

**GREATER BETHEL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH, INC.**

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**BIBLE STUDY TOPIC: WHY WE MUST LOVE**

Scripture: 1 John 4:7-11

October 25, November 1, and 8, 2022

**1. We should love one another because God is love (4:7-8).**

Based on several similar texts (John 3:16; 13:34; Eph. 5:2, 25; 1 John 4:9-10), I worked out this definition: ***Biblical love is a self-sacrificing, caring commitment that shows itself in seeking the highest good of the one loved.***

At its heart, biblical love is a **commitment**, and thus it may be commanded. But it is not a commitment without feeling, but a **caring** commitment. In other words, **biblical love involves delight, not just duty**. Also, this caring commitment is not just an attitude, but an action: it **shows itself** in deeds. Those deeds often require **self-sacrifice**, seen supremely in Jesus' going to the cross. The goal of this commitment is **the highest good of the one loved**, which is that the person is saved and conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

**A. God is the source of genuine love because it comes from His very nature.**

John states (4:7) that, **“love is from God,”** and then he goes further and states (4:8) that, **“God is love.”**

John goes even further when he states, **“God is love.”** Some misconstrue it to mean that because God is love, He overlooks or is tolerant toward sin. But the Bible is clear that **God's love does not negate His holiness and justice**, or vice versa. In 1 John 1:5, the apostle stated, **“God is light, and in Him, there is no darkness at all.”** John also has said, **“He is righteous”** (2:29).

Cf. Revelation 20:15

**B. God's true children display His nature.**

John states this both positively and negatively (4:7-8): **“everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God....”** **All that are born of God know God.** The **false teachers** claimed to know God in a secret, deeper sense, but John is saying that they do not know God at all.

John's main application here is that **children take on the characteristics of their parents.**

Many in **evangelical churches claim to be born again**, but they do not love others and do not even try to do so. They are outside the life of God; ... there is no hope for such people unless they repent and turn to Him."

**2. God showed His love by sending His Son as the propitiation for our sins (4:9-10).** John makes two points in verses 9-10:

**A. God's love is seen in us in that He sent His Son so that we might live through Him (4:9).**

John's point here seems to be that we, as God's born-again children, are Exhibit A of His great love that sent His only begotten Son to this wicked world.

**Biblical Christianity** is not primarily a matter of a person deciding to stop certain sinful practices and start doing morally acceptable practices. It is not a matter of changing from being a non-religious person who spends Sundays for himself, to becoming a regular churchgoer. Rather, at its heart, **Biblical Christianity** is a matter of **God imparting new life to those who are dead in their sins** (Eph. 2:1-5).

**B. Love is truly seen, not in our loving God, but in His loving us by sending His Son to be the propitiation for our sins (4:10).**

John directs us back to God's love as seen in His sending His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. "**Propitiation**" means to satisfy God's justice and wrath toward our sin. The initiative was *totally* with God! He didn't wait until we showed some promise of changing or until we cried out for help. Rather, as Paul put it (Rom. 5:8), "**But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.**"

**3. Therefore, we ought to love one another (4:11).**

"**Ought**" implies **obligation or commandment**. That love can be commanded shows that it is not primarily a feeling, but rather **an action based on commitment**. We must love others or we are being disobedient to God.

**If everyone were easy to love, we wouldn't need this powerful example of God's love** or this strong exhortation to love one another. The world loves those that love them. But Jesus commands us to love even our enemies (Matt. 5:43-47).

Implicit in what John is saying here is that we must love those who may not be especially lovable or easy to love.

### **Application Questions**

1. Practically, how should we show love to a difficult person? Do we confront his sin or overlook it? Where are the boundaries?
2. Since no one loves perfectly, how do we apply verses 7 and 8? How much love must we demonstrate to know that we are born again?