

REASONS FOR LOVING LIKE GOD (1 John 4:7-21)

- I. It is a sign of being begotten by God (vs 7-8).**
 - A. Loving the brethren shows that we are of God.
 - 1. Love comes from God and we learn to love by the example that God sets for us.
 - 2. This is an example that parents are to emulate for their children the things that they teach them to be.
 - B. An interesting point about the word “agape” is that before the time of Christ, this word was hardly used at all.
 - 1. Very rarely was it used in secular literature, if at all.
 - 2. Even, after it came into use by Christians, this word was rarely used by secular writers.
 - 3. The reason is that sacrificial love is a completely Christian concept.
 - a. Worldly minded people do not think in terms of sacrificing for others.
 - b. But as God has shown for us, this is the way that we are to think of our brethren and fellow man.
 - C. Only those that are begotten by God love the way that God loves.
 - 1. Love is evidence of the new birth.
 - 2. I used to preach a sermon, Signs of the New Birth.
 - 3. This is one of those signs.
 - 4. We love differently than the world, and like God.
 - D. The one who loves shows that he has intimate knowledge of God, because only one knowing God would know to love like Him.
 - E. Augustine, the 4th century theologian made this statement: “A wicked man may have baptism. He may have prophecy. He may receive the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ. All of these things a wicked man may have. But no wicked man can have love.”
 - 1. I don’t agree in the least with the way he phrased all of that, but the sentiment is true.
 - 2. One who loves shows that they have been genuinely converted.
 - F. There is no way that we know God if we don’t love.
 - G. We can’t be a child of God if we do not love.
- II. Because of God’s bestowal of Christ (vs 9-11).**
 - A. God put His love on exhibition by bestowing Christ on the world.
 - 1. John is the only writer to use the phrase “only begotten” about Jesus.
 - 2. It means “one of a kind, “”never to be another like Him.”
 - B. The reason for loving God is that God loves us so much that He was willing to sacrifice His only begotten Son.
 - 1. The purpose for it was so that we could live.
 - 2. What could be a greater reason for loving God than the giving of His Son?
 - C. Verse 10 shows that God’s love is not based on anything we have done or will do.

1. God loved us before we loved Him and this love moved Him to send His Son.
 2. There is no greater way that God could have shown His love for mankind.
- D. Jesus was sent to be the propitiation for our sins.
1. This word is interesting.
 2. It carries the idea of the benefit of reconciliation but also allowing us to be called friends of God.
 3. God had to be appeased and Christ did that, but took it a step further by allowing us to have a relationship with God.
- E. Because of that love, we are to love one another.
- F. How could we do any less?

III. **The benefit of God abiding in us (vs 12–16).**

- A. We may not have the ability to see God, but we have the ability to allow God to abide in us by loving others.
1. The how of the abiding is found in 1:3, 5.
 2. God abides in us as we follow His will
 3. Not only that, but we allow our love for God to become mature.
- B. The way that we know He dwells is the same way we know that Jesus abides in us - by the Spirit, which is through the word.
- C. John and the other apostles had seen Jesus and gave testimony to the fact that Jesus came into the world to save mankind.
- D. One that will confess Christ will love as he should.
1. This again is dealing with the Gnostic heresy.
 2. The Gnostics did not love others because they were too busy pleasing self.
 3. They could not make this confession and they could not love as they were commanded.
- E. Christians have knowledge of and belief in the love of God.
1. When we act on that knowledge and belief we can be like God when it comes to love.
 2. He will be with us and we will be with Him.

IV. **We receive boldness (vs. 17-18).**

- A. When love is matured, we have boldness to face the judgment.
1. This carries the idea of not being found lacking in something if we love the way we should.
 2. Love is the foundational element and if we love the way we should, then the rest falls into place.
 3. We show our love for God by obeying His commandments and that comes with maturity.
- B. The “he” in verse 17 refers to Jesus.
1. It is Him that we are striving to resemble in this world.
 2. By loving all men we imitate Jesus.
 3. When we follow His example we have His approval.
- C. We don’t have to fear the judgment when we are loving as we should.
1. When we fear now, there is dread and no hope.
 2. Love removes that fear.

- D. Verse 19 is important because it shows that Jesus did not die in order to get God to love us, but because He already loved us.
 - 1. Some teach this false doctrine.
 - 2. As one writer said, "After God's love in giving His Son for us, it would be monstrous not to love."

V. It is the basic element for the love of God (vs 20-21).

- A. You cannot separate love for God and love for man - they go hand in hand with each other.
 - 1. One who says he does is a liar.
 - 2. Elsewhere in scripture, John tells us that all liars will lose their souls (Revelation 21:8).
- B. Notice this statement from Woods: "It is a characteristic of love to fix its attention on that which is visible and near; if, therefore, one does not love his brother whom he has seen, it is impossible to love God who one has not seen."
- C. Jesus gave this command several times during His earthly ministry.