



The Epistle of 1 John

“THE PROOF OF GOD’S LOVE”

1 John 4:7-12

Theme: Those who have experienced the love of God and thereby possess the knowledge of God in their hearts, show love toward others.

I. The Influence of God’s Love – 4:7-8

A. THE HEREDITARY ELEMENT OF GOD’S LOVE – v. 7

1. John again addresses the believers as *“Beloved”* - an indication that he is introducing another profound thought.
2. He then lays out a principle that must characterize all Christians – *“let us love one another, for love is from God ...”*
3. For those who profess to know God and walk with God, it is only proper that the predominant characteristic of God also characterize them -- therefore, we should *“love one another”*
4. He then gives the reason that this influence of God should characterize our lives – *“everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.”*
5. John is teaching us that those who are actually the children of God have been *“born of God”* and are therefore intimate with God (*“knows God”*) love.
6. There is a heredity issue that comes into play -- that we will turn out to be, by nature, like our Father.

B. THE HANDICAP OF ESTRANGEMENT FROM GOD’S LOVE – v. 8

1. Hence, the characteristic of loving one another serves as a paternity test to determine who are actually true

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children of God and who are not.

2. *“The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love”* - there is empty profession on the part of those who are unable to love as God loves
3. A person cannot come into a real relationship with a loving God without being transformed into a loving person.
4. In terms of valuable evidence that proves one’s right to claim relationship to God, the ability to love is as important as the ability to live righteous lives - cp. *1 John 3:10*.

II. The Illustration of God’s Love – 4:9-10

A. THE CONSUMMATE DEMONSTRATION OF GOD’S LOVE – v. 9

1. *“By this the love of God was manifested in us ...”* - this verse provides us with the awareness that the quality of God’s love is that it is selfless – that it is “with reference to [“in”] us.”
2. The selflessness of God’s love is that He *“has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him”*
3. God’s desire was to share His grace and mercy with each of us ... that we might be able to enjoy fellowship with Him through the *“Word of Life”* -- Jesus Christ - cp. *1 John 1:1-3*
4. The extent of God’s demonstration is seen in the reference to Christ as *“the only begotten Son”* – it was a tremendous sacrifice of love.

B. THE COMPELLING DEVOTION OF GOD’S LOVE – v. 10

1. Clearly, the love of God goes beyond His selflessness and involves yet another feature ... His willingness to

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sacrifice to extend this love to us.

2. *“In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”*
3. Here we see that the loving relationship that is available between God and men was not initiated or secured by men, but by God’s love - cp. *John 3:16*
4. The work of Jesus Christ in becoming *“the propitiation for our sins”* was a work of tremendous sacrifice - cp. *Romans 3:25*
 - a) *“propitiation”* [ἰλασμός] – “appeasement” necessitated by sin – cp. *1 John 2:2; Romans 3:25; Hebrews 9:5*
 - b) This is the appeasement of God and is directed to the need that arises from the reality of the wrath of God. It means as such that averting of wrath by means of an appropriate transaction of sacrifice.
5. Hence Godly love is always interested in the welfare of its recipient willing to do whatever is necessary to secure the safety of His chosen ones even to the extent of the death of His own Son.

III. The Implication of God’s Love – 4:11-12

A. THE FORCE OF GOD’S LOVE IN US - v. 11

1. These two features of God’s love -- selflessness and sacrifice -- are characteristics that will exist in the lives of every true child of God.
2. *“Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”* - Interestingly, the outgrowth of knowing the love of God is not said here to be love for God (although this is also true), but rather, love for each other.

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3. How can we be so unlike the One who has demonstrated to us what it means to truly love ... the **force** of our awareness of that love is to love.

B. THE FULFILLMENT OF GOD'S LOVE IN US - v. 12

1. There were those mystics who claimed that spiritual affirmation came through God revealing Himself to you in visions and the like.
2. John disputes the notion that intimacy with God is verified through "seeing God" in visions and mystical experiences by declaring "*No one has seen God at any time*"
3. Instead, John teaches that the way you know the affirmation of God's love is by seeing your love for others made real – cp. **Galatians 5:22a**.
4. "*If we love one another, God abides in us*" - this is the way we are affirmed, by becoming like the One who loves us.
5. As this is accomplished, "*His love is perfected in us*" -- when we love others, God's love for us has reached its full effect in creating the same kind of love as His in us.