

So That You May Know

An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John**

Chapter 7- The Test of Love

57. The Law of Love Part 5

WAOY Tuesday 07/24/07; WOSM Tuesday 12/20/22

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1John**, and today I want to continue to examine what John taught about "The Law of Love". So, let's open our Bibles to **1John 2:7-11** and read those verses again together:

7 Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard.

8 On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining.

9 The one who says he is in the Light and *yet* hates his brother is in the darkness until now.

10 The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him.

11 But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

The sum of what I have been teaching here in these verses is this. Because we are saved; because we have been born from above; because we have within us the new divine nature that is created in righteousness and true holiness, and which has both the will and the power to serve God- because all of that is true- then we are left with no excuse other than to love God's people.

John says the darkness has passed away and the true light has now shined into our hearts and we are a new people who have been regenerated by the Power of the Holy Spirit and washed in the precious

Blood of Jesus Christ- so we have to; we are compelled to fulfill this law of Love.

Now you would think that this Law of Love is elementary Truth about the Gospel of Jesus Christ- but then if all of this is true and we all agree with all of this- why do we have such turmoil within the Body of Jesus Christ?

Why do we have people who go to Church for years and never even speak to each other? Why do we have people getting so upset with one another that they leave the Church over issues that the Bible says we are supposed to work out?

Some would say, *"I just can't get along with that person."* And they make that statement to justify why they do not love this person and forgive this person or have any desire to be around this person.

Now whereas this is a common statement- and many people use this excuse today to justify the sin of not loving the brethren- in reality brothers and sisters- we don't have that right anymore.

You see, it isn't up to us whom God chooses to place in His Own Body- that is God's Business. We are commanded to love all whom God has saved- regardless of what we have to go through in order to do that. The Bible is clear- beloved- for anyone to withhold love from anyone whom Jesus Christ has saved is sin.

This is the great equalizer in the Church of Jesus. Because you see to not love someone because they are not in your same social class or because their education level is less than yours or because they have habits which offend you or because their body has an odor or because they speak differently than you do or because they are poor or because they came from a background that didn't give them as much privilege as yours did or because they look differently than you do or because they have a different skin color- to not love them for this is blatant rebellion to that which God commands us to do.

Remember- we have no more excuses- we are born again and have both the will and the power to do what pleases God.

Now some will say here- *"But I do love them- I just don't want anything to do with them."* But that is just a cop out and it will not fly with God. To love someone means everything that that word implies and to stay away from someone proves that you do not love them. Try telling your wife that you love her as you stay away from her and see if that is okay with her.

Now I want to be careful here and give you a little more insight into what John teaches about this. You see, sometimes in order to prove themselves- people will extend mercy and kindness to people precisely because they are poor or because they are different than they are, and this is not what John is saying here.

John simply says that you are to love the brethren – but just that you are to love *all* the brethren- even those who are difficult to love. Again, this love is like all other things about the kingdom of God- this brings glory to God- and that is why we should do it; that should be our motivation.

We are saved; we belong to Jesus; we desire to do God's Will; so since God's Word clearly reveals that it is God's Will that saved people love other saved people- we have a duty; an obligation; and a responsibility as believers to humbly submit ourselves to that which honors God and love all of God's people fervently.

And we are to love them if it is easy and if it gives us satisfaction- but we are also to love them just as fervently if we have to work at it and if we get nothing out of it.

You see, it isn't about how blessed we are when we love that makes love proper. Loving God's people is always proper under any circumstance. Not to love God's people under any circumstance is what is not proper.

That which binds us together is not our own personal habits or our customs or our dress or our educational level or our culture or our financial status or our language or our background. No, what unites believers is that all of us are sinners who have been gloriously and wondrously saved by a supernatural miracle of God. None of us deserves Salvation; none of us has earned it. Every single person who is saved has been saved by Grace through Faith and not by works- so all of us deserve to be in hell right now and none of us deserves anything that God has given to us.

And that Truth serves to keep us humble, and it serves to cast away our arrogance and to break the staff of our pride and cause us to be pitiful and tender and longsuffering and merciful and loving to each other- so much so that the lost world will stand and wonder as they see God's great love demonstrated in us a through us to each other.

The Bible teaches that you are to love your brothers and sisters in Christ more than you love your own family- if your family is lost.

