

Love of God 1 John 4:7-12

Introduction

People have over the years tried to define love. Many people say that it is a feeling—a magical kind of feeling that results in tingling in the arms, back of neck along with butterflies in the stomach. Many movies, books, and other media have the main character doing crazy stuff when they fall in love.

However, John quickly disabuses this notion of love, and in the letter, he talks about love 3 times. This time he talks about love's source...where did it come from? Human beings are created in the image of God with the capacity to love, but only Christians receive the love from God. What does this love look like? Let's see what Paul says in **1 Corinthians 13**:

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 *Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; (5) does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; (6) does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; (7) bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (8) Love never fails.*

This is the love of God that Christians receive. This love perfectly reflects the character of God. Our greatest object and endeavor should be to know Him better, and thus we will love Him more truly.

I. God is Love

- John does not say that God is loving or that Love is God, but that God is love. This is a profound statement because John is writing that God is love in His innermost being” (Stott). John says that it is in His character and essence to love.
- God is love does not mean that it is the only aspect of God's character, because we see that God “is a consuming fire” (**Heb 12:29**) and that He “is a righteous judge, and a God who has indignation every day” (**Ps 7:11**). It also does not mean that everything that is called “love” by the world is what God identifies with (romance or sexual debauchery). His love is a holy and pure love.
- The word love is from the Greek “agape” which in Christian thought is a selfless love that seeks the best in others.
- God's love is shown in the relationship of the Trinity.

John 17:24 *Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.*

John 3:35 *The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand.*

John 14:31 *But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do.*

- By implication the Holy Spirit also loves the Father and the Son, and the Father and Son loves the Holy Spirit. It is a pure reciprocal love that brings joy and happiness to the other two.
- John then says that “In this is love, not that we loved Him, but that He loved us.” This is an amazing statement because John is saying that it is not our love to Him that is important but that He loves us. But before we explore this statement, we must note that love is from God. We are incapable of loving God without His love in us we love darkness and hate the light. Here John says that God loves us, and not only that He loves us, but He manifested or demonstrated His love to us by sending His Son.

Transition: God's love is even clearer when we consider the Fall of man when Adam and Eve hid from God. God said, “Where are you?” What has happened is that the separation had occurred when they sinned against God. God cursed them, but in the middle of His curse on mankind, He shows His love in **Genesis 3:15**.

Genesis 3:15 *And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.*

The love of God can only be finally understood and appreciated in the Lord Jesus Christ.

II. God Manifests (shows) His Love

- God has sent His only begotten Son is a phrase used most commonly in Scripture, and it implies the Deity of Christ Jesus because it implies that Jesus existed before He was born. None of us were sent into this world because all of us were born into this world.
- God demonstrated His love to us by sending His Son.

Romans 5:8 *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*
John 3:16 *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

- God gave His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Again, propitiation means to appease His wrath upon us and that our sins be covered through the death of His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus had to die on the cross so that His justice is satisfied. Not only that, Jesus Himself voluntarily gave His life for us because He loved us to the end (to the uttermost).

Ephesians 1:7 *In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace*

1 John 3:16 *By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us.*

John 13:1 *Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.*

- We often do not understand the greatness of His love when John says He has sent His Son *into the world*. What does this mean? In order to understand this, we must do what Paul says and search the mystery of God's love for us.

Ephesians 3:17-19 *that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, (18) may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height-- (19) to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

- Paul says that we are to comprehend the width, length, depth, and height of His love for us. Let us do so.
- The relationship within the Trinity for all eternity—Imagine the love between the mother and child, but multiplied by infinity. Imagine the absolute perfection in the relationship and complete contentment!
- See the creation with man being made in the image of God—for man to love God and be loved by God perfectly. See how man rebels against God and how that sin breaks the relationship between God and man. See how man is dead to God and how they do not love God, nor do they seek Him. See how God provides a promise of the Savior to the world.
- See how God sends His Son to the world and when Jesus was in the womb, ready to be born, how the inn refused them a room—the selfishness of man manifested itself that night. See how Jesus the King of the Universe born in a smelly stable with animals.
- See the poverty of Jesus' family—two turtledoves was the common price for the poor for animal sacrifice. He grew up a carpenter. A far cry as the Creator and King of the universe
- In His ministry, for three years, He encountered hardened hearts—whispered accusations of demons against Him. He saw disciples leaving Him because they no longer believed in Him. He taught for three years that the kingdom of Heaven was at hand. He called for repentance and to humble oneself before God.
- He did many miracles and showed proof that He is the Son of God, yet His people rejected Him. See the ugliness of the crowd when they cried out, "Crucify Him."
- He hung on the tree to become curse for us so that our sins be placed on Him. He experienced complete separation from the Father—He experienced the agonies of the damned and more—especially with the fact He knew and loved the Father and the Holy Spirit from all eternity. What agony! What love! Father, forgive them for they know what they do.
- This doesn't stop because we see that God raised Jesus from the dead, and God proclaimed that everything was complete and He was pleased! God did this so we can have eternal life.
- The question is...Why did God do all this? Because He loved us!

Conclusion

2 Corinthians 9:15 *Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!*

How can we act as Christians in any other way? As John said...As God loved us, we ought to love one another!