

Message #19**I John 4:17-21**

There is no subject more difficult to teach or grasp than the “love of God.” It is very deep and very complex. God’s love is totally amazing for it saw us as sinners and provided a sacrifice for us when we were sinners.

Now you and I who know the Lord have been left here on earth, in part, to demonstrate God’s love.

GOD ABIDES IN US AND THOSE WHO HAVE CLOSE FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD WILL BE THOSE WHO DEMONSTRATE GOD’S LOVE IN AND TO THIS WORLD.

Of all the assignments we have as a believer, this one is the most difficult. To love at God’s supernatural level of love is the ultimate challenge for any believer.

FACT #1 – God’s love is developed by our fellowship with God. **4:17a**

The words “by this” refer to the fact that by in abiding in God and God, who is love abiding in us, we may develop the kind of love character that is complete.

No one apart from God will ever love at a complete level. Any concept of “love” apart from God will be incomplete and distorted.

FACT #2 – God’s love may be completed in us. **4:17b**

It is possible for us to reach a point in our lives where we are a complete reflection of the love of God within our personalities. The word “perfected” is better understood as meaning completed.

God’s completed love does not just work itself out in external deeds of love, but also in loving things God loves and hating things God hates (5:2).

FACT #3 – God’s love determines our attitude about God’s judgment. **4:17c-18**

The phrase “there is no fear in love” has been butchered by so many people that rarely does one even grasp the true interpretation. This verse is not teaching that the believer should not be afraid of anything. This verse is not saying that a believer should not fear God. What this is saying is when God’s love is developing in our lives, we love things God loves, hate things God hates, and there is no fear of judgment. Because we know “as He is, so also are we in this world.” What that means is we realize we think the same way, we love the same way, and we love the same things that God does.

This development in God’s kind of love is what casts out fear. When we talk about fear, we are not talking about reverence and respect for God; we are specifically speaking about facing God in judgment and being afraid because we know our lives didn’t stand or count for Him.

Those who are developing in God's kind of love are those who do not have a fear of punishment but an anticipation of receiving rewards.

Those who are growing and developing in the true pure ways of God do not fear judgment; they look for it with confidence.

FACT #4 – God's love is possible because God first loves us. **4:19**

Now understand what this verse is saying—the only reason we will continually love God is because God continually loves us. The only reason you have any desire whatsoever to love God and His Word and will is because God first loved you.

You did not choose God; God chose you. You did not elect yourself; God elected you. You did not provide a sacrifice for your sins; God provided it for you. Therefore, the only reason we can love God is because God first loved us. The emphasis is on the believer.

The unbeliever is loved by God in one sense, but not loved by God in another sense. God loved the world and gave His only Son for salvation. So the love of God is found in the cross of Christ. The unsaved person has no chance to love God for he rejects the demonstration of that love, Jesus Christ on the cross.

FACT #5 – God's love is brotherly love. **5:20-21**

Now the brother is a specific brother that is in your fellowship, whom you know to be a brother.

The Gnostics hated the apostles and those in the church who stood for truth. They were creeping into the church and were attacking those who knew and taught the truth.

Listen and listen well—if someone comes into this church and continually hates his brother or sister in Christ and says, "I love God," he is a liar. That is absolutely impossible when God indwells the believer. The particular believer is one who was mature in the faith and was communicating the truth. This is the brother who demonstrates God's character. If a person hates one who demonstrates God's character, they also hate the God they have not ever seen.

One cannot just get away with loving God; he must love godly people also.