Indeed, you should love your family- but you should love your spiritual family even more. You are to love your brothers and sisters in Christ more than you love your own wife or husband if your wife or husband is lost. Again, the Bible is clear- you are to love your wife and husband- but you are to love the family of God even more.ⁱ

You see if I am lost, and my wife is saved- she can only love me for a certain amount of time. When she dies and when I die- because she is saved, and I am lost- we will not spend eternity together. She will go to be with God in heaven and I will go to burn in hell forever.

But we are going to spend eternity with every single one of our genuine brothers and sisters in Christ and if that is true that we are going to be with each other forever in heaven – then by all means we need to learn how to love each other down here.

Sometimes love comes easy. As human beings- we can sometimes fall in love with certain people very easily- and we should thank God for that gift. But beloved- this command from God to love our brethren is not based upon how easy or how hard it is to accomplish it.

We must remember that John wrote down inspired, infallible, and inerrant words that have all authority over us and words that are just as relevant today as they were when he wrote them. So, we have this to do.

If you can love easy- then fine- praise God for that. But if loving your brethren is hard for you or costs you something or takes a lot out of you- then let me give you some suggestions.

First of all, no one has the option to love or not to love. If you are saved- then you are commanded by God to love the brethren. And this should be a high priority in your prayer closet every morning. I asked this question the other day in my Church, and I want to say it here on the radio. The question will give us great insight into how little we think about the things that matter a great deal to God.

“How long has it been since you yourself or someone you knew sat up all night praying and seeking God so that you could love your brothers and sisters fervently?”

Most people don't pray about this issue during the day- much less stay up all night praying about it. Most people are not troubled at all if they are at odds with their covenant brothers and sisters. They can

function and feel good about themselves and really have little or no remorse at all even though the Bible says that to be at odds with your brother is a very serious sin.

The fact that we are so little troubled about this is not a sign of our great spiritual maturity but rather an indication that we love ourselves more than we love God. No Christian should feel good when we have open rebellion and un-repentant sin in our lives. And to withhold love from a brother or sister in Christ is a terrible sin in the Eyes of God.

So, I would say that to stay up all night praying that you could love your brother so that you would not sin against God would be a great and wonderful exercise in humble submission to God whereas to go through life really not caring about your status with your brothers and sisters is what is odd and strange and frightening.

I would also say that whatever effort you have to expend so that you would not be guilty of withholding your love from a brother or sister would be proper and correct and worthwhile. Remember, beloved, this is a real big deal to God, and it ought to be a real big deal to us too.

Now I want to look at verse 9 or **1John2** again:

The one who says he is in the Light and *yet* hates his brother is in the darkness until now.

Here we have a very similar example that John gave us back in verse 4. In these two verses, John is giving us an example of someone who *says* that they are saved. They are not truly born again- but only *say* that they are saved. Because the man in verse 4 does not keep God's commandments and because the man in verse 9 does not love his brethren- John is saying here that their "salvation" is false and these two men are really not saved at all.

That is because John wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that being saved *causes* you to keep God's commandments and that being saved *causes* you to love your brothers and sisters in Christ.

This effort here by John takes Salvation out of the subjective and puts it into the objective. It prevents us from defining Salvation according to our own terms based upon that which pleases us, and it forces us to define Salvation biblically and to use terms that please God.

So, because being saved *causes* these two measurable and tangible fruits to be active and alive in our lives- the absence of these two qualities proves without doubt that there is no genuine Salvation. Now notice that John uses the word “hate” here. This is an English translation of the Greek word, *miseoo* (**mise/w**), which does mean to detest or great dislike or distaste. But there is an even deeper meaning of this word.

To hate someone in a Biblical sense also means to love them less; to withhold our love from them; to simply not care about them. So, while hate can even mean violence in some cases – the way that John is using this word in verse 9- he meant to say not that we do violence toward or brothers but that we simply love them less than the Bible commands us to; that we simply cease from caring about them; that we view them not to be worth the effort that is needed to love them.

So, John is saying here that loving our brethren will require effort and it will require patience and long suffering and it will cost us something - but that whatever effort it requires of us- it is worth it- because it brings great glory to God. And John is also saying that if we ever get to place where we no longer view these particular people as worth the effort- we are “hating” them in the Biblical sense of the word and John says if we do that- we are walking in darkness.

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of 1 John. May God help us all.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.

ⁱ Luke 14:26 Jesus was not instructing people to hate in this verse- but that our love for God should be so great that all other “loves” that we have would be “hate” by comparison.