

December 15, 2019- Pastor Karl Payne, 1 John 4:7-10

John addresses the subject of love for others by admonition or command several times in this epistle:

Fellowship with God—**2:9-11**; Membership in the Family of God-**3:10**; Knowing God Personally and Intimately-**4:7**

- A Vs 7 The Challenge**
- B Vs 8 The Caution**
- C Vs 9 The Supernatural Provision**
- D Vs 10 The Supreme Example**

7

“Beloved” The challenge to love sacrificially is directed to Christians.

“Love”, “love”, “love” in each case is sacrificial love for the benefit of another, based on divine design and example. God is the standard for genuine love, not a competing idea. **1 John 4:19.**

“Know” goes beyond a collection of facts or information. It conveyed the idea of a deep, comprehending knowledge or understanding of someone. It is also used to describe marital sexuality. There can be an eternal difference between head knowledge and heart reality.

(Rabbits, rats, cats, and dogs have sex. But it has nothing to do with the deep, comprehensive understanding and knowing of two people committed to each other through marriage for better or worse, in sickness or health, till death do us part. Rebellious teenagers, lonely singles and lustful, lying adulterers can have sex if they are biologically capable of doing so. But rebellion, loneliness and lust ending in a physical act of sex are not to be confused with deep, comprehensive knowing and sacrificial loving of married spouses who are sacrificially loved *“in spite of missing the mark”, rather than the cheap and conditional imitations of lust, “I will love you if you” or “I love you because you”.*)

Love the brethren: **1 Pet. 1:22; 1 John 2:10; 3:11; 3:18: 3:23; 2 John 5.** Loving others is consistent with our new nature and profession of new life in Christ. “It was just the natural thing” to do or say may be a legitimate response of a person without Christ, but for Christians it is often nothing more than an excuse to justify sin that we do because we want to, and plan to pray about later.

Remember, to the natural man the things of God are foolish or idiotic. **1 Cor.2:14**

(When Christians attempt to hold the natural man or human government to a divine standard that Christians do not even uphold perfectly, they are expecting something that is not humanly possible. Elections are coming soon. They will always represent a choice between the lessor of evils, trying to identify that person, position or party that comes closest to God’s divine design for human beings and human government. When He returns the crooked things will be made straight. Until then we are soldiers and ambassadors on a mission who fight and speak for truth, justice, mercy and grace in the midst of a world that is in rebellion against God and His children.

8

Because God is love, everything He does must ultimately represent love, whether it involves living, dying, rewards, discipline, or declaring the final judgement of every person. The Apostle John is here calling out the Gnostic heretics and false teachers who professed to have a relationship with God that was deeper, wider, and superior to other Christians, while they treated those who were not part of their group with contempt. Earlier he identified these false teachers as deceivers, **1 John 2:26**, and will later identify these same people as liars, **1 John 4: 20-21**. Here he indicates that they are not even Christians.

Contrast “know” in **1 John 2:3** (PfAI); **4:7** (PAI) and **4:8** (AAI). 2:3, know, perfect, active at a historical point, with the relationship ongoing and guaranteed for eternity. 4:7, know, active and ongoing, 4:8, know, active at a particular historical point of time, period. 2:3 is addressing Christians, 4:7 Christians, 4:8 non-Christians.

The Gnostics of John’s day were incorrect teaching that true enlightenment and relationship with God involved knowing secret information about God, restricted to members of their own private group, and participating in secret baptisms and additional anointing’s available only through their leadership. Even if what they taught was popular in restricted circles of naïve and immature professing Christians, it did not make what they said true. Deceiving and lying about spirituality was not restricted to the first century. When self-professed spiritual gurus inform you today that it does not matter what you believe as long as you love others, because ultimately it is all about love, they are deceivers and liars, even if they are sincere. “God hates judgmental people who think they alone are right like you born again Christians”, is in itself a judgmental statement confidently and boldly parroted by people who believe that what they are stating is correct and those disagreeing with them are wrong. According to Jesus Christ, what people believe really does matter, and true salvation and knowing God is not ultimately all about love, sincerity and personal opinions. **John 3:16-18; 3:36; 14:6**. Jesus told the religious leaders of His day that they were blind men leading the blind and white washed tomb boxes, clean on the outside but filled with dead bones on the inside. Did He owe these religious leaders an apology for telling them that what they were teaching and doing was wrong? Remember **1 Cor.2:14** is as true today as it was when it was written 2,000 years ago through the pen of the Apostle Paul.

