

The Purpose of Brotherly Love

1 John 4:7-21

Study #14

(Not entirely original with me)

INTRODUCTION:

It seems only natural that a Christian would love other Christians, because that is a sure sign that that person is truly a child of God, although non-Christians also love one another, the Christian has different reasons for being a loving person. Jesus was loving and every Christian is to imitate Jesus as best as he/she can. Just what happens, what is the purpose when a Christian demonstrates love for his/her fellow Christians?

I. BROTHERLY LOVE IS EVIDENCE OF SONSHIP (7-8)

A. WE SHOULD LOVE ONE ANOTHER, FOR LOVE IS OF GOD...

1. As will be illustrated shortly, true love (the Greek word is agape, “active goodwill”) emanates from God - **7a**
2. That is because “God is love” - **8b**
 - a. Every action of His is motivated out of an “active goodwill” toward us
 - b. This does not mean He overlooks sin, for God is also “light” - cf. **1 Jn 1:5-6**

B. THOSE WHO LOVE, DEMONSTRATE THEIR SONSHIP...

1. They demonstrate that they are “born of God” and “know God” - **7b**
2. But if one does not love as God does, then they have not yet come to truly know God - **8a**

II. BROTHERLY LOVE IS DEFINED BY GOD’S LOVE (9-11)

A. GOD MANIFESTED HIS LOVE THROUGH THE GIFT OF HIS SON...

1. He sent His “only begotten Son” - **9; cf. Jn 1:14,18; 3:16,18**
2. He sent His Son, not because we loved Him, but because He loved us - **10; cf. Ro 5:8**
3. He sent His Son for two reasons:
 - a. That we might live through Him - **9; Jn 10:10**
 - b. That He might be the propitiation (an appeasing sacrifice) for our sins - **10**
-- Jesus died not just to provide forgiveness, but also to provide new life!

B. THIS IS THE KIND OF LOVE WE SHOULD HAVE...

1. If this is kind of love God has had toward us...
 - a. I.e., active goodwill
 - b. I.e., manifested unconditionally (to a certain extent, of course)

2. Then this is the kind of love we should have toward one another!
 - a. Where we love, not because we are loved first
 - b. But as God is love, so we are to be as His children! - cf. **Lk 6:35**

III. BROTHERLY LOVE IS EVIDENCE OF FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD (12-16)

A. THROUGH BROTHERLY LOVE, GOD'S ABIDING IS POSSIBLE...

1. No one has seen God at any time - **12a; cf. Jn 1:18**
2. However, when we keep the command to love one another, God will abide in us, and His love will be perfected in us! - **12b; cf. 1 Jn 3:24a**
3. We know this is true because of the Spirit which God has given - **13; cf. 1 Jn 3:24b**
 - a. The Spirit was to remind the apostles of all that Jesus taught - **Jn 14:26**
 - b. This included Jesus' teaching on how the Father and the Son would abide in them (i.e., through keeping the commandments) - **Jn 14:21,23**

B. THIS IS NOT THE ONLY NECESSARY REQUIREMENT FOR GOD TO ABIDE IN US, BUT IT IS AN ESSENTIAL ONE...

1. The apostles have testified that Father sent the Son to be our Savior - **14**
2. And so we must be willing to confess Jesus as the Son of God - **15**
3. Then, when we have known and believed the love God has for us (manifested in the sending of His Son), we are in a position to fully accept two basic principles of the gospel:
 - a. God is love
 - b. He who abides in love abides in God and God in him - **16**

IV. BROTHERLY LOVE PROVIDES ASSURANCE (17-19)

A. WHEN BROTHERLY LOVE IS PERFECTED, WE CAN HAVE BOLDNESS...

1. As we grow and become more complete and mature in brotherly love, we will be able to have boldness in the day of judgment - **17a**
2. The boldness will come from knowing that as His children we were like Him in this world - **17b**

B. AS BROTHERLY LOVE IS PERFECTED, FEAR IS DISPELLED...

1. Because the prospects of torment naturally produce fear, the more we grow in God's love, to that degree fear is dispersed - **18a**
2. If we fear the day of judgment, that is an indication we need to grow in love! - **18b**
3. Growing in love is made so easy for us, however, because God first loved us! - **19**

V. BROTHERLY LOVE IS ESSENTIAL TO LOVING GOD (20-21)

A. TO CLAIM TO LOVE GOD AND STILL HATE ONE'S BROTHER IS A LIE...

1. Like those who claim...
 - a. To have fellowship with God while they walk in darkness - **1 Jn 1:6**
 - b. To not have sinned - **1 Jn 1:10**
 - c. To know Jesus while not keeping His commandments - **1 Jn 2:4**...so is one who claims to love God while hating his brother: John says that they are all liars!- **20a**
2. For to love one whom we cannot see (God) requires that we first be able to love those whom we can see - **20b**

B. TO LOVE GOD, THEREFORE, MEANS WE MUST DEVELOP BROTHERLY LOVE...

1. This is why we have the commandment from Jesus - cf. **Jn 13:34-35**
2. Indeed, Jesus taught that loving God and one another were the two greatest commandments of the old law! - **Mt 22:35-40**

CONCLUSION:

1. If "brotherly love" is...
 - a. Evidence of sonship
 - b. Defined by God's love for us
 - c. Evidence of fellowship with God
 - d. A means of providing assurance in the day of judgment
 - e. Essential to loving God...then how dare we neglect this most essential commandment of God?
2. While there are other commands of our Lord that we must be careful to obey, none is so important, so essential to our spiritual life as God's children, as this one:
***"This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."* - Jn 15:12**

Are we letting the love that God displayed toward us through His Son Jesus to teach us how to love one another?

(Material from Mark A. Copeland)