the other person responds to it.

This is the kind of love that God extended toward us- even when we did not want it; even when we did not appreciate it; and even when we very well may have been hostile to it at first. This is the kind of love that Jesus exhibited when He went to the Cross. Jesus didn't wait until everybody was on His side to die- no, Jesus went to the Cross when

nobody on earth was with Him and when nobody on earth even understood or appreciated what He was doing. Jesus died because He loved selflessly His Father and He loved His Father's Will and Jesus knew that it was Gods' Will for Jesus to be rejected and for Him to be persecuted and to be tortured and to be beaten and to die for the sins of the world and so because Jesus loved His Father completely and without any regard to how God's Will would affect Him personally- Jesus prayed the greatest prayer that has ever or will ever be prayed when He said, "**Not My Will but Yours be done**" He fully submitted Himself to God's Will and He went to the Cross at a time when He was alone, forsaken, misunderstood, and rejected by the overwhelming majority of those He had come to save.

That is love and that is the one single standard by which we are to love God and the one single standard by which we are to love one another. And anything thing less than this sacrificial, selfless love is not what John is talking about in this verse.

Now many will say at this point, "*But I don't possess that kind of love*". And you would be exactly right to say that. This kind of selfless love doesn't originate from inside the human soul. This kind of love is supernatural; it is divine; it is a miracle every time you see it demonstrated and it is a wonder and a beauty to behold. This kind of love takes your breath away; it causes you to become convicted of your own self-centered ways. When you see this love demonstrated- you will put your hand over your mouth and gape in amazement. This kind of love causes us to bow our heads and our hearts and our knees and to fall before God in total helplessness. This is the love that wins the heart of the hardest man; that changes the nature of the most wicked among us; and that transforms a black heart whiter than snow.

For us to live and operate and function in this self-less kind of love will mean that we have purposed in our heart to do so- because this kind of love does not come naturally to human beings. It is natural for us to love those who love us back; to do for those who do for us; to give to those who give something back to us; and to expect some form of gratitude or recognition for what we do.

So if any of us is to achieve to this level of selfless love we will have to pray and work real hard to submit ourselves to God and to submit ourselves to God's Word and to submit ourselves to each other and we will have to humble ourselves down at His feet so that over time-

through the Power of the indwelling Holy Spirit- God will develop this kind of love within us.

The Apostle John didn't always have this kind of love working inside him. If you will recall when Jesus first called him- John was- along with his brother, James called, the "Sons of Thunder"- and they didn't get that tag because they were gentile and loving men. No, John learned how to love and John learned about this love from being with Jesus and from putting his head on Jesus' breast and hearing the heartbeat of the incarnate God and of watching Jesus do what He did and hearing Jesus pray how He prayed and of seeing Jesus die and then of being one of the few people on earth to be an eye witness of His Resurrection. All of this served to temper John over time and all of this worked inside of John to move upon him to constantly repent and constantly pray and constantly guard his own heart so that today we call this man the Apostle of Love.

And it is true to say that on this sin cursed earth- you do not find this kind of love existing anywhere except inside the Church and among the people of God- because nowhere else on earth does God move like He does inside the Church and in no one else does God do inside people what He does inside His Own people. And as much as is wrong with the modern Church- it is the only creation of God on earth that exists to honor God and to please the Lord and to teach His Word and whereby Jesus Christ is the Head and so in this Church- within the body of Jesus Christ- John says there must exist this selfless love and it must be real and it must flow like a river and it must touch every soul and then it must flow out the door of the Church down the street inside the most sinful areas of our community so that all will know that Jesus Christ is Lord to the Glory of God the Father.

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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