God is love and love is God are not synonymous statements, even if this type of statement is spoken with 100% sincerity and passion. The first part of this statement is correct, but the second part of this statement is incorrect. Dogs have four legs. Everything with four legs is a dog. Apart from an accident or birth defect, the first statement is true, but the second statement is incorrect. What we say and believe does matter. Truth is not ultimately about sincerity or even love.

A possible question: How can non-Christians love others? Answer: Common grace and natural revelation. All mankind has been made in the image of God, which since the fall is broken but not eradicated. Mankind still has an active conscious that reminds them of right and wrong whether they like it or not, unless they have so descended into habitual sin that they have seared

their conscious. Creation still screams daily that design came from a designer, not random chance, time and mutation. Chaos does not create replicating order. **Rom.1:18-23**

9

“God is love” is vindicated and demonstrated by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. The action of the cross demonstrates the validity of the statement, God is love. God’s demonstration of genuine sacrificial love is the motivation for Christians learning how to consistently love one another with the love they receive from God, and to forgive others in the same fashion God has forgiven us, **1 John 4:19; Col.3:13**. It is not a matter of self-denial or discipline, but allowing God who lives in each believer to work through each Christian, accomplishing that which is beyond the natural ability and response of a person living for themselves. God did not demonstrate His love for us through His son by word or tongue alone, but by deed and truth, **1 John 3:18**. This type of love is poured in us and through us by the Holy Spirit who lives in and through us, **Rom.5:5; 1 Cor. 2:10-13; 6:19-20; 1 John 3:24; 4:13; 2 Pet.1:4**.

It is reasonable to assume that because God is light, (1 John 1:5), God is righteous, (1 John 2:29), God is love, (1 John 4:8), and God is spirit, (John 4:24-25), that those who truly know God deeply and intimately would desire to walk in light (holiness and purity), live righteously, sacrificially love others, and remain constantly dependent upon the supernatural empowerment of the Holy Spirit to do all of the above in us and through us, because none of it comes naturally. Phil.4:13; Heb.5:11-6:1; 2 Pet.1:3-8; 1 John 3:2-3 (Christians ought to be known and characterized as people who run towards light, not away from it or attempt to dim and hide it.)

Since loving others does not come naturally, this ability must be considered a supernatural endowment from God through the Holy Spirit who lives inside every true Christian. Human beings by nature are selfish. Christians are given a new nature allowing them to live supernaturally rather than naturally. Sacrificially loving others should be an identifying mark of Christians that is recognizable to both Christians and non-Christians. The ability to love our enemies and pray for those who spitefully use us is not something we learn to do naturally, it is supernatural, motivated by following the example of Jesus Christ out of obedience, who perfectly modeled and emulated sacrificial love for others. Christians ought to be known and characterized as people who run towards light, not away from it or attempt to dim and hide it.

10

God is the one who defines sacrificial love when He sent His most precious possession to die as a sacrifice for the benefit of others. What is the ultimate motivation for a Christian to be constrained to love others, even if they seem unlovable, unlikable, and underserving of anything but the contempt they deserve? **Rom.5:8; Philip.2:5-11; 1 Pet. 2:21-25**

People should be able to observe the love of God through the Children of God who allow Him to live through them. If there is no love consistently demonstrated, one can, and should, question the reality and validity of the relationship to God who has commanded us to love others as we are loved by God. As Christians we have been commanded to live life supernaturally rather than naturally; God lives in us. He does not live in non-Christians. With privilege there is additional responsibility that we must embrace rather than rationalize.