



Eternal Life

A Study of 1 John

- “Love” in 1 John
 - 1:1 - 4:6 -> 14x / 69 verses = .2/verse
 - 4:7 - 5:3 -> 32x / 18 verses = 1.78/verse
 - 5:4 - 21 -> 0x / 18 verses = 0/verse
- What might be the theme of this section?

1 John 4:7-12

- 4:7-12 -> “love one another” 3x
 - “let us” (command); “we ought” (duty); “if we” (condition)

ETHICAL

SOCIAL

DOCTRINAL

1 John 4:7-12

- “Beloved, let us **love** one another”
 - John already told us that Jesus commanded it (2:7-8; 3:23)
 - And that it indicates *Light* (2:10-11) and life (3:11-15)
 - Here he explains the doctrinal (theological) basis for the command and indicators

1 John 4:7-12

- *Why Should We Love One Another?*
 1. Because God is Love (7-8)
 2. Because God Manifested Love (9-11)
 3. Because God is Perfecting Love (12)

1. Because God is Love

A. Love is from God

- God is the origin and source of this particular kind of love
 - *Self-sacrificing* (3:16)
 - Giving, to meet needs (4:9-10)
- Love is *of* God (*belonging to, pertaining to*)

1. Because God is Love

A. Love is from God

- Everyone *loving* is born *of* God
 - Cf. *practicing righteousness* (2:29)
 - Loving with God's kind of love demonstrates that we are God's children (see 3:1, 10)

1. Because God is Love

A. Love is from God

- Everyone *loving* knows God
 - Those who know God keep His commandments (2:3)
 - God's commandments -> love (2:7-8)
 - Those loving with God's kind of love demonstrate they actually know God

1. Because God is Love

B. God is love

- Those who *say* they know God but don't keep His commandments are *lying* (2:4)
- Those not loving with God's kind of love demonstrate they *did not ever* know God
 - Cf. claiming to have fellowship with God and yet walking in darkness (1:6)

1. Because God is Love

B. God is love

- Grammar is important! This cannot be translated: ~~“love is God”~~
 - *God* is the subject
 - *love* is the predicate nominative
 - No article -> essential quality, not identity
- God is a Person, not an abstract concept

1. Because God is Love

B. God is love

- *Divine simplicity* -> God is not made up of competing parts, departments, committees
- There is no conflict between His love and His wrath and His justice and His grace ...
- All seen together in *propitiation* (4:10)

2. Because God Manifested Love

- How? By sending His Son
 - *In us? Better: among us*
 - The manifesting of God's love was an observable, historical fact (1:1-3)
 - We can *know* the personal God who is love because He showed His love in reality

2. Because God Manifested Love

- How? By sending His Son
 - *only begotten = unique, one-of-a-kind* (cf. Heb. 11:17 -> Gen. 25:1-5)
- The God who is love sent His unique Son on a specific mission with a specific purpose: “so that we might live through Him” (cf. Eph. 2:1-5)

2. Because God Manifested Love

- The problem: “our sins” (10) – lawlessness/ rebellion against God; separates us from God; deserves just punishment
- The solution: *propitiation* – another means of satisfying His just wrath against sin
- The reason: God’s love

2. Because God Manifested Love

- *Real love is seen in the fact that God purposefully sent His Son to be the object and satisfaction of His wrath against our sins*
 - If you deny substitutionary atonement you minimize God's love (cf. Rom. 5:6-11)
- “not that we loved God” -> God acted first; our (imperfect) love is a response to His perfect love

2. Because God Manifested Love

- “Since that’s the way God loved us, we in turn ought to love one another”
 - Refers to the incarnation & propitiation (9-10)
 - Those truths obligate us to love as God loves, since we are His children (3:1, 10; 4:7-8)
 - Focusing exclusively on God’s love for us is at best immature, and at worst idolatry

3. Because God is Perfecting Love

- “No one has seen God at any time”
 - In His essential being, as spirit (John 4:24)
 - What about OT appearances?
 - *Theophanies* – Christ appearing to men in physical form (e.g. – Gen. 18; Judg. 13)
 - *Shekinah* glory in the tabernacle and temple (e.g. – Ex. 40:34)

3. Because God is Perfecting Love

- Even though no one sees God in His essence, God (who is love) can be *seen* as we love
- *If* is not *conditional* but *evidential*
 - God loves His children and abides in them
 - When His children love, they reveal their parentage and His abiding

3. Because God is Perfecting Love

- When God's children love, God's love is brought to *perfection (it reaches it's intended goal)*
 - God manifested His love in and through Jesus
 - His plan is for us to be like Jesus (Rom. 8:29)
 - The more we love, the more we are like Jesus
 - The more we are like Jesus, the more God's love accomplishes His intended purpose

Summary

- God's children ought to love one another, for:
 1. God in His essence is love, and those born of Him are like Him
 2. God modeled His love for us to imitate
 3. When we love, we demonstrate God's abiding in us and bring His love to its intended goal

So What?

- Do you love others as God loves you?
 - How does the quality of your love measure up? (1 Cor. 13:4-7)
 - Even for 'enemies'? (Luke 6:27-36)
 - It all comes down to motive and attitude (Matt. 6:1-6)
 - Do it! and ask God to purify your motives

So What?

- Love is most evident when we are wronged
 - Love *overlooks* the offense of sin (1 Cor. 13:4-7; 1 Pet. 4:8)
 - Love addresses sin for the benefit of the sinner (1 Cor. 5:1-5; Heb 12:4-11)

So What?

- “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.” (Eph. 4:31-32)