

## Sermons From First John - An Exposition On Brotherly Love

**Text:** [1 John 4:7-21 HCSB](#) Dear friends, let us love one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. [8](#) The one who does not love does not know God, because God is love. [9](#) God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent His One and Only Son into the world so that we might live through Him. [10](#) Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. [11](#) Dear friends, if God loved us in this way, we also must love one another. [12](#) No one has ever seen God. If we love one another, God remains in us and His love is perfected in us. [13](#) This is how we know that we remain in Him and He in us: He has given to us from His Spirit. [14](#) And we have seen and we testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world. [15](#) Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God--God remains in him and he in God. [16](#) And we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and the one who remains in love remains in God, and God remains in him. [17](#) In this, love is perfected with us so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; for we are as He is in this world. [18](#) There is no fear in love; instead, perfect love drives out fear, because fear involves punishment. So the one who fears has not reached perfection in love. [19](#) We love because He first loved us. [20](#) If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For the person who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. [21](#) And we have this command from Him: the one who loves God must also love his brother.

### Introduction

1. Who is best known as "the apostle of love"?
  - a. The apostle Paul is certainly worthy of such an appellation in view of his discourse on love in 1 Co 13:1-13
  - b. But because of the many references to love in his first epistle, John has come to be known as "the apostle of love"
2. We have already seen where John declared that love is evidence of...
  - a. Abiding in the light, i.e., having fellowship with God - 1 John 2:10; cf. 1:5-7
  - b. Being children of God - 1 John 3:10,14
3. And we have already seen where John has touched upon...
  - a. The definition of love - 1 John 3:16
  - b. The value of love - 1 John 3:18-19
4. But now, in the passage which serves as the text for our study, John expounds upon the theme of brotherly love in much greater depth -

### 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
  - [1 John 4:7a HCSB](#) Dear friends, let us love one another, because love is from God,
2. That is because "God is love"
  - [1 John 4:8b HCSB](#) because God is love.
    - 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"
  - [1 John 1:5-6 HCSB](#) Now this is the message we have heard from Him and declare to you: God is light, and there is absolutely no darkness in Him. [6](#) If we say, "We have

fellowship with Him," and walk in darkness, we are lying and are not practicing the truth.

### **B. Those who love, demonstrate their sonship...**

1. They demonstrate that they are "born of God" and "know God" -

1 [John 4:7b HCSB](#) and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

2. But if one does not love as God does, then they have not yet come to truly know God

- [1 John 4:8a HCSB](#) The one who does not love does not know God

But lest any misconstrue the kind of love being discussed, he expands upon the definition of true love mentioned earlier in 1 John 3:16...

## **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"

- [1 John 4:9 HCSB](#) God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent His One and Only Son into the world so that we might live through Him.
- [John 1:14, 18 HCSB4](#) The Word became flesh and took up residence among us. We observed His glory, the glory as the One and Only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. **18** No one has ever seen God. The One and Only Son--the One who is at the Father's side--He has revealed Him.
- [John 3:16, 18 HCSB](#) **"For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. 18 Anyone who believes in Him is not judged, but anyone who does not believe is already judged, because he has not believed in the name of the One and Only Son of God.**

2. He sent His Son, not because we loved Him, but because He loved us

- [1 John 4:10 HCSB](#) Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.
- [Romans 5:8 HCSB](#) But God proves His own love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us!

3. He sent His Son for two reasons:

a. That we might live through Him

- [1 John 4:9 HCSB](#) God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent His One and Only Son into the world so that we might live through Him.
- [John 10:10 HCSB](#) **A thief comes only to steal and to kill and to destroy. I have come that they may have life and have it in abundance.**

b. That He might be the propitiation (an appeasing sacrifice) for our sins

- [1 John 4:10 HCSB](#) Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

-- 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!

- **Luke 6:35 HCSB** But love your enemies, do *what is* good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is gracious to the ungrateful and evil.

With "brotherly love" properly defined, John continues to point out that...

### **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 - 1 Jn 4:12a; 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! - 1 Jn 4:12b; cf. 1 Jn 3:24a
3. We know this is true because of the Spirit which God has given - 1 Jn 4:13; 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 - 1 Jn 4:14
2. And so we must be willing to confess Jesus as the Son of God - 1 Jn 4:15
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 - 1 Jn 4:16

In the next section of this "exposition on brotherly love", John touches again on a theme mentioned back in 1 Jn 3:19-21...

### **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
  - 1 Jn 4:17a
2. The boldness will come from knowing that as His children we were like Him in this world - 1 Jn 4:17b

#### **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 - 1 Jn 4:18a
2. If we fear the day of judgment, that is an indication we need to grow in love! - 1 Jn 4:18b
3. Growing in love is made so easy for us, however, because God first loved us! - 1 Jn 4:19

Finally, John ends this "exposition on brotherly love" by proving...

### **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! - 1 Jn 4:20a

2. For to love one whom we cannot see (God) requires that we first be able to love those whom we can see - 1 Jn 4:20b

### **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?