

King James Bible Study Correspondence Course

An Outreach of Highway Evangelistic Ministries
5311 Windridge lane ~ Lockhart, Florida 32810 ~ USA

1 John Lesson 11**LOVE is of GOD**

return pages 5 & 6 only

Godly love is demonstrated by care for others.

Our society is never far from talking about love. It is a prevailing theme of the television programs we watch and the music we hear. When we observe carefully, however, the term "love" is most often used to speak of feelings that are rooted in self-fulfillment. This kind of love can easily slip into selfish disregard that uses others, rather than giving to them.

Throughout the letter of 1 John, John frequently returned to the theme of true Christian love. He wanted Christians to understand what genuine love is and why God says that love for others is essential for His children.

God does not just command us to love. Instead, He has given His own self-giving love as a pattern for our love. As we contemplate God's love for us, we learn how we must reach out in love to others. This kind of love is unnatural for us, because by nature we sinful humans would rather take from others than give to others. To enable us to love as He commands, God's Spirit is at work within us to perfect godly love in our lives.

God wants to produce in us practical love for others in need. This quality of love is vastly superior to what our culture regards as love. This godly love will demonstrate to the world that we are truly born of God.

What Does Love Look Like?

Many people use the term "love" in a wide variety of ways. But if we are to do as the Bible directs, we have to understand what the Bible means by "love." If we simply read into "love" our notion of what it means to us, we may well be far from what John intended to say.

People have often observed that a picture is worth a thousand words. That is particularly true when we consider an abstract concept such as love. To help us understand what real love is, John pointed us to the perfect pattern of love. When we comprehend God's love for us, we will understand how we are to love one another.

The love John described is not a romantic feeling; it is the distinctive mark of God's family. Those who truly love have been born of God and know God. Only those who have come into God's family through faith and trust in JESUS CHRIST are able to love as God intends.

In verse 8 (1 John 4) John stated the truth about love in negative terms. The person whose life is not characterized by love evidences that he does not know God. God in His essential character is love. Those who are of Him will demonstrate that love in their lives. Those who do not demonstrate His love in their lives have not come to know Him personally.

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Some may object that John was being too hard, because they know non-Christians who are loving people. We have to understand what the true meaning of the word love is in GOD's dictionary. The love that comes from GOD is the highest quality of love. The Greek word *agape* described sacrificial love to help another in need. This is the kind of love that God has extended to us, and it is the kind of love that Christians should extend to others.

God manifested this *agape* love to its ultimate degree when He sent His Son Jesus Christ into the world (v. 9). This kind of love does not count the cost; it gives voluntarily and willingly. This kind of love is not conditioned on the worthiness of the object, but rather it is prompted by the generosity of the giver. It is unconditional sacrifice to meet the need of another. In this case, God's love reached out to undeserving sinners to give us eternal life. To give us that gift, JESUS CHRIST had to forfeit His own life and endure the shame and pain of the cross. In doing that, God gave to us the perfect pattern of what love should be and do.



Scripture Memorization

I Jn 4:16

16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

(KJV)

Only God's love is pure enough to be the standard for love (v. 10). God has nothing to gain from sinful humans. His love is totally selfless, giving to undeserving sinners that which cost Him the death of His own Son. God's love focuses on what it can do for humans, not what it can get from them. When Jesus died as the perfect substitute for sinners, He totally satisfied God's righteous demands. By taking the penalty for our sins, Jesus opened the door, for those who place their faith and trust in Him to have a relationship with God.

When we receive the benefit of God's love, we have the obligation to pass it on to others (v. 11). If we accept God's love, but refuse to love others, we have not really appreciated what God has done for us.

God's love for us is our pattern for loving one another. By His own example God has shown us what love looks like.

How Does Love Be Perfected?

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It is one thing to possess God's love. The problem then is turning that into a reality in your own life. How can that kind of love be perfected in our lives? John proceeded to discuss the perfection of love in 4:12-18.

John taught that God is working to accomplish two important things at the same time. On the one hand, He wants to work in His children so that they are able to love with His kind of *agape* love. By doing this, God is also using His children to reveal to the world what He is like. In other words, when His children love as He loves, the world can see God as He truly is. Sin has clouded humans' perception of God, but the love of His children will enable the world to see Him more clearly (v. 12).

We know only too well, however, that our sinful nature pushes us toward selfishness and away from love. If we are going to love as God loves. God has to work a miracle in us to change our lives. That is exactly what God does in us through His Holy Spirit (v. 13). The Spirit comes to live in each child of God. Part of the fruit of godly character that He produces (Galatians 5:22,23) is love. The presence of love, then, is evidence that we dwell in God and God dwells in us.

