



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

1 JOHN 4:8 – “THE ONE WHO DOES NOT LOVE...”

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Dan File, P.O. Box 1088, Lake City, CO 81235-1088/303-345-8830 / filefamily@centurytel.net

In 1 John 4:7, the Apostle writes, “Let us love one another”. It is a call to mutual 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) 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”.

I. 1 JOHN 4:8: “THE ONE WHO DOES NOT LOVE...”

(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

The God of the New Testament is the same God of the Old Testament. King David would often write about the lovingkindness of God together with His great mercy and compassion. For example, in Psalm 103, David is recounting all the incredible benefits that come from God Almighty. He writes in verse 4, “Who redeems your life from the pit, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion.” That word, “lovingkindness” is so very unique in the Hebrew. We don’t have a word to define it. It describes God loyal love for us. It speaks of a love that has no end, continues. It speaks of a love that flows from God and continues forever. It is a continual, steady flow of God’s incredible love into my life that never stops. It is a steadfast love that knows no end. It is unconditional to me and nothing ever separates me from this love of God... not even death.

Romans 8:37-39 says “But in all these things, we overwhelmingly conquer through Him Who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor heights, nor depth, nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

This is God’s loyal love to all who believe. It is a steadfast, faithful love that knows no end. Let that penetrate your heart! And God marries His loyal love with mercy and compassion!

A. “THE ONE WHO DOES NOT LOVE...” – 1 JOHN 4:8A

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

1 John 4:8

Because love is the most basic element of godliness, what does it mean when love is lacking? In 1 John 4:8, the Apostle paints the opposite picture from one who loves and knows God in the previous verse of 1 John 4:7, “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.” Here John pictures the one who is unloving in attitude and practice, who does not love. John is talking about those whose lives are not characterized by a love for others.

Again, 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) We cannot have this kind of love in and of ourselves. There is no way. We are incapable of this kind of love. Of course, we can do acts of kindness towards others, but without knowing God, we cannot love like Him. John makes this so clear. And we all know this to be true if we were really honest. It is impossible for us to sacrificially and unconditionally love others. Even as Christians, we so often fail in our love for others. Ye without the Lord, we could never love like Him. So what does John say about all those who do not have this kind of “agape” love towards others?

B. “DOES NOT KNOW GOD...”- 1 JOHN 4:8B

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

1 John 4:8

John is clear. The absence of love in the life of any individual proves that they do “not know God.” There’s no middle ground. John says this one has never come to know God personally. The phrase, “does not know God” reveals that this one is still a stranger to God. The absence of this God given love in one’s heart and life disqualifies this one as truly knowing God.

The sure result of the new birth in Jesus Christ is that believers “know God”.

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

BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS, GOVERNOR & SPOUSES: TUESDAY AT 7:15AM, CAPITOL BASEMENT, ROOM 0109

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A genuine believer has a living relationship with God that is actively increasing. Conversely, if the one who claims to be a believer yet does not love, John says he does not know God.

It is absurd to claim to have been born of God and to know God if we do not love others. Remember that likeness is proof of relationship. If we have been born of God, then we will love one another because God is love. This is a distinguishing mark of true believers. This kind of love finds its source in God alone. It is a love that comes only from God. But, if we have not been “*born of God*” (1 John 4:7), then there is no way we can love like God. Instead, we can only have the natural love of the world that will never be steadfast and loyal without end as God loves.

C. “FOR GOD IS LOVE.” - 1 JOHN 4:8C

*“The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.”
1 John 4:8*

John writes one of the greatest Biblical statements here about the nature of God. That God is love deals with His character and love and stresses the personality of God to the fullest.¹ And because the nature of God is love, if we do not love as God, this reveals that we do not know God personally. We have not been born again.

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 new life is real.² All those with this new life will be characterized by the love of Jesus Christ. They love and continue to love.³

As true believers in Jesus Christ, we are called to love as God loves us. This godly love is a command rooted in the soil of His redeeming grace through what He has done by providing salvation found only in His Son Jesus Christ. It is this godly love that ultimately constrains all believers to obedient love as true children of God. But John says, “*The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.*” (1 John 4:8)

The critical question remains; *do you know God?* Not just do you know about God. Not have you walked an isle or parroted a prayer at some point in your past. Not did you grow up in a Christian home or were baptized. Not are you a good person and you do good things. Not one of these things are enough to save you. We will all stand before God one day and give an accounting for our life to Him. The only thing that will matter is if we “*confess with our mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead.*” If indeed you can truthfully say these things, Paul says, “*you shall be saved. For with the heart man believes resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.*” (Romans 10:9-10)

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

² Hiebert, D. Edmond, *The Epistles of John: An Expository Commentary*. Bob Jones University Press: Greenville, SC, 1991. Pg.197-198.

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