



Bible Study for February 26, 2020

Well, Christmas is only ten months away! Yes, that’s right, you only have 302 shopping days left! But as Christmas shopping season seems to start earlier and earlier each year, you’ll probably soon see signs advertising how many shopping days are left this this holiday season at your favorite stores. The pressure is building already!

Each year as the time gets closer to Christmas (especially on Black Friday) there are news stories of grown adults fighting for TVs DVD players, computers, cameras, and toys.

It’s very easy to get caught up in the commercial side of Christmas isn’t it? For an early antidote to the virus of commercialization, let’s look at 1 John 4:7-11.

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. **8** He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. **9** In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. **10** Herein 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.

The Christmas Motive: God is Love

God’s love is an unselfish interest in us for our sake. It is *agape*, not *eros*, *phileo*, or *storge*.

What kind of love? We use the term “love” so loosely. We love our car, dog, parents, wife, children, house, state, country, Wildcats, baseball, etc.

To say that God is love is to give it as an attribute of God. As an attribute of God, it never changes. It’s always the same. Some other examples of attributes of God given in Scripture are listed below.

And one cried unto another, and said, **Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts:** the whole earth is full of his glory. **Isaiah 6:3**

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. **John 4:24**

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that **God is light**, and in him is no darkness at all. **1 John 1:5**

We see evidence that this attribute of God was active even before creation among the members of the Trinity. Jesus speaks to his Father of “my glory which you have given me in your love for me before the foundation of the world” (John 17:24), thus indicating that there was love and a giving of honor from the Father to the Son from all eternity.

Some theologians, like St. Augustine, have seen love as the essence of the trinity.

Now when I, who am asking about this, love anything, there are three things present: I myself, what I love, and love itself. For I cannot love love unless I love a lover; for there is no love where nothing is loved. So there are three things: the lover, the loved and the love.

The eighteenth-century theologian Jonathan Edwards has an entire essay on this theme (“An Unpublished Essay on the Trinity”).

The Christmas Message: He sent His Son to Show His Love

This self-giving, unselfish quality of the divine love is seen in what God has done. God’s love in sending his Son to die for us was not motivated by our prior love for him.

Weekly Bible Study meets on Wednesday at two times (11:30-12 and 12-12:30). Both in Capitol Annex 436 or, if occupied, the 4th floor lounge (404).

Love always manifests itself. If you love something or someone you will show it. There will be evidence of this love. In Romans 5:8, “God demonstrates His love....” In John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that He gave....”

Here God demonstrates His love by sending His Son as a propitiation for our sins

God’s love does not nullify the doctrine of God’s wrath. Instead, it is the means by which God’s wrath has been dealt with.

I thought this was a lesson about love? It is, but any discussion of God’s love is meaningless unless it is balanced by a discussion of God’s wrath.

Psalm 7:11 tells us that God is angry with the wicked every day.

Don’t love the gift more than the giver! But that’s impossible with Jesus! The gift and the giver are both God. Heb. 1:3 “the brightness of His glory, express image of His person”

The Christmas Mandate: Love one another

John’s goal is to drive this point home. If God loved us this much, we ought to love one another!

This is the spirit that should drive Christmas. But it isn’t just for one day a year. It’s for every day, all-year-around.

One question remains: Why command something that is true of all believers?

Consider a mother that takes her young child to the doctor. The doctor assures her that her child is healthy and will grow healthy. Doctors can even predict height, etc. But that mother would not go home and not feed the child anymore because the doctor said the child would grow healthy to a certain height. You still must act.

Doctors say your child will live a long and healthy life of 100 yrs. But then you don’t take care of the baby.

God’s commands are the means by which he empowers us to fulfil what we are in Christ.

Conclusion:

You still have ten months, but this year let’s not get caught up in the commercialization of Christmas.

Instead, let’s focus on the Christmas Motive that God is love, the Christmas message that God showed that love by sending His Son Jesus, and the Christmas Mandate that we are to love one another.

When we follow the mandate to love one another, remarkable unity results! Consider the proper way to achieve unity among believers that was shared by A. W. Tozer many years ago.

Has it ever occurred to you that one hundred pianos all tuned to the same fork are automatically tuned to each other? They are of one accord by being tuned, not to each other, but to another standard to which each one must individually bow.

So one hundred worshipers meeting together, each one looking away to Christ, are in heart nearer to each other than they could possibly be were they to become “unity” conscious and turn their eyes away from God to strive for closer fellowship.

A. W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God* [1948] (Wilder Publications, 2009), 63.

If each of us get in tune with Christ, we will automatically be in tune with each other!