



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

1 JOHN 4:7 – “LET US LOVE ONE ANOTHER!”

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John has repeatedly talked about love in this letter and he once again goes back to his favorite subject in these verses of 1 John 4:7-11, with greater depth and breadth. John wrote about love in 1 John 3:16-18 to show the nature of this love that God has and all believers are to possess as well. Now John writes to inspire us to love because of Who God is.

I. 1 JOHN 4:7: “LET US LOVE ONE ANOTHER!”

(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.” (9) “By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.” (10) “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” (11) “Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.” 1 John 4:7-11

John writes one of the greatest Biblical statements here about the nature of God. John isn’t talking about a quality that God possesses. God’s essence is Who God is. This is an aspect of the nature of God. That God is love deals with His character and love and stresses the personality of God to the fullest. ¹

God is by nature love. Because He is love, He gets to define love for us...love does not define Him. We must be very careful. People try to impose on God a human view of love, but God transcends any human perspective or limitation. ² Because God is love, it does not mean He tolerates everything. He created love, He is love and He alone defines love for us. And God’s ultimate expression of love was this: *“In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” (1 John 4:10)*

A. LOVE: WHAT IS GODLY LOVE?

Paul knew that love is the most basic element of godliness. 1 Corinthians 13:13, *“the greatest of these is love...”* Paul also knew that love is the most essential factor in our spiritual lives. Ephesians 5:1-2, *“be imitators of God... and walk in love...”* Paul knew that love is our greatest virtue. Jesus Himself expressed this truth in John 13:34, *“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.”*

What kind of love is this? It is not a love of emotion, impulse, feeling or attraction but it is a godly love that we can only have because He first loved us. (1 John 4:19)

“love” Greek **“agape”** sacrificial, unconditional love. An action taken.

This “agape” love means that we give not what the loved one wants, but we give what is truly needed. John 3:16 says, *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...”* In the greatest example of “agape” love, we see God giving not what man wanted, but what he needed. Man needed God’s Son, Jesus Christ to bring forgiveness.

This is God’s true, divine love for others. And this is the love we are called to have; an act of our will whereby we sacrificially and unconditionally love others. You see, God did not love us because we were so attractive and He was stirred up by some great emotion or feeling for us. God loved us and acted on that love to give us what we really needed; a Savior Who humbled Himself to the point of death for our salvation.

All believers have a continuing obligation to the same kind of love as Jesus Christ. And the extent to which our love would be willing to go must be the same lengths that Christ was willing to love us. Loving our brother and sister as Christ loved us could mean that we make the ultimate sacrifice to secure their good. Though this would be rare, we can’t overlook this idea of self-sacrifice too quickly. We may not have to die for others, but we may need to die to our self or sacrifice our own interests for others.³

Our world encourages self-satisfaction and not sacrifice. But a heart willing to sacrifice on behalf of our brothers and sisters in Christ is the standard of love that we are obligated to give. That’s what love really is. And this is our continuing obligation to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

We do not understand this kind of love today. But this is the kind of love we are to have for one another, and it is to abound more and more. That’s a high calling in a tough world. Paul understood that. And Jesus did too when he said in John 13:35, *“By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”*

B. “BELOVED, LET US LOVE ONE ANOTHER...”- 1 JOHN 4:7A

(7) “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.” 1 John 4:7

John’s love for fellow believers is often expressed by his affectionate term, “Beloved” which means divinely loved ones. He writes, motivated by a deep and persistent love for his readers, desiring their true welfare. “Beloved” expresses John’s love as he at the same time, calls them to love.

1 JOHN 4:7- "LET US LOVE ONE ANOTHER!"

Could it be that John saw a lack of love? Was there a need to show love greater emphasis? Is it possible to have your theology in line, your moral behavior in check and yet have very little love for one another? The point must be pressed today. So John begins with a passionate exhortation to "love one another". This is John's great concern, is it ours? Do you really love one another?

"Let us love one another" is a call to mutual love, in which John includes himself. It's not a question and it doesn't matter what we feel like. It is absurd to claim to have been born of God and to know God if we do not love our fellow believers. And so John's purpose is to encourage and challenge Christians to "love one another".

This phrase is in the present tense. It calls for a continual and repeated love. And with the use of "one another", it means that this love is mutual by using the reciprocal pronoun which insists that this love is mutual. It must flow freely in both directions. It's a call for high, unselfish love that truly seeks the welfare of another. The presence of this love is known only by the gracious actions it prompts. This kind of unselfish love will prompt believers to reach out to believers and unbelievers alike. (Galatians 6:10)⁴

C. "FOR LOVE IS FROM GOD..." - 1 JOHN 4:7B

(7) "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God." 1 John 4:7

The first reason John says believers are to give "agape" love, this self-sacrificial service towards one another, is that "love is from God." If believers are real and genuine, they will love simply because this is from God and we are His children. Because we are His children and thus have a "like nature" then we will be like God and reflect His love towards others.

John uses the definite article "for love" to focus on the kind of love he is calling for. It is the love that has its source in God. With the preposition "from" meaning out of, John denotes where this love is from; from God Who is the source. It is not the natural love of the world as Jesus talked about in John

15:19. Rather John refers to the self-sacrificing love rooted in God's own love portrayed through Jesus Christ. (1 John 4:9-10)

D. "AND EVERYONE WHO LOVES IS BORN OF GOD..." - 1 JOHN 4:7C

(7) "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God." 1 John 4:7

Remember that likeness is proof of relationship. If we have been born of God, then we will love one another because God is love.

"is born" Greek "gennao" verb, perfect passive, has been begotten, a past definite experience of new birth as brought about by God.

How are we born again? Through salvation found in Jesus Christ alone, Who paid for the penalty of our sins, by making atonement for us on the cross. Only by believing in Him are we born again to new life. And the result is that we are now a member of the family of God. The divine beginning that God brought about preceded His love. And the love is an activity of the implanted eternal life and proof that the life is real.⁵ All those with this new life will be characterized by the love of Jesus Christ when "He laid down His life for us." (1 John 3:16) All true and genuine believers, saved in the past by God will continue to give evidence of that fact in the present; they love and continue to love.⁶

E. "AND KNOWS GOD." - 1 JOHN 4:7D

The sure result of the new birth is that believers "know God". Conversely, if the one who claims to be a believer yet does not love, John says he does not know God.

"knows" Greek "ginoskei" verb, points too a daily experience in getting to know God better and better.

A genuine believer has a living relationship with God that is actively increasing. It will be dynamic not static. Is this the kind of relationship you have with God? Do you "know" God? Have you been born again?

¹ Hiebert, D. Edmond, *The Epistles of John: An Expository Commentary*. Bob Jones University Press: Greenville, SC, 1991. Pg.198.

² MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary Series on 1-3 John*. Moody Press: Chicago, IL, 2007. Pg. 166.

³ Boice, James Montgomery, *An Expository Commentary: The Epistles of John*. Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI, 1979. Pg. 96.

⁴ Hiebert, D. Edmond, *The Epistles of John: An Expository Commentary*. Bob Jones University Press: Greenville, SC, 1991. Pg.196-197.

⁵ Hiebert, D. Edmond, *The Epistles of John: An Expository Commentary*. Bob Jones University Press: Greenville, SC, 1991. Pg.197-198.

⁶ MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary Series on 1-3 John*. Moody Press: Chicago, IL, 2007. Pg. 165.