People often pit love and truth against each other. But John repeatedly linked love and truth together. They do not work against each other; they are both qualities of godliness (1 John 4:14, 15). False teachers do not manifest God's love, and they deny the truth about God's Son. God's children demonstrate God's love in their lives, and they declare that Jesus is indeed the Son of God. Those who are truly in God follow His pattern of love, and they honor Christ as LORD.

In verse 16 John repeated the truth that he had stated before in verse 8: "God is love." Then he summarized what he had been teaching in verses 12 to 15 by adding, "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." Love comes only from God. GOD's love is perfected in us when we love one another. Growth in love, is prompted by God's Holy Spirit working in a life. For Christians to grow in love they must yield to the Spirit's ministry in there lives. Instead of opposing the Spirit through sinful attitudes and actions, we must surrender to Him and walk in Him. We do not grow in love by trying to be more loving through our own efforts, but by yielding to the Spirit's control of our lives. Then GOD will produce godly love in us. Spiritual growth in our lives is evidences of GOD perfecting HIS love in us that we are pleasing to. Because of that, we can anticipate the Judgment Seat of Christ with boldness (v. 17). Just as schoolchildren have report cards and adults have performance reviews, so Christians must appear before the Lord to give account of their lives.

On the other hand, if we have resisted the Spirit's ministry in our lives, we will be fearful and apprehensive as we come before Christ (v. 18). The person who fears to appear before the Lord is one in whom love has not been

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perfected. When the Spirit has been able to perfect a person's love, that perfect love casts out fear. By working to make us more like Christ, the Holy Spirit also endeavors to make our appearance before Christ a joyful time of affirmation.

More Than Just a Good Idea

As John talked about love, he left us with two powerful principles. First, God has set the standard for genuine love. We should not form our conception of love from what our culture calls love. Instead, God defined love when He loved us by sending His Son to be the Saviour of the world. That selfless, sacrificial action to help sinful, needy humans is God's standard for love.

The second principle is that we Christians are able to love because of the love that God has for us (1 John 4:19). Although it certainly is true that we love God as a response to His prior love for us, it is probably better to read verse 19 as "**We (are able to) love, because He first loved us.**" Not only is God the pattern for our love, but He also provides the power for our love. Because we humans are born with a sin nature, love does not come naturally to us. As part of His love, God has given to His children the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Spirit produces godly love in our lives. Instead of being limited by our sinful nature, we are liberated by the Spirit to love God and other people.

Because love is an aspect of God's character, He wants His children to demonstrate love throughout every part of their lives (v. 20). This demonstration involves more than just loving God and being content with that. It is all too easy for us to say that we love God. If our love is genuine, it will also be demonstrated to other people. Godly love affects both how we approach God and how we treat others. We do not have the luxury of holding grudges against others or treating them in an insensitive and careless way. That is not love, and it is a denial of our claim that we love God.

To make this point absolutely clear, John concluded this section with another challenge to keep Christ's new commandment (v. 21). Christ requires that those who love God love others also. God does not set forth His commands in a cafeteria style in which we choose some requirements to obey and pass on others. We are obligated to do all that God directs. For Christians, love should be more than just a good idea. Our lives should be characterized by God's love reaching out to love other people. In fact, we should love others just as we love God Himself. God wants His quality of love to characterize our lives completely as we relate to Him and to one another.

Notes

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1 John Lesson 11

LOVE is of GOD

Name _____

Read these related passages as you study 1 John 4:7-21 this week:
Matthew 25:31-46; John 3; 1 John 3:11-18

1. How does the world define the word love?
2. What, according to 1 John 4:7, is the source of love?
3. A person whose life is not characterized by love evidences what?
4. Give the definition of GOD's love
5. How should those who have freely received God's love treat others?
6. How can that love be perfected in our lives?
7. What is the fruit of the spirit?
8. What are the qualities of godliness?
9. How is GOD's love perfected in us?
10. At the Judgment Seat of Christ, what can we expect if we have been yielding to the Holy Spirit?
11. What are the two powerful principles, John talked about love?
12. What attitude on our part is evidence that we have not really come to learn what it means to love?

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13. At the Judgment Seat of Christ, what can we expect if we have not been yielding to the Holy Spirit?
14. What is Christ's new commandment?

Bonus Question

15. Compare the spiritual growth process between 1 John 2:10-14 and 2 Tim 3:16-17 and 1 John 4:17-18



Memory verses, write these out on the back of this page.

1 John 5:10-13; 1 John 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:1; 2 Peter 1:10

True/false

- The absence of love in a person's attitudes is a clear sign something is wrong in his or her heart.
- God requires His children to practice love for one another.
- If we are not loving others, we are not letting God's love flow through us to reach out to others.
- GOD understands that there are some idiots in the world that you cannot love

Something to meditate on

Unloving attitudes will enslave us because we are guilty of disobeying God. This week, we need to identify where we have not been loving to others and then to ask the Lord to help us reach out with His love to those people.

Any questions?